

# Conservation Area Appraisals: Buttermarket Street

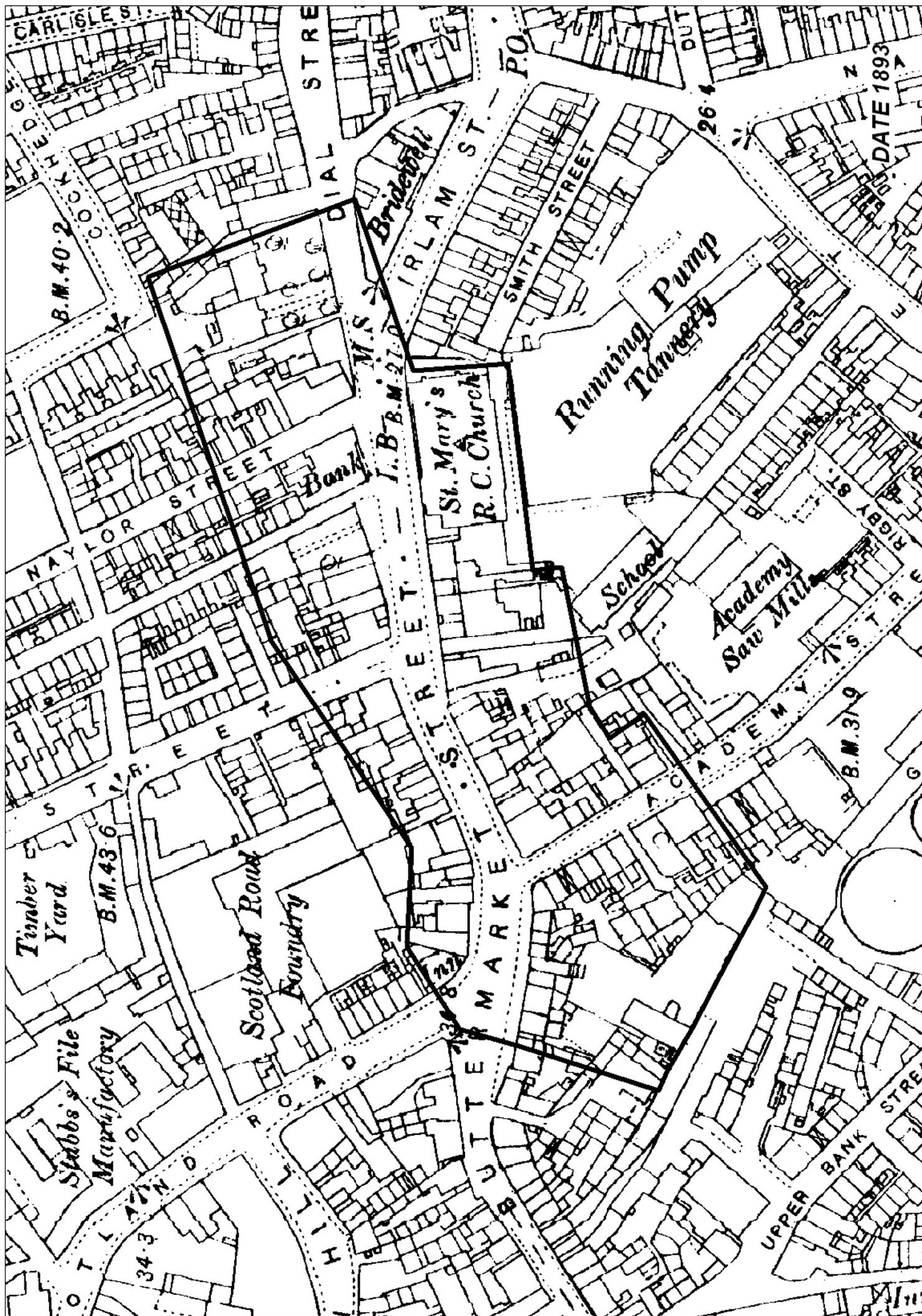


Warrington Borough Council, Environment Services Directorate  
Planning Policy Division

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<b>CONTENTS</b>		<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Purpose Of This Document	3
1.2	Consultation	5
1.3	Background to the Designation of Buttermarket Street Conservation Area	5
1.4	Summary of the Main Findings of this Report	5
<b>2</b>	<b>LOCATION &amp; SETTING</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Strategic Location	6
2.2	Visual/Physical Setting	10
<b>3</b>	<b>GENERAL CHARACTER &amp; PLAN FORM</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1	Land Form	11
3.2	Relation of Buildings and Spaces	11
3.3	An Audit of Heritage Assets	13
<b>4</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF BUTTERMARKE STREET CONSERVATION AREA</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1	Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest	15
4.2	Spatial Arrangement	15
4.3	Historic Interest	16
<b>5</b>	<b>HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1	Early Development of the Street Pattern	17
5.2	Warrington Academy	19
5.3	Development in the 19th Century	20
5.4	The 20th Century	23
5.5	Changes since Designation of the Conservation Area	25
<b>6</b>	<b>ANALYSIS OF THE AREA'S SPECIAL QUALITIES</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1	Contribution of Historic Buildings	28
6.2	Townscape	34
6.3	Prevalent and Traditional Building Materials and the Public Realm	37
6.4	Negative Factors, Intrusion and Damage	39
6.5	General Condition	41
6.6	The Contribution made to the Character of the Area by Green Spaces and its Biodiversity Value	41
<b>7</b>	<b>ISSUES FOR CONSERVATION &amp; MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</b>	<b>42</b>
7.1	Problems, Pressure and Capacity for Change	42
7.2	Development Opportunities	43
7.3	Conservation Area Boundaries	45
7.4	Conservation Area Management Plan - The Next Steps	46



	Page No.
<b>Appendix 1 - Policy Context</b>	<b>49</b>
National Context	49
Regional Policy	49
Local Policy	49
 <b>LIST OF PLANS &amp; DIAGRAMS</b>	
Figure 1	7
Figure 2	8
Figure 3	9
Figure 4	12
Figure 5	18
Figure 6	21
Figure 7	22
Figure 8	24
Figure 9	26
Figure 10	33
Figure 11	36
Figure 12	44

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of This document.

This document is one of a series of reviews of Warrington's conservation areas. It describes the character and appearance of the Buttermarket Street Conservation Area and identifies and analyses its special qualities. It reviews the impact of development and change since designation including factors that detract from its special qualities and considers the issues that are likely to affect the conservation area in the future. The format of the document is based upon guidance on the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals issued by English Heritage in Spring 2005. Appraisals of Bridge Street and the Town Hall Conservation Areas were issued for consultation in November 2006.

The need for a series of such reviews or 'appraisals,' is highlighted by the sheer length of time which has elapsed since many of the Borough's conservation areas were first designated. Buttermarket Street Conservation Area was in fact one of the earliest conservation area designations, made by the then County Borough Council on 3rd July 1972.

Since then, enormous changes have taken place in the physical character of the town, in terms of development, the local economy and the volume and pattern of traffic movement. The effects of age and weather, the adequacy of building maintenance and changes of use will all have had an impact upon the survival of the town's heritage of historic buildings. Especially in the town centre, the public realm of streets and open spaces has also undergone many changes as a result of traffic management and redevelopment.

Appraisals of the earlier designations are therefore timely and moreover a continuing programme of appraisals is now required by the Local Authority's Best Value regime.

As well as raising awareness of the issues surrounding the particular conservation area, the ultimate purpose of the appraisal is to provide the basis of a **Management Plan** for Buttermarket Street Conservation Area which, in consultation with stakeholders and the community, will address and tackle the issues raised. Appraisals should not therefore be just an academic exercise but part of the process of securing the long term protection and enhancement of the Borough's heritage of special places.

It is intended that the Management Plan will be formulated as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at a future date. The adoption of the Management Plan as an SPD will ensure alignment with the Local Development Framework, which will succeed the Unitary Development plan.

*(At 5/3/07 Executive Board - The total number of Conservation Areas in Warrington was reduced from 19 to 16 by combining existing contiguous Conservation Areas in Lymm and Stockton Heath)*



Conservation Areas were introduced in 1967 by the Civic Amenities Act and the concept has been incorporated into planning legislation since that time. There are now over 9000 conservation areas in England.

The statutory definition of 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' (S69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Such areas vary widely from historic town or village centres to industrial sites, small areas such as churchyards or very long linear routes such as canals. The view of English Heritage is that it is vital that only areas which are demonstrably of "special architectural or historic interest" in the local or regional context should be designated because of the responsibilities and obligations which this confers..

Conservation areas create a framework within which to safeguard the character of a whole area by acknowledging the contribution of; individual buildings, street patterns and the spaces between buildings.

Conservation area designation does not prohibit new development, and is not the same as preservation. New development in a conservation area should either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and this means that standards of design and materials used for new development are expected to be very high. In addition there may be buildings outside the conservation area that contribute to its setting and any development proposals affecting them must be considered in terms of their impact upon the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation area

Conservation Area Consent is required from the local planning authority for the demolition of unlisted buildings within a conservation area. Planning Permission may also be required for development that may not be required outside a conservation area such as some extensions to houses and buildings within the curtilage e.g. garages and sheds.

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that;

Every local planning authority - shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate those areas as conservation areas.

It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

An outline of the legislative and Policy framework relating to Conservation Areas is set out in Appendix 1



## 1.2 Consultation

In March 2006, a public consultation exercise was undertaken whereby local residents and businesses within the Buttermarket Street Conservation Area were consulted and their views sought on what they believed to be the main characteristics of the conservation area.

Four people responded to the consultation from properties within or adjoining the conservation area. Three occupied commercial properties, one respondent representing a church. Two respondents knew of the conservation area designation prior to the consultation. The old buildings were considered worthy of preserving, contributing much to the character of the area. There was concern that new development could erode the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 1.3 Background to the designation of Buttermarket Street Conservation Area.

In 1968 Warrington was designated as a New Town. The consultants advising on the New Town Master Plan also prepared a plan for the town centre to show how it might accommodate the commercial and other needs of the expanded town. Inevitably the town expansion would require town centre redevelopment and upgraded infrastructure. At the same time certain areas of the town centre were recognised as of particular historic or architectural merit warranting protection where possible from major renewal work. Several conservation areas were therefore recommended, taking advantage of the then relatively new Civic Amenities Act powers. The Town Hall Conservation Area was the first to be designated in April 1972. Buttermarket Street was the second.

