

Silverwell St & Wood St Conservation Area



Draft Conservation Area Appraisal

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Cover illustration: Wood Street

SILVERWELL STREET AND WOOD STREET CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 Introduction

The Silverwell Street and Wood Street Conservation Area is situated in the eastern part of Bolton town centre. The conservation area includes two parallel Georgian streets, running east off Bradshawgate, one of the principal streets in Medieval Bolton. The properties lining Silverwell Street and Wood Street include some of the most complete late 18th century buildings in Bolton, and Bradshawgate is fronted with good examples of late 19th century and early 20th century buildings.

The purpose of the conservation area appraisal is to reassess the designated Silverwell Street and Wood Street Conservation Area, and to evaluate and record its special interest. As part of this review, two small extensions to the conservation area are proposed. This review of the Conservation Area was undertaken in 2007 by The Architectural History Practice, on behalf of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council. The appraisal will have an important function in development control and managing the area, and will supplement the guidance within *Building Bolton*, published by the Council in 2006.

2.0 Policy Background

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”, as set out in Section 69 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Local authorities have a duty to designate such areas and to review them, and to use their planning powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within a framework of managing change with a positive approach. Designation automatically entails control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens controls over minor development and gives special protection to trees within the area. Policies in the Unitary Development Plan guide the Council’s decision-making within Conservation Areas. In addition, the Bolton Town Centre Framework was launched in 2005, covering five different strategy or policy documents, including *Building Bolton* (2006) and the *Public Realm Implementation Framework* (2007).

The Silverwell Street and Wood Street Conservation Area was originally designated in 1970. The conservation area was last reviewed by Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council in the late 1990s.

3.0 Summary of special interest

The Conservation Area covers a compact grid of densely developed urban streets, including the east side of Bradshawgate and two streets off its east side – Silverwell Street and Wood Street. Bradshawgate defines the west edge of the conservation area. The east edge is bounded by the north-south section of Silverwell Street. The south boundary runs behind properties fronting the south side of Silverwell Street and the north boundary runs behind properties on the north side of Wood Street.

The street pattern is a combination of two key phases of development; the medieval period and the late 18th and early 19th century. Early Bolton developed around a cross

roads which became the medieval market place; the south arm of this junction was Bradshawgate, which was the principal road southwards out of the town. In the third quarter of the 18th century, Wood Street was laid out at right angles to Bradshawgate, on its east side. This street is clearly shown on the 1793 map of Bolton. Silverwell Street was laid out slightly later and first appears on the 1824 Baines' map (Appendix 2).

As one of the principal commercial streets in the town, Bradshawgate has been redeveloped several times since the medieval period and most of the present buildings lining its east side were built in the late 19th century or early 20th century. Among them are some good examples of late Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings. In contrast, most of the buildings on Silverwell Street and Wood Street were built when these streets were first laid-out, giving the streets their strong Georgian character. The elegant brick buildings lining these streets were built as town houses for Bolton's merchant and professional classes, although all are now in use as offices.

The regular street pattern allows for framed, linear views along streets. Views north and south along the curving line of Bradshawgate are significant. Views east along both Silverwell Street and Wood Street provide attractive street scenes, tightly framed by buildings built up to the rear of the footway. To the east, there are glimpses across gardens at the end of Wood Street, and along Silverwell Street and beyond into Institute Street. Due to the alignment of Nelson Square to the west, and Silverwell Street, there are some longer views between these two areas, but generally the tight street pattern and fairly level topography limits more distant views.

The scale and grain of the conservation area is fairly uniform, with buildings generally no more than 3 storeys high, and most built up to the rear of the footway. The fine grain of the townscape is the result of narrow property boundaries and the domestic scale of many of the buildings. On Silverwell Street and Wood Street, this provides a unity to the street scene. The high survival rate of historic windows and doors contributes to the completeness of these streets, giving a vertical emphasis to street frontages. On Bradshawgate the architecture, function and scale of buildings is more varied, and there has also been some intrusive post-war development.

Most buildings are constructed of red brick, with sand stone used to face higher status buildings. Red terracotta was used on buildings dating from the 1890s on Bradshawgate. A few buildings have been rendered or painted, and on Silverwell Street the use of different coloured finishes contributes to the character of the street. Historic street surfaces are important to the character of the conservation area, particularly on Wood Street where sandstone setts and stone paving have been retained. Elsewhere, setts have been retained for crossovers, but streets are surfaced in tarmac with concrete paving. There are some examples of Victorian cast-iron lamp columns on Wood Street and Silverwell Streets, refurnished with new lanterns. More modern, standard lighting is used on Bradshawgate and the street suffers from heavy traffic in contrast to the quieter Silverwell Street and Wood Street.

4.0 Assessing Special Interest:

4.1 Location and setting

Silverwell Street and Wood Street conservation area includes the east part of Bolton town centre, on a plateau of land defined by the River Croal to the north and east. Bolton developed at the junction of several small rivers, which are tributaries of the River Irwell. The underlying geology is Carboniferous Sandstone with coal measures, overlain by sands and gravels. The conservation area is roughly 300 metres above sea level, on land that generally slopes to the south towards the railway line and beyond to the Manchester basin.