Amongst the special qualities then identified were that the street was the main approach to the town centre from the east; the area was dominated by St. Mary's Church and its tower and it contained several attractive Georgian buildings. The area also had important townscape qualities. The buildings created an increasing feeling of enclosure approaching from the east. The staggered buildings created a funnel which the road entered, with the trees on the right providing a foil to the strong vertical element of the Church Tower. The irregular building line was also noteworthy as was the curved alignment of the street. The Friends Meeting House, contained within its charming enclosed space was considered worthy of particular safeguarding.

## 1.4 Summary of the main findings of this report

- Buttermarket Street Conservation Area was damaged soon after its designation by unsympathetic modern development particularly New Town House and by the construction of the Inner Circulatory Road. The latter resulted in the demolition of several listed buildings and created a wide junction, disrupting the continuity of historic built form between the Friends' Meeting House and the remainder of the Conservation Area.
- Despite these early negative influences, the Conservation Area retains a core of heritage buildings. Particularly noteworthy are the former town houses of the late C18th and early C19th and the architecturally important St. Mary's Church.
- Conservation Area status has undoubtedly contributed to the high quality renovation of several buildings. It has also been valuable in achieving positive design outcomes in the new office development on the site of St. Mary's School and recent residential development at Dial Street.
- This report identifies a number of factors that detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. These include buildings on the east approach to the conservation area which suffer from crude 'modernisation' and excessive signage. Detrimental aspects of the public realm include intrusive or inappropriate street furniture and damaged paving.



- The report suggests several potential long term opportunities to repair damaged townscape following the example of the Dial Street scheme.
- The report also recommends a number of boundary changes to reflect present conditions and the effects of redevelopment on adjoining land and also to encourage the enhancement of peripheral areas.
- In conclusion, the conservation area designation has served a useful purpose and continues to do so, despite some initial set backs. The report suggests the framework of a **Conservation Area Management Plan** which would aim to address the issues identified in the appraisal.



## 2. LOCATION AND SETTING

### 2.1 Strategic Location

Buttermarket Street Conservation Area is currently one of 7 conservation areas within the Warrington Town unparished area. These conservation areas comprise much of the historical centre of the town and are in close proximity to one another, however their characters are quite distinct. Their disposition is shown on **Fig.1**

The boundaries of the Conservation Area were drawn to encompass the frontage properties between Dial Street and the Friend's Meeting House. They are best described by reference to **Fig.2** Buttermarket Street is the easterly of the four principal thoroughfares that form the historic cross roads at Market Gate, the focal point of Warrington town centre. The conservation area is based upon the outer section of Buttermarket Street commencing 120metres from Market Gate and extending in linear form 260 m up to and including part of Dial Street. It has a typical width of 80m and is 1.92 hectares in area. Once part of the strategic A57 traffic route, Buttermarket Street was severed by the Inner Circulatory Road in the early 1980s. Buttermarket Street within the town centre retail core has been pedestrianised but within the conservation area it continues in use as a busy highway catering for in- bound and out-bound traffic flows. The presence of traffic and its associated street furniture within the conservation area is therefore an inevitable consequence of its role as a town centre access and bus route.

A small enclave of the Conservation Area remains west of the Inner Circulatory road, comprising the Friend's Meeting house and grounds, now separated from the main part of the conservation area. (This issue is addressed under the boundaries review section of this report).

Dial Street leads onto the traffic roundabout junction with the A49 diversion at Mersey Street. Beyond, Church Street continues the old A57 route eastwards, now by-passed by the Manchester Road diversion.

The location of the conservation area in the wider urban context is shown in **Fig 3**