The conservation area is bounded by Bradshawgate to the west and the east edge is bounded by the north-south section of Silverwell Street. The south boundary runs behind properties fronting the south side of Silverwell Street and the north boundary runs behind properties on the north side of Wood Street. To the north is the Churchgate Conservation area with St Peter's Church at its north-east corner and to the west is the Mawdsley Street conservation area, with Nelson Square. South of Silverwell Street is a dense area of streets partly redeveloped in the late 20th century and more recently, for housing, defined by the railway cutting to the south.

Wood Street and Silverwell Street are within a Business Use area, defined in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Bradshawgate is defined as an Evening Economy Zone, with many popular bars and restaurants.

4.2 Historic Development and Archaeology

Early Bolton

Archaeological work in Bolton has shown that there were prehistoric settlements in the area; a Bronze Age burial was found just a quarter of a mile to the south east of the Church. The church occupies a low promontory site bounded by the River Croal to the north and east which would have presented an attractive, defensible place to establish a community, on well-drained sands and gravels. The only evidence for Roman activity in Bolton comes from a fragment of Roman pottery found during recent archaeological excavations at the site of the former Boar's Head Inn on the north side of Churchgate.

Although Bolton is not mentioned in Domesday, a settlement almost certainly existed by then, indicated by the Anglo-Saxon cross found during the construction of St Peter's Church in 1868. The place-name is Old English and means a dwelling or hamlet in an enclosure, first recorded in the 12th century. The town was also known as Bolton-le-Moors, referring to its location on the edge of open moorland.

Bradshawgate originally led, via Bank Street, to Tonge Moor, Bradshaw and Harwood. Bradshawgate was one of the four streets that met at the market cross in the centre of Bolton, and was originally a narrow street lined with houses and commercial premises. It was widened at the beginning of the 20th Century when the west side was set back and lined with new buildings. As there has been no archaeological work undertaken on sites within the conservation area, opportunities for future investigation should be taken whenever sites are redeveloped in the future.

Following the granting of borough status to Bolton in 1253, the town's burgesses had the right to build on burgage plots fronting the main streets, particularly Deansgate and Churchgate. In 1288, there were 69 of these burgage plots, each long plot had a narrow street frontage. During most of the medieval period Bolton was principally a market town, with its residents dependent on the surrounding farmland. Textiles became increasingly important to the prosperity of the town, initially woollens and later cotton and linen; by the 1530s Leland noted that the market "standeth most by cottons and coarse yarn", with fuel coming from coal pits as well from turf. In the 17th century the town was known for fustian manufacture, a mix of cotton and linen, and this supported a growing merchant class. Counter-panes and bed-quilts were specialities; Bolton was renowned for the fine quality of its cotton production.

During the Civil War in the 1640s, Bolton supported Parliament against Charles I and the Earl of Derby; the town was staunchly protestant and had a growing merchant class. In 1643, following his defeat at Preston, the Earl of Derby unsuccessfully attacked the town but a third attack in 1644 succeeded and Bolton was sacked and burned. The Earl of Derby was subsequently tried in Bolton, and beheaded at the Market Cross on Churchgate in 1651.

The town grew slowly until the late 18th century, when the rapidly expanding cotton industry brought accelerated growth and prosperity to the town. The 1793 map of Bolton shows that the layout of the medieval town, with expansion north and south of Churchgate and with new streets recently laid-out to the south, including Wood Street, clearly shown on this map (Appendix 2). At the beginning of the 18th Century the area east of Bradshawgate was covered with meadows. The development of housing in Wood Street began in the 1780's and Silverwell Street was laid out in the early 1800's; the earliest residents made their living in agriculture, trade and manufacturing. Wood Street is reputed to be named after John Woods who had an ironmongers shop on Deansgate and lived at Number 25 Wood Street. Silverwell Street is named after a well which once existed at the lower end of the street. The south side of Silverwell Street appears to have been built on part of the garden of Silverwell House, a large detached house built in the late 18th century for John Pilkington, a cotton manufacturer.



Fig.1: Silverwell House in the 19th century (Bolton Archives)

Silverwell Street and Wood Street in the 19th century

The rapid expansion of the textile industry dominated Bolton for over 150 years from the late 18th century. Although the importance of Bolton's market for the trading of textiles had declined with the shift of the cotton trade to Manchester in the late 18th century, the town's prosperity grew due to large-scale manufacturing, particularly the spinning of fine yarn. The town is associated with some key figures in the development of the industry, notably Samuel Crompton who invented the spinning mule. The town was also important for machinery manufacture and as a centre of the bleaching and finishing branch of the cotton industry. Transport improved with the opening of the Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal, begun in the 1790's and completed fifteen years later with a terminal at Church Wharf, east of St. Peter's Church. This encouraged the expansion of shops, small businesses and industrial premises into this area. The 1824 map of Bolton illustrates the town's growth since the end of the 18th century (Fig.27).