**Figure 1 : Town Centre Conservation Areas**

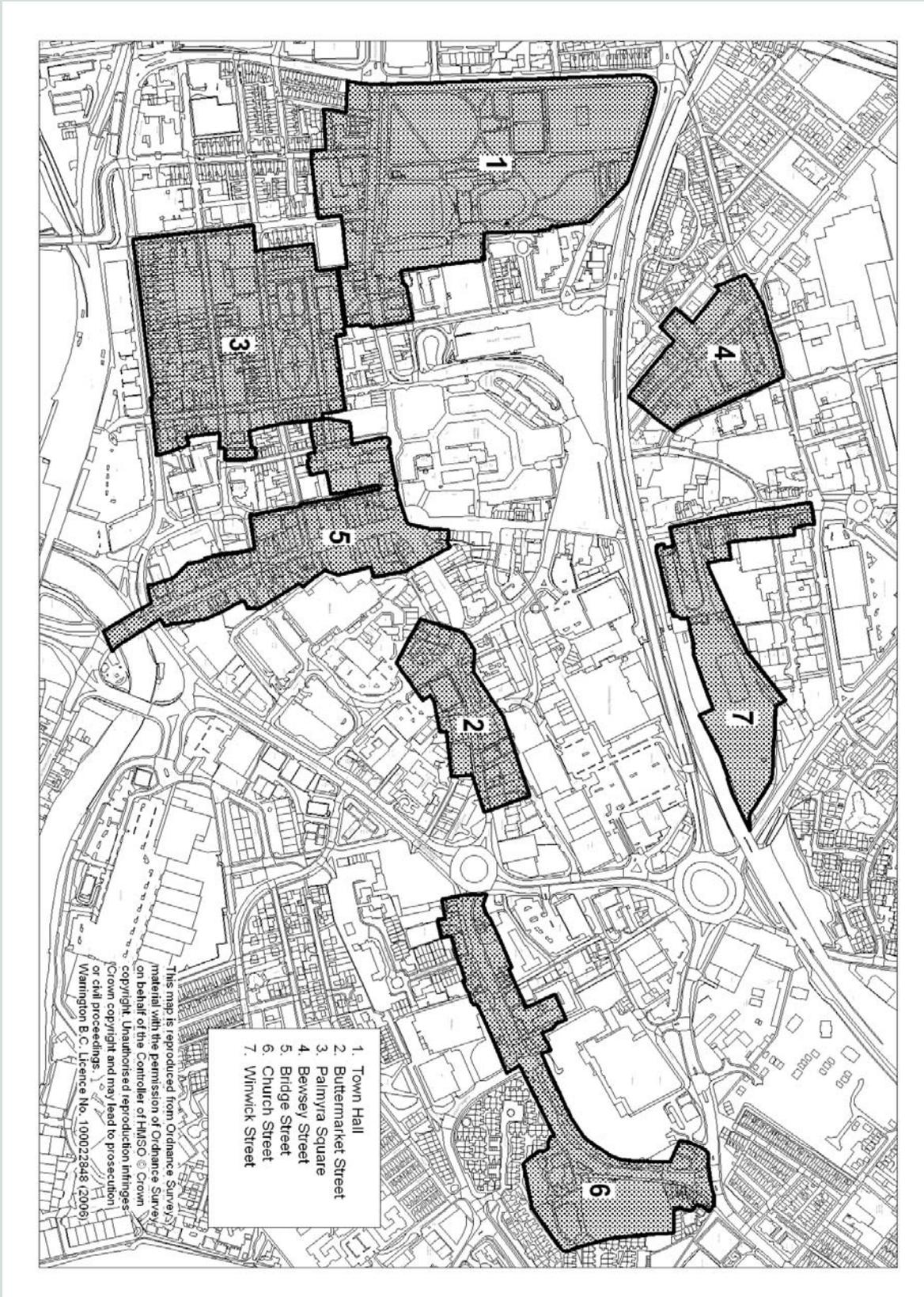


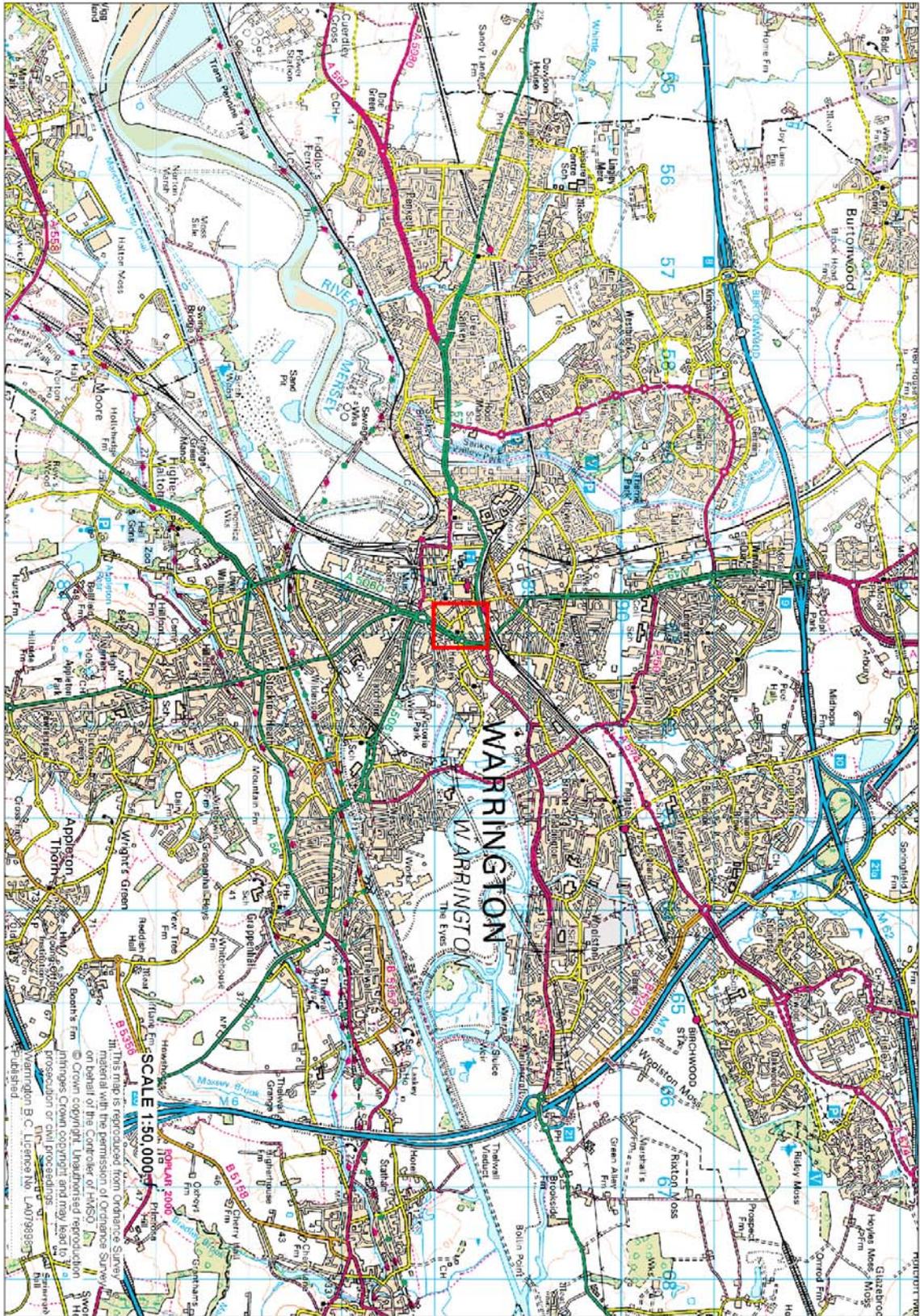


Figure 2 : Buttermarket Street Conservation Area - Designated Area





Figure 3 : Locational Context





## 2.2 Visual/physical setting

The conservation area is centred on the street itself, and is relatively self contained and easily legible from within. From outside the conservation area, its extent is less readily defined, with the various rooflines in the urban area merging. Abutting the Conservation Area to the north is the sprawling Cockhedge retail park. At its eastern extremity are a parade of small shops, retail warehouses and a recently built row of town houses. On its south side is a mixture of car parking, office and residential use, the latter including St. Mary's Presbytery and Charles Forbes Court sheltered housing. St. Mary's Church tower is a landmark visible from a variety of positions well outside the Conservation Area but the south side of the main structure is screened from Mersey Street by intervening built form.

Nearby is the Salvation Army Citadel and Community Centre. The Citadel has an association with the conservation area in that its original building was situated at the corner of Buttermarket Street and Academy Way, the site now occupied by the Kwik Save supermarket.

### 3 GENERAL CHARACTER AND PLAN FORM

#### 3.1 Land Form

Buttermarket Street follows the base of a low ridge then rises its summit at Market Gate. The pronounced dog leg in its historic alignment is now disguised by the wide junction with Academy Way/Scotland Road. There is also a minor change in alignment adjacent to the junction with Orford Street. This provides additional visual interest by contributing to a sense of enclosure and changing sequential views. The carriageway varies in width from about 6.5m widening to about 10m adjacent to St. Mary's Church. The road rises from 7.9m at its eastern extremity to 9.7 m at its junction with Academy Way though the change in level along its length is virtually imperceptible.

The rise becomes more pronounced towards Market Gate at 15.7m. This elevation offers an eastward prospect towards the conservation area taking in the tower of St Mary's Church and in the distance, the lofty spire of St. Elphin's Church. Within the conservation area, the ground rises immediately northwards of the highway so that buildings on the north side which are set back are at a slightly higher level whilst those at back of footway are set into the rising ground. The slope must have provided an attractive setting for the town houses facing onto their south facing gar-



dens. Three minor streets lead off the north side of Buttermarket Street, Orford Street, James Street and Naylor Street. The latter two have been truncated by the Cockhedge retail park, whilst Orford Street provides an access to the retail park for parking and service traffic. James Street is a narrow lane, still sett paved.

#### 3.2 Relation of buildings and spaces

**Fig. 4** shows the relationship of buildings and spaces. It is noticeable that there is no common building line. The variation in the position of buildings relative to the street is one of the distinctive features of this conservation area. The funnel like configuration of the eastern end mentioned in the original designation report is also evident. This has been reinforced by the new town house development on Dial Street. This scheme also continues the local theme of stepped building lines.

The row of shops opposite Dial Street are outside the conservation area but very much part of its setting. (See section 6). The Borough Arms at the junction with Mersey Street marks the end of the row and is a well presented town public house of the Victorian era.







The transept and aisle of St. Mary's Church rise sheer from the street, emphasising the bulk of the building. The south side of the street is almost wholly enclosed by built form and thus is more or less permanently in shade, providing sharp contrasts with the north side especially in seasonal low sun conditions.

It is noted that St Mary's Church and the former chapel on Buttermarket Street are without graveyards, reflecting their relatively recent age and the construction of the municipal cemetery on Manchester Road.

The area occupied by the present conservation area was once a mix of town houses and small business premises. The small size of the conservation area, is a reflection of the fact that it was originally hemmed in by industrial sites. These were cleared prior to, or shortly after designation. Redevelopment of these large sites has resulted in the conservation area being juxtaposed essentially by larger scale modern buildings such as Cockhedge and New Town House.



Today, there is only one shop window frontage actually within the Conservation Area boundary, no.101, currently vacant. Kwik Save presents a blank frontage. The former town houses now accommodate offices, a pub/restaurant and a club, demonstrating the adaptability of the larger domestic properties of the era.

The varied mix of land uses give Buttermarket Street Conservation Area the character of a transitional zone between the town centre retail core and the inner suburbs, a place to pass through rather than stop and linger.

### 3.3 An Audit of heritage assets

The oldest remaining buildings within the Buttermarket Street conservation area are according to the list description, No 2 (Bank House), 4 (Dial House), Dial Street and no.80 Buttermarket Street which are described in the List entries as C18th houses. (However, the building occupying the site of 2,4, Dial Street as shown on the 1826 map does not have the footprint of the present buildings which may therefore be C19th). The Trustee Savings Bank derives from 1829, extended or rebuilt late C19th. St Mary's is a relatively 'modern' church- i.e. Victorian Gothic revival as opposed to medieval- dating from 1877. The Porter's pub (Cross Keys), is of similar vintage. The other town houses are of the first half of the C19th.

The conservation area contains 11 listed buildings, all of which are grade II. All of the listed buildings are also noted as having group value.





**The Listed Buildings are:**

Friends Meeting House	grade II
Cross Keys Public house	grade II
No. 80 Buttermarket Street	grade II
Nos 82,84 (one entry)	grade II
Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary.	grade II
No. 95	grade II
Trustee Savings Bank (no. 97)	grade II
Dial Street Building dated 1817 (Former Sunday School)	grade II
No. 2 Dial Street ( Bank House)	grade II
No.4 Dial Street ( Dial House)	grade II
No.6 Dial Street (Vigo House)	grade II

**Ref. Fig.10/12**

There are 2 entries in the sites and monuments record. The first refers to the find to the south of Smith Street of a roman coin. The second refers to the 15th century holy well, known as Hallumswalle, which C19th maps indicate possibly as the running pump on the site of the current Borough Arms.

## 4 SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF BUTTERMARKE STREET CONSERVATION AREA.

The special qualities of Buttermarket Street Conservation area can be summarised in terms of its buildings, the relation of buildings to spaces and the area's historic development and associations and the mixture of uses,

### 4.1 Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest.

Of some 19 separate buildings identifiable on the \*GIS based map some 11 are Listed Buildings representing 57% of the total. As such their historical and architectural merit has been recognised at a national level. Ten of the Listed buildings form a compact group in the centre of the conservation area. The buildings include examples of good quality late C18th or early 19thC Georgian style town housing whilst the Gothic Revival style is represented in the form of St. Mary's Church and Porter's (Cross Keys) public house.

*\*Geographical Information System*

St. Mary's R.C. Church dates from 1877, in decorated style by Pugin and Pugin, considered by Pevsner to be one of their best works. The body of the Church is in coursed buff sandstone rubble ; smooth faced pink stone is used for windows, band courses and other details. The very tall and slender north east tower by Peter Paul Pugin was added in 1906. A notable feature of the tower is the balustrade formed of the wording "Ave Maria" in pink sandstone.

A more detailed description of the various buildings is given in section 6.



### 4.2 Spatial Arrangement

As well as buildings of architectural and historic interest the unusual spatial arrangement of the buildings contributes strongly to the distinctiveness of the conservation area. The combination of changing road alignment and staggered positions of the various frontage buildings create a pleasing sequence of views of the projecting elevations, the whole scene dominated by St. Mary's Church and its lofty tower.

Green space in the form of former residential gardens is an important element of the street scene enhanced further by the presence of a number of mature trees. A recently landscaped open space and the landscaped grounds of the new residential development at Dial Street flank the eastern approach to the conservation area. Incidental landscaped spaces front New Town House, Kwik Save store and Academy Place. The Friend's Meeting house is contained within a private walled garden which has been used for burials.



The canopies of trees within the grounds can be seen over the buildings and boundary walls.



### 4.3 Historic Interest

Buttermarket Street is one of the town's historic development axes, aligned in an east west direction and forming a continuation of Church Street around which the town of Warrington originally developed. Butter Market is shown on the 1772 map. The conservation area part of the street would have served from ancient times as the entry point from the east to the heart of the town centre. The curving alignment was no doubt influenced by the contours as the ground rose towards Market Gate. The unusual funnel like configuration of its eastern approach reflects the historic evolution of the street layout where Dial Street and a street once known as Irlam Street formed a forked junction.

The presence of three places of worship, two still in use, adds to the historic interest of the area. The Society of Friends were established on their present site in the C18th. The survival of their premises as a place of worship provides a tangible link with Warrington's past before the advent of C19th industrial expansion.

Academy Street was once the location of the Warrington Academy, a pioneer Non-conformist educational institution. Although none of its buildings remain, its historic significance is perpetuated in the road name, Academy Way.

The Non-conformist movement is also represented by No. 101, Buttermarket Street, dating from 1817, once a Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School.

St. Mary's R.C. Church is contemporary with Warrington's rapid population growth and its main phase of industrial expansion during the latter part of the C19th.

Early commercial development is represented by no 9, shown as a savings bank in 1851.

See also section 5, below, Historic Development.



## 5 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Early development of the street pattern

Aspects of local history relative to the origins and development pattern of the town are mentioned in the Bridge Street and Town Hall Conservation area appraisals and are not therefore repeated here.

Buttermarket Street is the westerly continuation of Church Street, the original location of the early settlement of Warrington. Historians believe that the centre of the town shifted from Church street towards Market Gate after the construction of the first bridge at Bridgefoot in the 13thC. The streets converging upon Market Gate came to be used as locations for agricultural produce markets before the establishment of the Market Place, north-west of Market Gate, the conservation area's name reflecting its early role.

Scotland Road was formerly known as Scotland Bank and was reputed to be the scene in August 1648 of the capitulation of the Duke of Hamilton's forces to the Protector after a running battle from Preston. Cromwell issued dispatches whilst staying in premises on Church Street on 20th August 1648.