Bradshawgate was an important commercial street in the 19th century, lined with inns, shops and other businesses. The general post office was built on Bradshawgate, on the north corner of Silverwell Street, in 1868. At the beginning of the century the street was widened by setting back the western frontage and the street was laid with tram tracks.

Two hundred years ago Silverwell Street and Wood Street were prosperous streets lined with town houses occupied by some of Bolton's wealthiest merchants and professional people such as surgeons, solicitors and teachers. William Hesketh Lever (later Lord Leverhulme), the founder of the international soap manufacturing empire was born at No.16 Wood Street in 1851. He was a generous benefactor to Bolton and gave Hall i'th'Wood to the town, for the public to visit. At one time the Ainsworth family, major textile manufacturers, lived at No.20 Wood Street. James Wolfenden, who was twice mayor of Bolton, lived in Silverwell Street from 1821-1851. These two and three-storey houses are still there, but no longer in domestic use. The 1847 OS map (Fig.28) shows the main entrance to Silverwell House at the east end of Silverwell Street and private gardens, probably for the occupants of Silverwell Street houses, extending from here to the south boundary of the Churchyard. In the second half of the 19th century, the north-south section of Silverwell Street was laid-out on the line of a back lane, Institute Street was laid-out further east and the gardens were swept away. Silverwell House was incorporated into a Drill Hall built on the gardens in 1887.

During the second half of the 19th Century, as a result of the wealth created by the cotton industry and the consequent expansion of the commercial function of the town centre, the character of the Wood Street and Silverwell Street area changed from a residential to a business district. The first sign of this was in 1849 when the Bolton Savings Bank was built on the site of a timber yard at the western end of Wood Street (now Pizza Express). The Bradshaw Gass and Hope office occupied a house on Silverwell Street from the 1870s.

Silverwell Street and Wood Street in the 20th century

Bradshawgate was a thriving town centre street throughout the first half of the 20th Century. Retail is now a minor activity on this part of Bradshawgate, with banking and property sales being more important, as well as increasing bar and leisure activity. The

impact of commercial advertising is intrusive on some premises, and many shop fronts have been renewed in the late 20th century, with large areas of plate glass.

Buildings on Wood Street and Silverwell Street continued to be occupied by professional businesses throughout the 20th century, and one of the area's few 20th century buildings was built at No.17 Silverwell Street in 1903, as the estate office for the Earl of Bradford. Structural changes in the banking and financial sector led to the closure of the former bank on Wood Street; the current restaurant use of the building reflects a recent increase in restaurant, bar and leisure activity in the town centre. The ground floor of the former post office on the corner of Bradshawgate is now a bar.



Fig.2: The former post office on the corner of Bradshawgate and Silverwell Street is now a bar

4.3 Open Spaces

There are no public open spaces in the conservation area. Private gardens are important, however, and these former domestic gardens are now maintained by the businesses occupying the former town houses. On Wood Street, a large garden at Number 25 provides an important green space at the end of the street and is important for its eastern boundary wall, made of stone flags. Other gardens fronting the north-south section of Silverwell Street have railings to the frontage.



Fig.3: The garden to Number 25 Wood Street, viewed from Silverwell Street to the east

4.4 Views and vistas

The tight street pattern and fairly level topography limits distant views in and out of the conservation area, but the regular grid-pattern street layout allows for linear views along streets. Looking west along Silverwell Street, the Town Hall tower can be seen over the roof tops along Bradshawgate.



Fig.4: View of the Town Hall tower from Silverwell Street.

Views north and south along the curving line Bradshawgate are significant, although the street suffers from heavy traffic and poor quality hard landscaping. Views east along both Silverwell Street and Wood Street provide attractive street scenes, tightly framed by buildings built up to the rear of the footway. To the east, there are glimpses across the garden at the end of Wood Street, and along Silverwell Street and beyond into Institute Street, the views include the trees south of St Peter's Church. There is a good view of the church, a major landmark, from the eastern end of Silverwell Street. Due to the alignment of the north side of Nelson Square with Silverwell Street, there are some longer views between these two attractive spaces.



Fig.5: View west along Silverwell Street towards Nelson Square

4.5 Character and appearance

The conservation area has a fairly consistent historic character, due to the prevailing building heights of 2 or 3 storeys and the high proportion of historic buildings within the conservation area. Bradshawgate is a wide, fairly open street, which reflects its widening in the early 20th century as part of town centre improvements. This contrasts with the narrow, enclosed spatial character of Silverwell Street and Wood Street, where former domestic properties are built-up to the back edge of the footway. These streets have a finely grained townscape with narrow historic plot boundaries and historic buildings of two or three storeys. The unity of these streets is also due to the uniform eaves lines and the retention of historic features such as chimney stacks, recessed sash windows, fanlights and doors.