The earliest large scale map of Warrington by Walworth and Donbavand, 1772, reveals that Church Street was by then fully built up with frontage development in the form of narrow burgage plots. Building development extended along Buttermarket Street from Market Gate eastwards towards Church Street but there remained substantial gaps and to its south extensive orchards and pasture occupied much of the space up to Mersey Street. The very narrow inner part of the present street was named Butter Market. It continued eastwards widening, as Bow Street, perhaps because of its noticeable dogleg, then Dial Street. The connection between Dial Street and Church Street was not continuous but in the form of a square. The west side of the square was a path called Tooter's Lane and the south side leading into Church Street was called Twill Street. Fennel Street formed the eastern side. North of present Buttermarket Street lay enclosed pasture land and orchards.



Fig.5 1772 map extract.



Activities recorded on the 1772 plan were tan yards and timber yards, the Warrington Academy. A Quakers Meeting House is not annotated at this date.



## 5.2 The Warrington Academy

Warrington Academy was an educational institution founded by Non conformists. It provided an independent education of university standard to Non- conformists who were not admitted to the country's only university's of the day, Oxford and Cambridge. It initially occupied premises at Bridgefoot from the mid- C18th. By 1762 it had outgrown these premises and relocated to purpose built accommodation located off the south side of Buttermarket Street. The buildings were arranged in a courtyard with master's houses on the sides and classrooms and examination hall at the end, the whole in a gated enclosure accessed by a narrow lane called Academy Place.

\*Beamont the celebrated C19th historian, lawyer and first Mayor of the Borough describes the Academy's teaching staff as competent in every branch of science and learning. They included Joseph Priestley an early experimentalist in electricity, teacher of Chemistry and science in general and John Reinhold Forster who was a great naturalist and who accompanied Captain Cooke on his second voyage round the world. Mrs Barbauld, nee Aikin was the wife of one of the professors and a celebrated local diarist and poet. A plaque erected 1911, on the gateway of the Conservative Club, formerly Vigo House, commemorates Mrs Barbauld's residence in a house on the site 1758-1774. The Academy in its heyday placed Warrington at the forefront of modern educational development and attracted hundreds of students, but declining discipline led to its closure in 1784. Later it became a day school. The 1851 OS refers to a Mechanics Institute within the courtyard.

\* *Beamont W. Walks about Warrington; Warrington Guardian press 1887. Warrington reference Library.*

The main Academy building was swept away in the late C19th by the construction of Academy street. The remaining buildings succumbed to industrial encroachment and decay and none remain. Ironically the Academy's first premises at Bridgefoot have survived, at least in replicated form, and are occupied by the Warrington Guardian.

Beamont speculates that the Society of Friends were influenced in their choice of location by proximity to the Non-conformist Academy, and that from 1784 they had occupied a building which seemed to have been part of the Academy site. Beamont tells of the quarterly assembly in Warrington of the South Lancashire Friends and that in their 'quaint but becoming attire', their gatherings were welcomed by the local populace.

A Friends Meeting House is annotated on the 1826 map but located slightly to the east of the present building which dates from 1830.



### 5.3 Development in the 19th Century

The Manorial Survey map of 1826, **Fig 6** reveals that frontage development of Buttermarket Street was more or less complete but not all the buildings shown at this date are those which survive today. Additions to the street scene included the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel of 1817 and a dispensary (no 80). The old Church Street workhouse gaol - consisting of two small cells presided over by the town's single constable - had given way to a new bridewell located at the junction of Butter Market Street and Dial Street. It faced onto a new street which forked south from Dial Street to point more directly towards Church Street. This was the origin of the 'funnel' plan evident today. Tooter's Lane remained, anonymous, linking Dial Street behind the bridewell. Beyond the frontages, extensive gardens and fields remained but rows of small cottages had appeared on James Street and Naylor Street perhaps to house the workers of the nearby glassworks and Cockhedge tannery.

The 1851 large scale Ordnance Survey, **Fig. 7**, shows that the historic frontages of Buttermarket Street which survive today, were in place. On the north side a dense pattern of workers cottages had appeared in terraced rows and courts. Cottages faced each other on James Street less than 4 metres apart! Behind no.95, aptly named 'Pocket Street', was a court of similar dimensions. Industries were now well established in this part of town including glass works, the renowned Stubs file manufactory, foundries and wireworks. South of Butter Market Street, Allen's cotton factory occupied the site later to be St. Mary's Church, beyond which was 'Running Pump Tannery', probably named after the ancient well or spring located between Church Street and Mersey Street.

The Legh manuscript of 1465 places the spring by the northern gate of Hallumswalle Hall, which lay near to the south wall of St Mary's. A seemingly bottomless water-filled pit discovered beneath the church c. 1999, -which required extensive underpinning and filling- adds to this mystery.

Sadly, Tooter's Lane had been renamed Mersey Street. The new road in front of the Bridewell had been named Irlam Street. Dial Street seemed to have been superseded by Butter Market Street, but the little square at the junction with Fennel Street and Church Street was densely built up and included 'Trafalgar Place.'

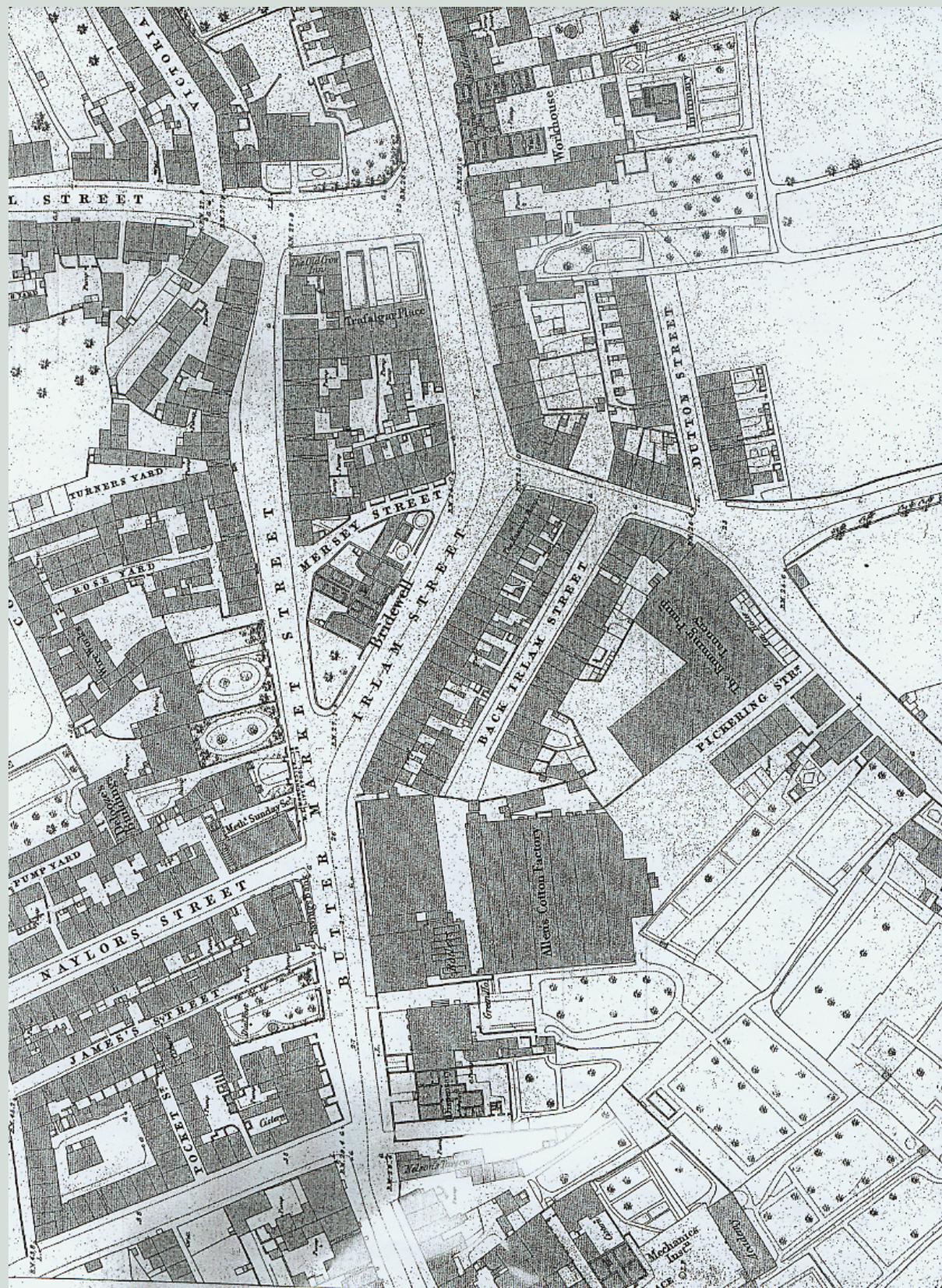
The fine town houses on the north side, including the successor to Mrs. Barbauld's former home, Vigo House, were now close neighbours to factories and workers' cottages, but there remained an extensive area of gardens and orchards between the Academy and Mersey Street. The 1851 OS shows the Academy Place school abutting the Friends Meeting House. This and the adjacent caretaker's house survive today, and perpetuate the Academy Place address.

The detailed 1851 OS shows numerous pumps indicative of a lack of town water supply. In the garden of no 95 a dial post is shown. Perhaps Dial Street took its name from such a feature. Uses named include the dispensary (no. 80), the savings bank, (no. 97) and the Methodist Sunday School, (no.101). Porter's Ale House, formerly the 'Cross Keys', was in existence as 'Nelson's Tavern' but almost certainly a building of earlier date than the present building.





Figure 7 : 1851 Edition Ordnance Survey





Warrington's population in 1801 was some 11,000. Between the 1840s and 1880s, the town's population doubled to about 45,000 with the most rapid phase of growth occurring from the 1870s. By 1901 it had reached 65,000. The town's good communications and expanding industries attracted migrants especially from Ireland. The migrant families crowded into the small terraced houses and courts typified by those shown around Buttermarket Street on the 1851 OS. St. Mary's R.C. Church of 1877 was symbolic of the cultural diversity and population growth then affecting the town.

#### 5.4 The 20th Century

By the early 20thC, both sides of Buttermarket Street, (by this time the words were joined), were hemmed in by a dense pattern of workers housing and industries. **Fig.8** .