Building frontages have a generally horizontal emphasis due to the consistent eaves line and use of plain string courses at first floor, but this is punctuated by tall doors and windows to give individual elevations a vertical emphasis. The urban grain is slightly coarser on Bradshawgate, due to the early 20th century redevelopment of the street, and commercial buildings are taller and wider. The rear of plots tend to be occupied by small yards with hard surfacing, except at the east ends of Wood Street and Silverwell Street where there are a few rare gardens.



Fig.6: brick-built early 19th century former town houses on the north side of Silverwell Street, now offices

Red brick has been the preferred building material in Bolton since the 18th century, when houses were faced in hand-made bricks, laid in Flemish bond. By the end of the 19th century machine-made bricks in a bright red were used, often with terracotta architectural details. Stone was reserved for high status buildings or as detailing on brick buildings; in this conservation area, the former bank at 10 to 12 Wood Street is the best example of the use of sandstone ashlar. Paint has been used on brick buildings along Silverwell Street and although not historic, the different colours make an attractive contribution to the street scene. Render is not a traditional finish and has spoilt frontages on Wood Street.

Bradshawgate is used as a bus route and has a heavy flow of vehicular traffic. It is also well-used by pedestrians all day and into the evening, as it is lined with a variety of shops and leisure facilities, including bars. The east side of Bradshawgate has retained the character of a prosperous Victorian and Edwardian commercial district although the use of some buildings has changed; for example the former post office on the corner of Silverwell Street and Bradshawgate is now a bar. Vehicular traffic along Silverwell Street is fairly light, used partly to reach the offices on Institute Street. Wood Street is a cul de sac and only used for vehicular access to the offices on this street. In combination with the setted surface this results in the street's quiet atmosphere, which feels relatively safe for pedestrians.

There is almost no residential property within the conservation area, in contrast to over a 100 years ago.

There are no formal or public open spaces within the conservation area; the only significant green space is the private garden at No.25 Wood Street, a rare domestic garden in the town centre (Fig.3). The wall to this garden terminates views east along this street. Rear yards and alleys are an important part of the fine grain of the area, with glimpse into these spaces through archways in frontages.

4.6 Character areas

The conservation area can be divided into two contrasting character areas, Bradshawgate, and Silverwell and Wood Streets.

a) **Bradshawgate.**

The western part of the conservation area is defined by Bradshawgate, one of the town's principal medieval streets, widened and redeveloped at the end of the 19th century. The eastern side of this gently curving street is lined with retail and business premises of late 19th century and early 20th century dates, built up to the back of pavement and mostly three storeys high. Most of these buildings remain in commercial use and this main street is busy with road traffic and pedestrians. The footways are generally laid with concrete paving and street lighting is of a standard modern pattern.



Fig.7: the commercial character of Bradshawgate, looking north-west

b) **Wood Street and Silverwell Street.** The eastern part of the conservation area is made up of two of Bolton's most complete historic streets. These densely developed streets were laid out in the late 18th century and early 19th century to provide housing for the town's merchant and professional classes. The streets have been little altered since the buildings were constructed in a narrow period between the 1780s and mid 19th century. The unified Georgian character of the streets is also due to the consistent eaves heights, the simple, restrained style of architectural and, with one exception, the prevailing use of brick. The former town houses that line these streets retain many original architectural features such as doors and windows. The domestic scale of these streets preserves views of the main landmarks of St Peter's Church and the Town Hall, over the rooftops. The reinstated setts and stone paving on Wood Street completes the historic street scene.



Fig.8: The south side of Wood Street

4.7 The Qualities of Buildings

The Conservation Area contains two main building types and styles, with former domestic buildings concentrated on Wood Street and Silverwell Street in contrast to the commercial buildings on Bradshawgate. The late 18th and early 19th Century buildings built as town houses are two storeys high on Silverwell Street and three storeys on Wood Street. These are of a simple Georgian style, built of brick, although some frontages have been rendered or painted. The roofs are covered in Welsh or Westmorland slate on plain eaves, with timber or cast-iron gutters; some houses have retained original rainwater hoppers in lead. Chimneys are important features.

Many of the former town houses are distinguished by prominent front entrances, with classical stone or timber doorcases and fanlights. On Wood Street, short flights of stone steps lead to the front doors, projecting onto the footway. Some former town houses have round or elliptical-arched carriage entrances leading to the rear yards. The window openings are vertically proportioned and some properties have retained their original timber sash windows with glazing bars.

The commercial buildings on Bradshawgate were built from the late 19th century onwards and are three or more storeys high. The majority are built of brick with stone or terracotta dressings, and slate roofs. Numbers 27 to 33 (odd) and 57-59 Bradshawgate are notable for being faced with stone. The buildings have well-modelled elevations, with projecting pilasters, doorways and window bays. They tend to be more ornate than the earlier domestic properties, with lively architectural details such as carved stone and moulded terracotta details, parapets and gables. Although upper floors have been little altered, at ground floor level most buildings have inserted shop fronts and advertising.



Fig.9: A fine mid-19th century doorway on Silverwell Street

Listed Buildings

Nine buildings are listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest within the Conservation Area. The following buildings are all grade II:

13 Silverwell Street (Fig. 16)

The two-storey building was built in 1903, as the Estate Office of the Earl of Bradford, a prominent local land owner. The office is set behind a low terracotta wall, and the Jacobean-style frontage is faced in red brick with terracotta details, including an elaborate moulded panel over the doorway.

15 and 17 Silverwell Street (Fig.9)

Built as a pair of houses in the early 19th Century and now used as architects' offices. The two-storey building is constructed in red brick with a slate roof and has a central arched carriage entry leading to the rear yard.

19-25 (odd) Silverwell Street (Fig 6)

Originally built as a terrace of four houses in the early 19th Century, the buildings have been occupied by the offices of Bradshaw Gass and Hope, architects since the 1870s. The buildings are two storeys high, constructed of brick with a slate roof. The terrace is divided by a wide semi-elliptical arched carriage entry. Number 19 has a doorway with sidelights set in a wide segmental archway with geometric tracery to the fanlight. The front elevation retains original sash windows with either twelve or sixteen panes.

27 Silverwell Street (Scott House)

Now in use as offices, but built as a town-house in the early 19th Century, facing east. It is two storeys high, constructed of brick with a slate roof and retains sixteen-pane sash windows. The house has a small garden facing east onto Silverwell Street, with modern railings. Plaques on the building's front elevations commemorate Sir James Scott founder of the Guild of Help, in whose memory the building was given to the Guild in 1926.

10 and 12 Wood Street

This imposing building was built as the Bolton Savings Bank in 1849, designed by J.E.Gregan in an Italianate palazzo-style. The front is faced in sandstone ashlar, with a rusticated ground floor and other classical details. The building is set behind a low wall with later railings, with steps to the two doorways. The building retains sash windows and is now occupied by Pizza Express.



Fig.10: The Bolton Savings Bank on Wood Street, recently refurbished as a restaurant

14 and 16 Wood Street

This pair of three-storey houses was built around 1790 as a formal ensemble and is now in office use. Access to the rear yard is via a central arched carriage entry. The right hand door has retained its original pedimented doorcase and traceried fanlight. Original sash windows survive on the second floor of No.16 and twelve and sixteen pane sashes have been reinstated on the first floor. All the windows have flat arched brick heads and there is a canted bay on the ground floor of No.16. William Hesketh Lever, the First Viscount Leverhulme and founder of the soap empire was born in No.16 in 1851.



Fig.11: the south side of Wood Street including the former town houses at numbers 14 to 20

18 and 20 Wood Street

Forming part of a terrace with Numbers 14 and 16 Wood Street, the buildings were built in 1790 as a pair of houses. Each has a central entrance with six panelled doors with wrought iron fanlights in pedimented doorcases, with one central semi-circular arched carriage entry. A number of original sash windows with small panes survive.

15 and 17 Wood Street

This pair of houses, forming part of a longer terrace is now used as offices. The date 1786 can be seen on the rainwater hopper. The brickwork has been rendered and there is a slate roof and a passage entry to the rear. Number 17 has a pedimented doorcase with a fanlight.



Fig.12: Numbers 15 and 17 Wood Street have been rendered but retain some original details.

Garden wall to 25 Wood Street (fronting Silverwell Street)

The garden wall is constructed of large riven slabs of sandstone, connected with wrought iron cramps. It encloses the east side of the garden along its boundary with Silverwell Street, and a short section on its south side. This type of boundary, often seen in the east Lancashire countryside, is now rare in an urban setting. The wall is now in need of careful maintenance and is on the Council's Buildings at Risk Register.

Unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

27 to 33 Bradshawgate

This commercial building was built in 1897, for the Manchester and Liverpool Bank. It is over three storeys high and faced in sandstone ashlar with a slate roof. The symmetrical frontage is designed in Renaissance style, with carved details such as pedimented

windows and cornices. The elaborate entrances are in projecting end bays. The building is currently used by an estate agent and the ground floor has been spoilt by the projecting display windows, inserted into the ground floor.



Fig.13 Numbers 27-33 Bradshawgate is a good example of a Victorian commercial building, built as a bank.

37 Bradshawgate (Fig. 14)

The Yorkshire Bank dates from 1933. The brick-fronted 3-storey building has a corner entrance and sash windows on upper floors, with a parapet to the roof.

39 Bradshawgate

This tall narrow property has a two-storey oriel window. The terracotta gable above contains a circular window with an elaborate surround. The building is now part of the Yorkshire Bank.



Fig.14: 37 and 39 Bradshawgate, The Yorkshire Bank. Numbers 41-51 are beyond.

41-51 Bradshawgate

This late 19th Century commercial building is three storeys high, built of red brick with terracotta ornament and a slate roof. The Renaissance-style frontage is divided into

bays by half-octagonal pilasters, and the first floor has large arched windows with elaborate terracotta spandrels. The ground floor has been disrupted by the different shopfronts and deep modern fascias.