St. Mary's Church had taken the place of part of Allen's Cotton factory, but Running Pump Tannery had taken over the remainder leaving the new Church no peripheral space. The gardens and orchards behind the Academy had given way to Richmond's Gas stove and Meter works- across Academy Street from the town's gas works! St. Mary's Church had managed to cram in a school at the rear of no 80 adjacent to the gas stove factory. On the north side, James Street and Naylor Street led straight to the huge Cockhedge Cotton mill complex.

A tramway ran along the street towards Church Street. The bridewell had gone, having functioned as the town prison from 1820 to 1900, when new premises on Arpley Street replaced it,- but ancient Tooter's Lane survived -this time as Howard's Place! Irlam Street was not named on the 1909 OS. The savings bank had been enlarged and the Church (no.101) remained in use.

Academy Place had become Academy Street a new through road connecting Mersey Street and used a tram route. It severed the remaining vestiges of the former Academy from the Friend's Meeting House. The junction of Buttermarket with Scotland Road was a sweeping curve lined with small shops and cottages at the rear of which Scotland Bank Works perpetuated the historic street name.

Altogether, the ambience of this part of town could not be considered particularly wholesome. It was a dense mixture of housing, small business premises and large industrial sites. The last vestiges of open land had been built upon and there was no open space as such apart from the site of the bridewell.

The survival of the Georgian town houses and their gardens in the pre- conservation era is probably indicative of a general lack of investment in this fringe area of the town centre. Their gardens would have probably been the only green space between the town centre and the rectory gardens and cemetery at the east end of Church Street some 500m away.



Figure 8 : 1909 Edition Ordnance Survey





## 5.5 Changes since designation of the Conservation Area.

Ironically, it is in the period since designation that the area has suffered the most severe blows to the integrity of its built form. **Fig.9** Shows the built form as it existed in the 1960s and buildings since demolished. The major causes of change in the modern era have been:

- The construction of New Town House - this resulted in the destruction of the frontage which comprised a row of cottages and business premises including the Britannia public house. This was a French 'chateau' style edifice in Portland stone, curved in plan, which provided an effective closure of the view eastwards along the street. New Town House has made the greatest impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by reason of its scale and bulk and its uncompromising grey aggregate cladding. In plan form it arrogantly ignored the grain of the street pattern and its building lines, leaving unresolved peripheral spaces. It was built under Government planning permission issued under New Towns Act powers to accommodate the New Town Development Corporation staff. It dominates the view eastwards from the pedestrian street and its light cladding is very obvious viewed westwards.
- \*The Inner Circulatory Road- this followed the alignment of Scotland Road and Academy Street but required widening and the offset junction with Buttermarket Street swept away no 1-9 Academy Street which were Listed and nos. 56-62 Buttermarket Street. Nos. 50-54 had already been replaced by a modern building. No 62 was also listed. The inner circulatory road resulted in a loss of enclosure at the junction and still poses a major obstacle for pedestrians. It also divorced the Friends Meeting House from the rest of the conservation area.
- Demolition of 6,8 Academy Street, also Listed, -the latter the last vestige of the Academy but merged into an adjacent warehouse,- they had become severely dilapidated and were subsequently demolished. Their sites were absorbed into the Kwik Save development which had involved a land exchange with the Salvation Army. The sites of nos. 70-76 had already been cleared as had unfit housing at Orford Street, James Street and Naylor Street, leaving open back-land beyond the street frontage.

*\* The proposals to develop the land at Scotland Road, Buttermarket Street for offices for the Development Corporation and to construct the inner circulatory road were acknowledged at the time of designation but it was considered nonetheless desirable to include the affected sites. The designation report referred to the importance of maintaining the existing building line around the corner. This was manifestly ignored in the planning of New Town House. The impact of these developments has been severe and detrimental in terms of conservation but illustrates the balance that sometimes has to be made between conservation and wider development and infrastructure objectives.*





**Further Changes include:**

- Replacement of nos. 91,93 by the Creamer Insurance building. In scale and form this is a modest building though let down by its dull brown brickwork and flat roof.
- Demolition of the Victorian St.Mary’s School and replacement by offices of similar scale and sympathetic style.
- Demolition of the Catholic Social Club, Ashton Hall, and ultimate redevelopment by the Georgian style town houses. This can only be described as a positive change.

The development illustrates the sometimes long timescale required to achieve worthwhile improvements in the quality of the townscape. The majority of the site lay outside the existing conservation area boundary. However its impact on the conservation area was noted and a design of apartments considered appropriate to the location was achieved. The traditional form of building in a Georgian style was considered to respect and complement the building stock within the conservation area. The use of natural slate, good quality brick and good window details have all contributed towards the success of the site.



Opportunistic improvements such as this can be more readily achieved when there is an understanding of the special qualities of the area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.



## 6. ANALYSIS OF THE AREA'S SPECIAL QUALITIES

### 6.1 Contribution of Historic Buildings

Despite the devastation mentioned above, the cluster of buildings at the core of the Conservation Area retains much interest and the Friend's Meeting House has survived though now separated from the core of the conservation area by Academy Way/Scotland Road.

The Friends Meeting House stands in an elevated position relative to Academy Way but is secluded from public view. The upper part of the building can be seen with advantage from the steps of New Town House. The building itself is a plain brick cube with hipped roof and semi-circular bay on its south-east side which accommodates the gallery staircase. Tall multi paned windows add interest. The caretaker's house and Bible school help enclose the site, the whole forming a cohesive group of modest scale and unpretentious style.

Proceeding eastwards, the core of the conservation area is flanked disturbingly by two substantial modern buildings, New Town House and Kwik Save. Kwik Save does at least make some references to the roofing traditions of the locality but is otherwise inadequate in scale and detail. New Town House has been described elsewhere.

The set back of New Town House gives prominence to the Orford Street elevation of the 3 storey modern Creamer Insurance office building no. 93. This building is in scale with its older neighbours but bland in detail and its brown brick cladding lacks the richness of the local red brick. From the west it screens its neighbour no. 95, which is set back 20m from the road in a wooded garden. Known as 'Old Town House' - perhaps as a reference to its ponderous neighbour- it is a former town dwelling of simple design, 2 storeys, rendered, slate roof, with central doorway with fanlight and Ionic columns. It is indicated on the 1826 map. Listed Grade II, it is now in use as a pub/restaurant. It has rather too many signs, though their visual impact is mitigated by the trees in the front garden.





Its eastern boundary is formed by James Street, a narrow sett paved lane flanked by no. 101 now offices, formerly the Trustee savings Bank. Listed Grade II the main building is two storeys part three on its eastside. Its west elevation facing the garden of no 95 is in red brick with painted stone window surrounds, strings and quoins. The west door surround has Ionic pilasters and radial fanlight. The panelled double door is reached by 5 steps, flanked by low walls and railings. The front elevation is the more imposing, featuring rusticated painted stone ground floor with three round headed windows and porch with pilasters. The first floor is probably painted stucco. Ionic pilasters frame four twelve paned sashes; above is a frieze and cornice. The building shown on the site on the 1826 map did not extend up to Naylor Street. The 1851 OS annotates a building on the site as 'Savings Bank' but it does not coincide with the footprint of the present building. It would appear that a new facade was added after 1851 but the present building may perhaps incorporate elements of earlier structure.



In contrast with the prestigious bank, the chapel like building with side wall to Naylor Street, is appropriately austere. It is two storeys, painted brick, gable end to the main road. The side elevations feature round headed windows to ground and first floors. Windows are modern as is the shopfront. The centre window of the south gable has a bracketed hood, above which is a plaque proclaiming 1817. The building is shown on the 1826 map as a Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School. Tie plates indicate some structural problems.



A narrow single storey shed like building projects forward of the east side of no.101.

2 and 4 Dial Street, Bank House and Dial House, are a semi-detached pair of modest two storey houses facing onto front gardens of about 9m. They were constructed in local brick in Flemish bond and probably date from the first half of the C19th., their windows being of the 4 paned sash type rather than the multi-paned Georgian pattern. Despite their unpretentious style, attention has been paid to detailing in terms of the fanlights above the door and the wooden porches with panelled pilasters, frieze and cornice. No. 2 has received replacement windows which appear to be top hung rather than vertically sliding sashes.





No 6 Vigo House is a larger detached house, two storeys, hipped roof and central portico with marble columns. It was the Regimental Club of the South Lancashire Regiment until 1971. A plaque over the iron gateway commemorates the association of Mrs Barbauld with the site in the C18th.

It would appear that the present building was in existence by 1826 and is possibly the building represented on the 1772 map. Regrettably all front windows are replacements.



Two further houses of doubtless similar style were in existence up to 1909 but later demolished and their sites absorbed into the St.Mary's club site.

It is fitting that the recent development on Dial Street has reinstated at least in part, the historic built form represented by good quality town houses.

Despite conversion to other uses, the former town houses retain their essential character and it is remarkable and satisfying that the front Gardens of nos. 80-84, 95, Buttermarket Street and nos. 2,6 Dial Street survive unpaved as green areas. Regrettably, no 4 Dial Street's garden has been flagged.

On the south side of the street, opposite Orford Street, Porter's Ale House, is a form of Gothic-revival town pub which faces defiantly onto New Town House. Two storeys plus twin attic gable windows with pyramid roofs and elaborate finials. Its frontage is less than 10m giving it a tall, narrow appearance. Its side gables are prominent because of the set back of adjacent buildings and carry large painted advertisements. Its original name 'Cross Keys' is perpetuated in stone relief logos above a pair of ground floor windows.



No 80-84 are a group of Georgian style town houses set in front gardens of about 7m. No 80 is two storeys but very high ceilings raise the eaves almost to the level of the 3 storied nos. 82,84 adjoining. No. 80 is painted brick, 3 bays, central pedimented doorway with Roman Doric columns and interlaced fanlight. It is shown as a dispensary on the maps of 1826 and 1851. The site was undeveloped in 1772, but it is described in the list entry as a late C18th house. Its large first floor windows have 24 paned sashes with fine glazing bars, the centre window with bracketed hood.





No 82-84 is now converted into one building; three storeys, unpainted red brown Flemish bond brick, stone cornice and string. Described as late C18th or early C19th. No 82 has an 8 panel door, fluted 3/4 Roman Doric columns and semi-circular fanlight. No 84 had its entrance on the east gable, now bricked up. It was shown as a Priory on the 1960s OS, linked to the adjacent St. Mary's Church. This group has been renovated to high standard and forms part of the Priory Court offices.



St. Mary's has been mentioned in section 4.1. With its contrasting pink and buff stone and rich Gothic Revival detailing, St. Mary's Church makes a very significant contribution to the overall character and appearance of the conservation area. The transept rose windows, the massive west circular traceried window and the rows of 'sexfoil' windows to the clerestory are especially notable. Its richly detailed interior with geometric tiled floor is every much as good as the exterior. The slender tower defines the eastern approach to the town centre and is one of the town centre's major landmarks, visible from the approach to the town at Bridgefoot, and from along Mersey Street. The views into the conservation area and the church tower should be retained and protected. It is notable that the cramped site resulted in the street entrance being via a narrow passage at the eastern end. Two east doors provide access to the interior; a large nave door and a minor door to the south aisle, the altar being situated at the west end.





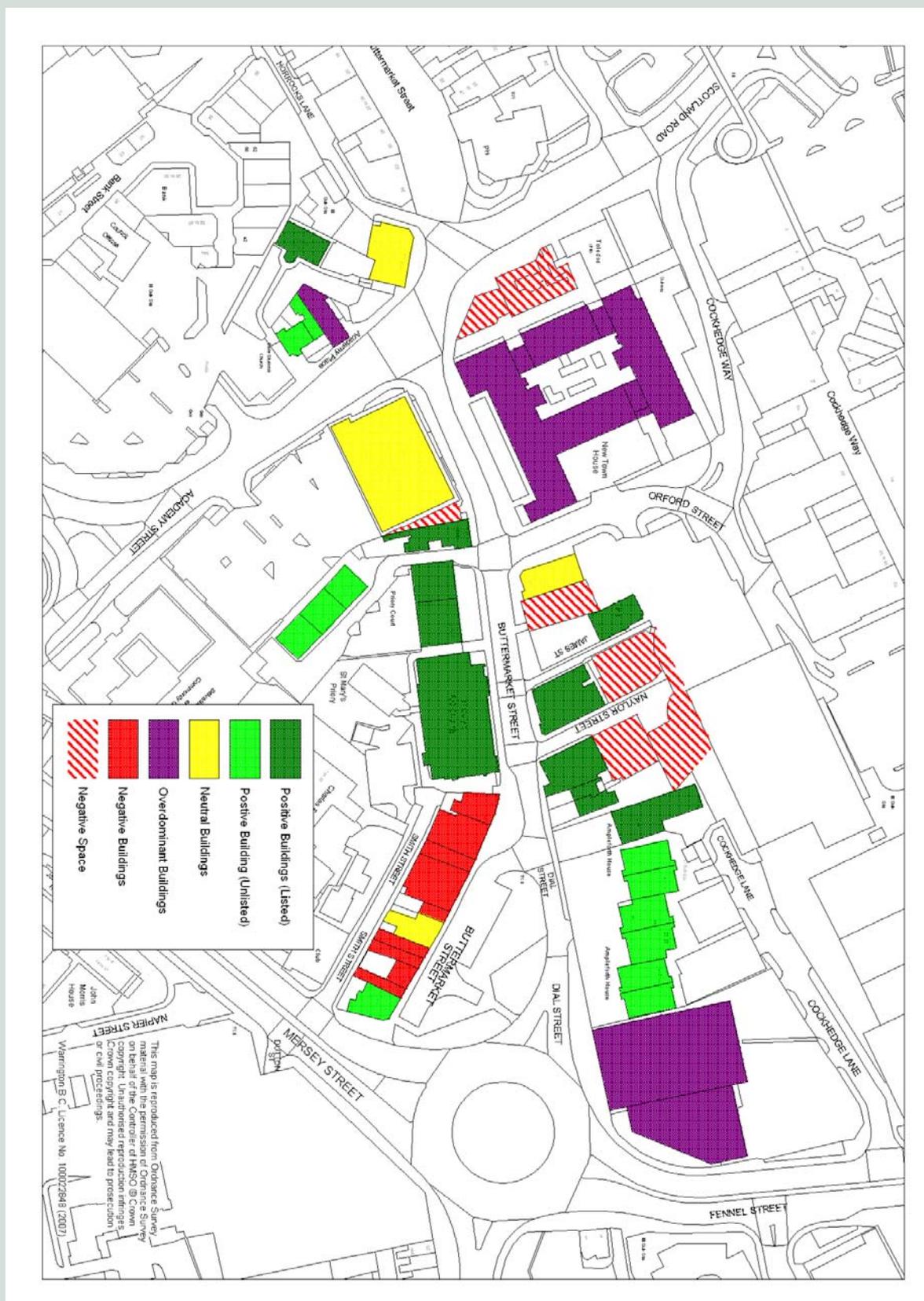
The buildings present in Buttermarket Street today, represent piecemeal development spanning a period from the late 18thC to the modern era. Some 7 of the 11 listed buildings are former town houses of the late C18th to mid C19th. These properties are of a comparable quality and display typical Georgian design features including well proportioned elevations and traditional sash windows. They provide a unifying theme to the conservation area, but by its sheer size, St. Mary's is inevitably its dominant architectural feature. St. Mary's Church and Porters Ale House exhibit Victorian Gothic elements in their design, in contrast to the plainer Georgian details. The above descriptions reveal that the conservation area derives its character from the mixture of Georgian domestic buildings interspersed with others of contrasting styles and set in varied positions relative to the street.

The contribution of the various buildings to the special character of the conservation area is represented in Fig. 10





Figure 10 : The Contribution Of Buildings to the Conservation Area





## 6.2 Townscape

Townscape is the term used to describe the relationship between buildings and spaces, incidental details of the street scene and factors such as views, sense of enclosure, openness. Aspect of the townscape have already been described in the preceding sections of this report. Townscape can include features which are detrimental to the special character of the area but which may represent opportunities for improvement.

Positive townscape features include:

- \* The funnel like spatial arrangement of the eastern approach and the sequential views along the street assisted by the change in alignment at Orford Street and variations in building line.



- \* The sense of enclosure in the central part due to the close spacing of opposite buildings;
- \* The series of projecting elevations revealed by variations in building line;

- \* The long vistas towards St. Elphin's Church spire;





- \* The richness of masonry detail of St. Mary's and the dominance of its tower.
- \* The scale, proportion and detailing of the historic buildings as described above in combination with their garden settings.



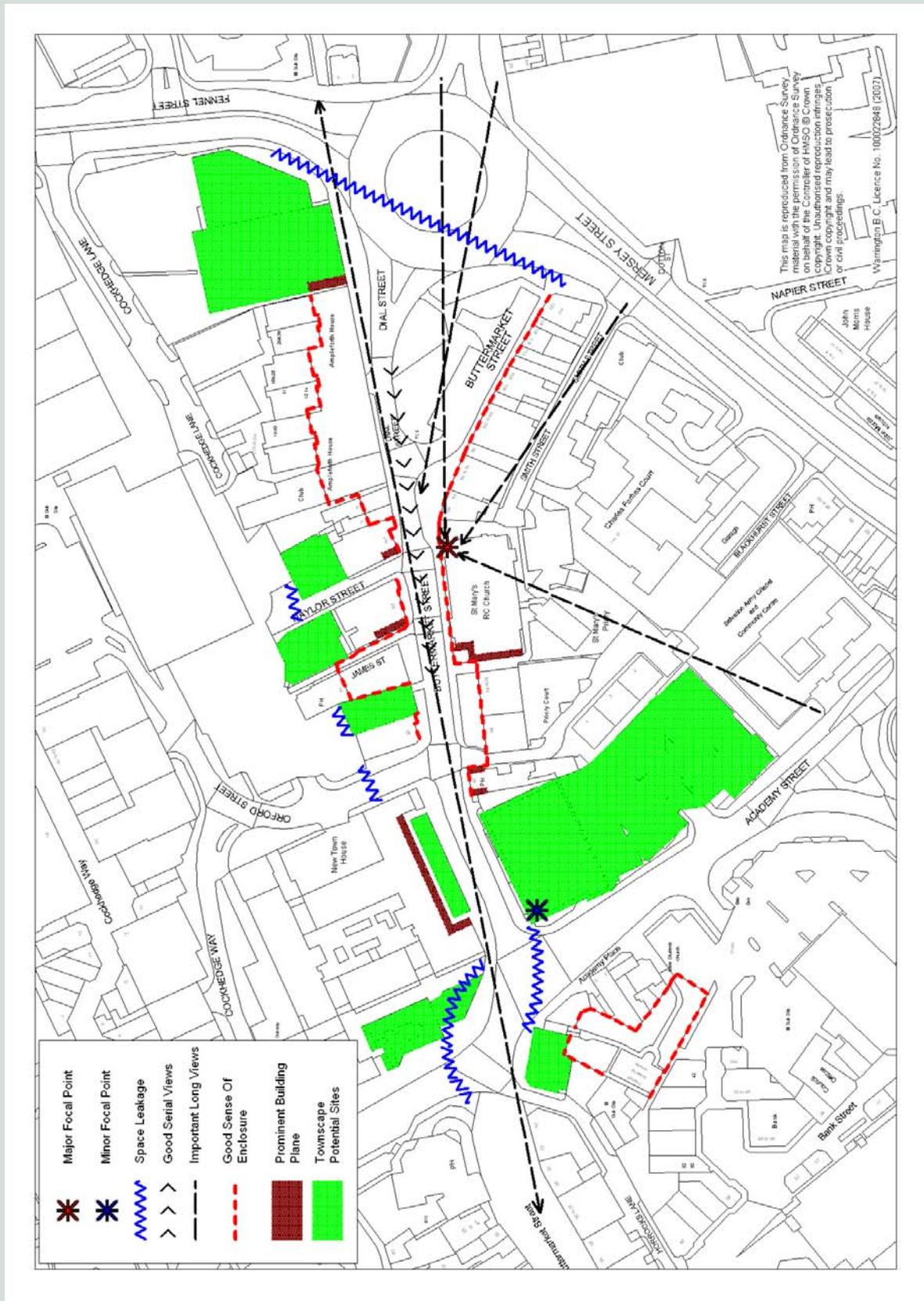
- \* 1,3 and 5 Academy Place, including the Bible Students Church are of an age similar to the Friends Meeting House and form a pleasing group with the Meeting House contributing to its enclosure.
- \* Trees and gardens and the newly landscaped open space at its eastern provide a pleasing foil to the built form. The small gardens are rare survivors of 18thC Warrington and should be retained as green spaces.