55 Bradshawgate

A late 19th century commercial building, faced in red brick with stone details. The 3-bay 3-storey building was designed in an Italian gothic style with carved capitals and arched windows. The stone brackets that once supported the shopfront cornice survive, although the shop front has been altered. It is now used as a restaurant.



Fig.15: Bradshawgate, including No 55, a Victorian gothic-style commercial building now a Spanish restaurant. The 1970s infill to the left is the only intrusive building in this block.

57-59 Bradshawgate

Originally constructed in 1868 as a general post office, this prominent building was used as the Employment Exchange in the 1920s and 1930s. The upper floors are now in office use and the ground floor is a bar. The ground floor is faced in stone and the upper floors are brick with stone dressings, including quoins and a heavy projecting eaves. The building retains sash windows and Silverwell Street elevation has iron railings.

14-18 Silverwell Street

Terrace of brick-built early 19th century houses, first shown on the 1824 Baines map. The 2-storey frontage retains sash windows and door cases, with a carriage entrance to the rear yard. The brickwork has been painted, which is now a distinctive part of this street scene.



Fig.16: early 19th century terraced housing at 14-18 Silverwell Street

22 – 24 Silverwell Street

Two terraced brick-built houses, dating from the early 19th century, and shown on the 1824 Baines map. The frontage retains the sash windows and doorcases. The painted brickwork of No.22 is now part of the character of the street.

6 Wood Street

This 3-bay, 2-storey commercial building was built in the early 20th century. It is faced in brick with stone details and has a well modelled frontage with an eclectic mixture of architectural features.



Fig.17: 6 Wood Street, an early 20th century office with a well-modelled frontage

25 Wood Street

This former house was built in the late 18th century and occupied by John Woods, after whom the street was named. It was used by The Socialist Club in the mid 20th century, and is now used as offices. Although altered, the building retains its domestic character and has a southerly aspect over the garden, enclosed by the listed stone flag wall (Fig.19).

4.8 Building materials and features

Buildings in the conservation area are built of a wide range of materials, with buff-coloured sandstone being used for the higher status buildings such as the former bank on Wood Street, and for details on other buildings. Hand-made red brick laid in Flemish bond was used in the construction of most late 18th century and early 19th century buildings. From the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, fired clay materials such as terracotta were popular on commercial buildings. These mass-produced materials were resistant to pollution, could be easily cleaned and were often used as a facing material on steel-framed buildings. The most varied mix of materials is on Bradshawgate.



Fig.18: Brick and terracotta on 13 Silverwell Street, an office built in 1903

Georgian and early 19th century buildings have pitched roofs covered in Welsh slate, with plain eaves, and later buildings have roofs hidden behind parapets. Brick chimney stacks are important on the roofline. Some brick-built properties on Silverwell and Wood Streets have been rendered or painted. The painted frontages on Silverwell Street are now an attractive part of the street scene, although fair-faced historic brick should not be painted.



Fig.19: High quality brickwork and a Victorian sliding sash window on Silverwell Street

Historic doors and windows have survived on many properties in the conservation area and are important for its historic character. Vertically-sliding sash windows are set within

recessed openings with deep reveals. Doorways often have decorative surrounds with pilasters, pediments or elaborate mouldings, doors are either 4-panelled or 6-panelled, with the latter generally found on 19th century buildings.



Fig.20: a typical late Georgian historic doorway on Silverwell Street

Railings and boundary walls are not a common feature in the conservation area, as most properties are built up to the back of the footway. An exception is the distinctive stone flag wall bounding the east side of the garden to No. 25 Wood Street. This is a now rare example of a traditional Lancashire boundary in the town, and is listed. The west side of this garden is enclosed by a brick wall with a shaped stone coping, with stone gate piers. The frontage to the former bank at Numbers 10 to 12 Wood Street has a low stone wall with panels of iron railings and the side of the former post office on Silverwell Street has railings (Fig.25).



Fig.21: the stone flag boundary to the garden of No.25 Wood Street, from Silverwell Street

4.9 Public realm: roads and pavements

Carriageways on Bradshawgate and Silverwell Street are surfaced in tarmacadam, although stone setts survive beneath the modern surface on Silverwell Street. On Wood Street, the original, large stone setts were re-laid and the stone paving and kerbs reinstated to the footways in the 1990s. This refurbishment work was carried out under the Wood Street Conservation Area Partnership Scheme and was funded by English Heritage, Bolton Council and property owners. The setted surface has the benefit of slowing traffic on this narrow street as well as enhancing the historic character of the street scene.



Fig.22: Repaired stone setts on Wood Street, with Yorkstone paving and kerbs

The footways to Bradshawgate are concrete with small sections of brick paving with some wide granite kerbs. Standard red tactile paving has been used to mark pedestrian crossings.