Aspects of Townscape are shown diagrammatically in Fig.11



**Figure 11 : Townscape Character and Potential Improvement Sites**





### 6.3 Prevalent and traditional building materials and the public realm

The area contains a mix of traditional materials, notably locally produced red brick with some use of stone for details and stucco or its equivalent, such as used for the “polite” design of the former bank. The use of natural slate on the roofs contributes towards the character and appearance of the conservation area, by providing a cohesive element. Modern materials also appear, including aggregate cladding used for New and the former dispensary/residence of 80 Buttermarket Street, which is white painted brickwork. No.95 is also rendered.

The buff regular coursed rubble used for St. Mary’s Church is not locally sourced but the pink sandstone is typical of the local sandstone outcrops which occur in Merseyside and north Cheshire. As in other conservation areas, there has been a loss of ironwork due largely to the war effort. Surviving traditional ironwork is therefore all the more important in enriching the street scene and should be preserved. Equally, modern variants can contribute to detail interest. Examples in Buttermarket Street are the railings in James Street and the ornamental gateway to Vigo House with commemorative plaque and the gates to the Friends Meeting House. A modern iron-work arch has been installed as a form of gateway in front of no 80 with good effect. Where old cast iron street nameplates survive as in Naylor Street, they should be retained in situ.





### Public Realm

The quality of the public realm -including its pavements- is patchy!

Noteworthy aspects include the retention of sett paving at James Street and stone flags in front of St. Mary's and nos. 80-84.

This small area of pavement has recently been resurfaced and the appropriate choice of large Yorkstone slabs was used during the resurfacing works, with the kerb stones retained. This choice of material enhances the setting of the listed buildings and is to be welcomed. The kerbstones outside St Mary's, 80, 82 and 84 Buttermarket Street are granite and this feature indicates the importance of this historic street.

Elsewhere, footways are a mixture of concrete flags and tarmac. In places, the flags are broken and displaced and the tarmac patched.

Street furniture however makes little concession to the conservation area. Traffic signs proliferate. Lighting columns are standard 'hockey stick' types. Most poles are galvanised or grey. The galvanised guard railings around the junction with Academy Way, Scotland Road, further detract. However the newly landscaped area at Dial Street provides a pleasing foreground to the historic buildings and will gain in presence as the tree canopies develop.





#### 6.4 Negative Factors ,Intrusion, Damage

As noted the conservation area itself has suffered some demolition and loss in the period following designation. Moreover the surrounding area has changed dramatically from an industrial area with large industrial buildings, cheek by jowl with rows of terraced houses. Within the vicinity of the conservation area, there is no remaining evidence of the former industrial nature of the town, although the Cockhedge shopping centre perpetuates the name of the Cockhedge cotton mills- which itself was based upon the ancient lane of that name.

With respect to the street scene today, it is the loss of details rather than buildings that has caused the most damage. Elegant lamps and most of the railings of the Victorian era have long gone. (The remains of railings on the Buttermarket Street boundary of the Church are still visible). Negative aspects of the public realm have been mentioned in 6.3 above.

Other Negative factors include:

- \* New Town House with its grey concrete cladding which emphasises its ungainly form and bulk. From a distance the array of antennae on its roof is visually intrusive as are the wooden bollards with fluorescent strips at the back of footway.
- \* The retail warehouse at Fennel Street/ Dial Street now seems incongruous in relation to the modern town house development, partly by reason of its cladding and signage.



\* Kwik Save tries to reflect some local themes but its single storey height is inappropriate to the prominent corner site and in plan form it fails to respond to the scale and proportions of the neighbouring historic structures. It presents a blank frontage to Buttermarket Street.





\* The shop unit at Academy displays excessive signage in relation to its small size.

\* Generally poor presentation of the row of shops no. 86 -118. William Hill has a restrained shopfront but the others suffer from an excess of signage, some of which is extremely tawdry. The taxi office is virtually covered in banner advertising. Many including the take-aways, which are closed during day time, have roller shutters. At the rear is an ugly conglomeration of extensions, additions, pipes and wires.  
*(Judging by the survival of some original elevational detail, the basic buildings are however almost certainly those facing Irlam Street indicated on the 1851 OS).*



\* Space leakage- i.e. loss of enclosure at the eastern extremity caused by the wide traffic intersection and low profile buildings beyond; also in views northward along Orford Street James Street and Naylor Street.



\* The car park adjacent no.93 is open to the street and exposes the rendered gable wall of the modern building with flue pipe and air conditioning units. The rendered wall suggests an original intention to extend.





- \* Old Town House has an excess of signage including signs painted on its boundary wall. Cars are often parked on the pavement in this location where it widens out.
- \* excessive advertising on the former curtain shop (50-54).

## 6.5 General Condition

The condition and state of repair of most of the buildings is generally good. Exceptions are No. 101 which is vacant and the gardens of no.2 and 4 Dial Street. Unauthorised alterations of listed buildings, for example replacement windows, will over time erode the character of the listed building and the conservation area as a whole. To date this is not a widespread problem in Buttermarket Street Conservation Area but the situation requires close monitoring. Replacement windows have been installed at no 2 Dial Street.

Maintenance issues include:

- \* a shabby east gable sign on Porters;
- \* broken gate and neglected landscaping at Kwik Save;
- \* Unkempt appearance of 2, 4 Dial Street .
- \* Mediocre quality of the paving and landscaped areas around New Town House, including a fenced off garden ( because of misuse).
- \* Landscape maintenance including tree management. The larger trees including the massive poplar at no 95 may have reached maturity but their loss would be regrettable. Suitable replacements must be made in the event of tree removal becoming essential.
- \* Poor public realm maintenance including damaged paving.

## 6.6 The contribution made to the character of the area by green spaces and its biodiversity value.

The trees that are with the Conservation Area are very fine specimens and provide significant contributions towards the character of the area. All the trees within the conservation area are protected by virtue of the conservation area designation. The London Plane trees in the garden of what was St Marys Social Club, now Ampleforth House are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, as are the Black Poplar and Maple trees within the front garden of The Old Town House public house.

The graveyard and garden of The Friends Meeting House, is a private area away from the busy thoroughfares of Buttermarket Street and Academy Street. The quiet private nature of this former graveyard, now garden, emphasises the religious nature of the site, and is particularly fitting for this establishment whose simplicity is in marked contrast to the confident architecture of St Mary's Church. Though the grounds of the Friends Meeting House are not readily visible from outside the site, their contribution towards the character and appearance of the conservation area is their tree canopies which are visible above adjacent buildings. However, this is not to devalue the contribution that the grounds make towards the setting of the listed building, and the quiet town centre oasis that the grounds provide.

The recently enhanced area of open space at the eastern entrance to the conservation area, which is outside the row of shops of 86-120 Buttermarket Street, makes a positive contribution to the area and forms an attractive gateway to the town centre. Any erosion of the quality of this space should be avoided.



## 7 ISSUES FOR CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### 7.1 Problems, pressure and capacity for change

- \* The buildings which form the core of the conservation area are listed and as such the capacity for inappropriate change is less than the capacity for change to unlisted buildings.
- \* However, the terrace of shops at 86 - 118 Buttermarket Street, though outside the conservation area, has suffered from a variety of detrimental alterations. Most buildings in the row have lost original details at first floor level. A particular modern trend that is a cause of concern is the alteration of original window openings, where new window frames extend beyond the obvious structural window heads, such as; 90-94 Buttermarket Street, 98-100 Buttermarket Street, 110 Buttermarket Street.
- \* The numerous traffic lights and galvanised barriers at the junction of Buttermarket Street, Academy Street and Scotland Road, are visually intrusive, though essential for highway safety. However the impact of the barriers could have been reduced by painting them black or by use of a more traditional design. The railings adjacent to 'Yates' are painted black and are visually less intrusive than the galvanised barriers.



- \* Tree planting in the space at the south-west corner of New Town House would help to diminish the visual impact of the highway furniture.

There is scope for improvement in that a large majority of the above are reversible, either as a result of enforcement action or, by negotiation. Appropriate signage would benefit the commercial properties, and a reduction in the street clutter would provide positive benefits to the street scene.

- \* Highway signs and other structures are a necessity in such a busy thoroughfare and it is not practical for the signs to be removed or the design changed. However there may be scope when signs are changed to have black posts and railings of a more traditional design rather than the standard types and galvanised finishes. In addition where it is possible to rationalise the use of poles, this should be considered.



## 7.2 Development opportunities.

The example of Dial Street indicates that opportunities can arise to repair defective townscape but that this may be a long term process. Sites which could provide such opportunities include:

- \* Nos 50-54 adjacent to the Friends Meeting House- a bland modern building on a prominent corner position which has the potential as a town centre gateway site



- \* Site adjacent to no.93 ( Creamer Offices) - an infill site which would restore lost built form and contribute to the enclosure at this point
- \* Car parks at the rear of no. 97 and no 101.
- \* The retail warehouses at the corner of Dial Street/Fennel Street.

- \* Possibly in the longer term the Kwik Save site and New Town House. The presentation of the latter could be improved by upgraded landscape treatment on Buttermarket Street and by reworking the west side paved area.



- \* Improvement of the landscaping around New Town House.

The townscape potential sites are indicated in Fig.11



### 7.3 Conservation Area Boundaries

The boundary of the Church Street Conservation Area, is based on the land boundaries that existed just prior to its designation. As land has developed over time, this has led to peculiarities that in places bears no relationship to the current situation, for example where the boundary runs through a site, and it is not clear from the ground where the boundary actually lies.

This appraisal provides an opportunity to review the boundary. Sites that no longer have the criteria worthy of designation should be excluded from the conservation area, and/or adjoining areas that were previously overlooked may be included. Extension to include the setting of important buildings may also be appropriate.

#### Suggested Boundary Changes: (Figure 12)

Areas that could be added to the conservation area are:

- \* The entire car park of Kwik Save. At present part of the car park is in the conservation area, with the remaining element of the car park being outside the conservation area. This boundary represents an historical layout and does not reflect the current land ownership or use. It is considered that all the car park should be included within the conservation area not because of its intrinsic merit but because it accords with the building curtilage and may in future represent an opportunity to redevelop in a more sympathetic manner.
- \* The Priory Court complex at the rear of 80 Buttermarket Street. This building on the site of the former school, has been reconstructed in a traditional manner, and forms an important grouping with the listed buildings of 80, 82 and 84 Buttermarket Street with St Mary's Church behind.
- \* The site of the former St Mary's Catholic Club. The original boundary excluded the building, but included the grounds within the conservation area. As this site has now been developed, it makes sense for the whole of the site to be included in the conservation area to aid clarity rather than part of the newly constructed building. It would also safeguard this important site at the entrance to the conservation area.