Fig.23: concrete paving and red tactile paving on Bradshawgate, with steel guard railings

Silverwell Street footways are also laid with concrete or brick paving, although granite setts have been retained at vehicular entrances which cross the footway. An historic granite setted road surface is also visible in places under the tarmac road surface, and if the opportunity arises, this surface should be reinstated.



Fig.24: setted crossovers on Silverwell Street, with the setted road surface visible under the tarmacadam.

Traditional-style street lanterns have been installed on historic cast-iron columns along Wood Street and Silverwell Streets. There are modern wall-mounted highway lights along Bradshawgate. Traditional-style bollards were installed along the edge of the footway on the north side of Silverwell Street in the 1990s. There is a mixture of traditional-style and modern steel guard railings along the edge of the Bradshawgate footway between Silverwell Street and Wood Street. Street furniture that contributes to the street scene includes the post box outside the former post office on Silverwell Street.



Fig.25: a variety of traditional and modern post boxes and a phone box outside the former post office on Silverwell Street, with a traditional-style lamp and railings.

5.0 Extent of intrusion and damage

5.1 Negative aspects

Negative factors in the conservation area range from the quality of the some 20th century buildings, to the management of waste and commercial advertising. The most significant impact on the historic character of the area is from inappropriate infill development from the second half of the 20th century, which has not taken account of the scale, massing and form of buildings in the conservation area. Whilst contemporary design can fit in well, significant changes in scale and form are disruptive to the street scene. The most intrusive example of post-war infill is the 7-storey office block on the corner of Bradshawgate and Silverwell Street. Although the main part of the building is set back from the street, above a two storey podium, its scale, massing and use of materials takes no account of the historic character of the townscape. The 2-storey offices at the east end of Silverwell Street are more sensitive in scale. No 53 Bradshawgate is a post-war commercial building built to the same scale as neighbouring buildings but its elevation sharply contrasts with the pattern of historic buildings on the street (Fig.15).



Fig.26: Post-war offices on the east side of Bradshawgate facing Nelson Square

The street surfaces and lighting along Bradshawgate are now in need of upgrading, to complement the high quality paving scheme on Churchgate. The mixture of concrete paving stones and setts are in poor condition and give an impression of a neglected street (Fig.23).

Rear yard areas are often hidden from view, but car parking and the management of waste, particularly wheeled bin storage is increasingly intrusive in views into rear yards and on some frontages. Where access to the rear of some historic properties is restricted, the shift to large wheeled bins has resulted in frontage bin storage (Fig.27).



Fig.27: wheeled bins are intrusively sited in front of Numbers 10 to 12 Wood Street

Many of the frontages of the commercial properties along the east side of Bradshawgate are spoilt by over-scaled fascias and signage. Alterations to ground floors to insert shopfronts have also been harmful to the character of the conservation area and detract from the architectural unity of individual buildings.



Fig.28: This over-scaled fascia signage dominates the frontage on Bradshawgate

Some insensitive alterations to listed buildings along Wood Street, particularly the applied render and ground floor bay windows to Numbers 15 to 19, have harmed the character of these historic buildings but could be reversed when the buildings are next refurbished (Fig.11).

5.2 Neutral areas

Some late 20th century infill development has had a neutral impact on the character of the conservation area and fits in well, although the design quality is modest. The neo-Georgian infill on the south side of Silverwell Street at Number 20 is a good example.

5.3 General condition

The condition of historic buildings within the conservation area is generally good, with most buildings appearing to be in active use and benefiting from regular maintenance. The use of some buildings has changed as the pattern of economic activity in the area has evolved and is part of an historic process. Former houses on Wood Street and Silverwell Street have been in office use for over a hundred years in some cases. More recently, changes in the banking and financial sector have led to former banks being converted to uses such as bars and restaurants.

The only historic “building at risk” within the conservation area is the wall to No 25 Wood Street; this requires careful maintenance and repair to ensure that it remains sound.

The public realm is generally well maintained, although footways along Bradshawgate are now in need of enhancement, due to the poor condition and quality of materials. Traditional stone paving was reinstated and the setts were re-laid on Wood Street in the 1990s with grant-aid, enhancing the historic character of this street.

5.4 Pressure for change

Commercial pressure for highly visible advertising is becoming visually intrusive in some areas, particularly on Bradshawgate where some bars and shops use large fascias and advertising. The increasing bar and restaurant use can result in upper floors being under-used; the potential for flats above ground floor businesses should be explored.

Changes to waste management standards are resulting in large wheeled bins which can be hard to conceal and intrusive in the street, unless easily accessible rear yards are available.

Disabled access standards mean that some businesses will need to alter entrances with steps on some historic buildings, or make other reasonable alterations. In the public realm, future enhancement schemes will need to comply with the latest standards and guidance.

The 2007 ban on smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces is likely to generate a demand for smoking shelters and outdoor seating, which will require careful management to avoid intrusive new structures.