\* The landscaped area and the terrace of shops behind at 86-120 ( including the Borough Arms), Buttermarket Street. This landscaped area is an important foreground to the conservation area, and has recently been upgraded and provides an acknowledged positive contribution towards the area. The terrace of shops to the south of the landscaped area, forms part of the 'funnel' approach described in the 1972 report and contributes towards the setting of St Mary's Church. Its inclusion will however present serious challenges in regard to shopfronts and signage.



\* New Town House and the landscaped area at the Scotland Road entrance to New Town House. The boundary doglegs through part of the building, and excludes a portion of the landscaped area. It is considered that the boundary should respect current boundaries and include all the landscaped area and the dog leg through the building should be straightened.

The areas to be excluded are;

\* The portion of car park at the rear of 93 Buttermarket Street, which is within the conservation area. The boundary of the conservation area should follow the rear boundary of 93 Buttermarket Street.

\* The portion of car park at the rear of 2 and 4 Dial Street that serves New Town House, which is within the conservation area. The boundary of the conservation area should follow the rear boundary of 2 and 4 Dial Street and should include the car park serving 2 and 4 Dial Street, which are listed buildings.

\* The sub station site adjacent to Friends Meeting House.

#### **7.4 Conservation Area Management Plan - The next steps**

Accepting the major changes which occurred in the period concurrent with or shortly after designation it is reassuring that there have been no major demolitions within the Buttermarket Street conservation area, since its designation as a conservation area. The management plan should however address the negative factors outlined above and seek in the long term to redress some of the damaged townscape.



Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that special attention shall be paid in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This special attention would relate to the determination of planning applications, where additional requirements may be required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, it would also relate to the adoption of suitable policies in development plans.

This requirement to preserve or enhance would also relate to the enforcement controls that would apply to the conservation area, both in ensuring that authorised development is carried out in accordance with the approved plan, and planning conditions are adhered to, and to the investigation of unauthorised works. It is considered that use of enforcement powers would be a beneficial tool in the preservation or enhancement of the Buttermarket Street Conservation Area as all too easily the introduction of unauthorised developments can lead to a decline in the character and appearance of our conservation areas. A more pro-active approach to enforcement, whereby the whole conservation area is surveyed, and unauthorised works identified would be beneficial to the Conservation Area. The use of enforcement powers would be considered an appropriate tool in our duty to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

Planning Applications for development within or otherwise affecting the Conservation Area to be submitted with sufficient detail to determine the application and the particular impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area. Normally material samples will need to be submitted with the application. Proposed materials should have regard to the palette of traditional materials present within the Conservation Area.

Information and records to be kept of the materials used in new developments for use by other developers.

The designation of the area should be acknowledged corporately when highway improvements are required. Conservation Area designation should not prevent items required for public safety, such as traffic lights, tactile paving, barriers and signs. However the designation of the area as a conservation area should ensure that any highway repairs or improvements, are carried out in a manner appropriate for such a designation, and care is taken to avoid inappropriate materials and unnecessary clutter of our historic streets.

Key elements of the Management Plan will be :

\* A consistent approach to Development Control and Enforcement framed within conservation objectives for the area and the appropriate policies.

\* A fully corporate approach in regard to public realm and infrastructure works as outlined in this report. The requirement for highway and pedestrian safety is acknowledged, but a more holistic approach to the protection of heritage areas is required in regard to the selection of street furniture and placing of road signs. Paving maintenance and repair using appropriate materials and details is desirable.



\* Establishing a dialogue with the owners/occupiers of properties to seek common purpose in promoting conservation objectives and in pursuit of the measures outlined in this report. These might include the reinstatement of lost or inappropriate features such as replacement windows and items such as traditional railings and paved surfaces as well as appropriate standards of building and grounds maintenance.

In particular the Management plan should address the following:

- \* Enforcement proceedings to be taken against any signs that were erected without the necessary permissions or where the permission has expired and the sign is no longer considered to be acceptable.
  - \* Enforcement proceedings to be taken against any unauthorised shop fronts or roller shutters.
  - \* Enforcement proceedings in regard to any harmful works to the exterior of a building that required permission.
  - \* More rigorous approach to the compliance with planning conditions.
  - \* The imposition of an Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights for certain alterations to the buildings to be investigated.
  - \* Future repairs to the highway to be carried out in an appropriate manner and materials.
- \* Investigation into whether restrictions to be put in place to prevent vehicles parking on pavements.
- \* Periodic photographic studies of the conservation areas to monitor the character and appearance of the conservation area and to ensure that any unauthorised works are identified and acted upon within an appropriate timescale.





## Appendix 1 Policy Context

### National Context

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) provides the national policy framework for Planning and the Built Environment which incorporates Conservation Areas (CA). The planning system is currently under reform, PPG's will be revised as Planning Policy Statement (PPS), although PPG15 is yet to be revised and therefore remains in situ.

PPG15 prescribes that Conservation policy should address the quality of townscape in its broadest sense as well as the protection of individual buildings.

PPG15 provides the policy framework for developing policy at the regional and local level - both of which are discussed in more detail below.

LPA's have a duty under Section 69 to review Conservation Areas from time to time. Furthermore the designation of a Conservation Area gives the Local Planning Authority (LPA) the ability to control development within the Conservation Area and ensures the setting of the Conservation Area is not compromised to its detriment.

### Regional Policy

Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13) became the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) under the new planning system. RPG13 is currently under review, however, the policies within RPG13 are still relevant, particularly; ER3 (Built Heritage) and ER4 (Contribution of Built Heritage to Regeneration) are relevant in formulating Local Policy.

### Local Policy

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006 is the adopted development plan for Warrington. However, under the new planning system this is now under review and will be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF).

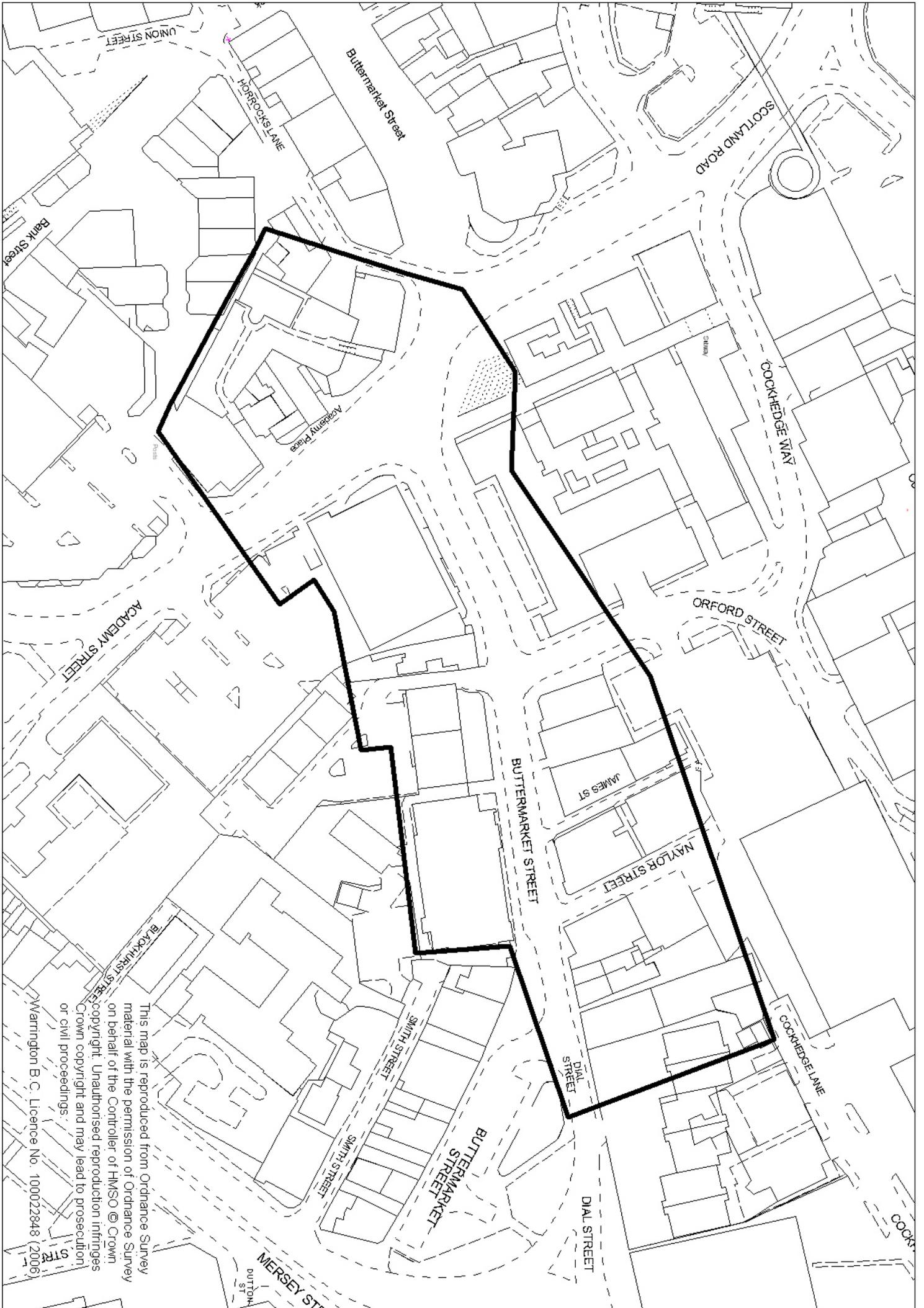
Relevant UDP policies include;

BH6 - Designation and Review of Conservation Areas

BH7/8 - Development in Conservation Areas.



**NOTES:**



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UNION STREET

HORROCKS LANE

Buttermarket Street

SCOTLAND ROAD

Bank Street

Academy Place

COCKLEDGE WAY

ACADEMY STREET

ORFORD STREET

BUTTERMARKET STREET

JAMES ST

NAYLOR STREET

ALCOCKHURST STREET

SMITH STREET

SMITH STREET

BUTTERMARKET STREET

DIAL STREET

COCKLEDGE LANE

DIAL STREET

MERSEY STREET

DUTTON ST

COCK

Warrington Borough Council