6.0 Community involvement.

A publicity leaflet which included a tear out questionnaire was distributed to businesses and properties within all the Town Centre Conservation Areas. In addition two half day drop in sessions were held at the library foyer in Le Mans Crescent on 22nd and 23rd January 2008 to provide advice and respond to comments. In total approximately 600 leaflets were distributed. A press release raising awareness of the drop in session was advertised in the Bolton Evening News and the Conservation Area Appraisals were made available to view online.

Respondents were asked if they agreed on the boundary extensions, whether they wished to see more areas protected and to score in terms of importance eight key recommendations set out in the Conservation Area Management Plan.

The response rate was low but raised no objections to the boundary extensions. The Civic Trust were one of the respondents and were generally supportive of all the Conservation Area boundary extensions. Some concern was raised regarding constraints that Conservation Area status afforded and that the extended areas could not be afforded adequate protection by the Authority given the investment pressure in some of these areas.

7.0 Suggested conservation area boundary changes

South of Silverwell Street, Silverwell House was built as large late 18th century detached house, occupied by John Pilkington a cotton manufacturer (Fig.1). In the early 1880s, the building was the home of Bolton Girls High School and in 1887 a drill hall was built onto the east side of the house, completely obscuring the garden frontage. The drill hall was used as a sports centre from 1969 but this has recently been removed, enabling the building to be refurbished. Although the setting of the building is partly compromised by car parking, the Grade II listed building is architecturally important, and a significant part of the historic development of the area. The rear of the building overlooks a yard off Bradshawgate. Adjacent to the entrance to this yard is 71 Bradshawgate, a rare example of a tobacconist's shop with an intact interior and shopfront, listed Grade II.



Fig.29: The east frontage of Silverwell House

At present, the boundary of the conservation area excludes of the south side of Institute Street. The west end of the street is occupied by post-war office buildings, and further east, the Masonic Hall is currently outside the conservation area boundary. This prominent red-brick building was constructed in the 1928, and dominates the corner with Clive Street, making a strong contribution to the street scene.



Fig.30: The Masonic Hall, built in 1928

8.0 Guidelines for development

8.1 New Development.

Building Bolton (2006) provides guidelines for new development in the town centre. However, opportunities within the conservation area are limited and are most likely to be presented by small infill and gap sites, or sites where existing buildings have a negative impact on the character of the area. New development must reflect the character of existing buildings with respect to siting, scale, proportions, materials and detailing. Applications for Outline Planning Permission will not be considered unless supported by a masterplan and a high level of detail. Applications for full planning permission must include a Design and Access statement that explains the development's affect on the character and appearance of the conservation area, demonstrating that the scheme will be sensitive to its context, supported by visual images such as photomontages or perspective drawings. Good quality contemporary design, related to the historic context and character of the area will be encouraged.

Key factors to take into account are:

- consistent building heights, except where punctuated by corner features;
- the varied skyline,
- the texture of frontages and the balance of windows/recessed openings to solid wall;
- vertical rhythm and the proportion of elevations;
- articulation of building elevations;
- tightly-developed plots and buildings providing enclosure to streets.

8.2 Demolition

Consent will not usually be given to demolish buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, unless it can be demonstrated that the replacement development will bring over-riding community benefits and be of a high design quality. The criteria in PPG15 and UDP policy will be referred to.

8.3 Advertisement Control.

The Authority will apply high standards when considering applications for Advertisement Consent in the Conservation Area. Certain categories of advertisements are not permitted in Conservation Areas and discontinuance action will be taken against existing signs where they do not conform to the guidelines given in Planning Control Policy Note No.6 - "The Display of Signs and Advertisements".

8.4 Street surfacing and furniture

The *Public Realm Implementation Framework*, adopted by the Council in 2007, provides guidance on design and standards for public realm enhancement. In addition, an audit of original stone flags, setts and kerbs in the conservation area should be undertaken. The potential for repairing and relaying significant examples of setted streets should be explored, for example on Silverwell Street.

New paving should be in reclaimed or new stone. Concrete flags incorporating an appropriate aggregate may be acceptable in some locations. Brick paving or black tarmac should not be used on footways as these materials are not in keeping with the character of the area.

Historic street furniture such as cast-iron lamp standards should be retained and repaired, with appropriate light fittings.

New lighting, bins and bollards, highway signage and seating should be designed to complement the character of the street. The number of separate items should be minimised to reduce visual clutter and obstacles to disabled people. High quality contemporary designs will be encouraged where appropriate, as well as more traditional designs.

8.5 Building Materials

Alterations should utilise traditional materials to match those used to construct the building. These include brick, stone, terracotta, slate, stone flags and clay tiles, reclaimed local stone, new stone or reconstituted stone.

Strap or ribbon pointing should be avoided since this not only harms the appearance of the building but can damage the stone or brick by preventing the evaporation of water.

External brick and stone walls should not be painted, rendered or clad in modern materials.

External cleaning should only be carried out to remove corrosive dirt. Cleaning should be carried out by a specialist firm under close supervision.

Decorative features including plaques, mouldings and date stones should be retained.

8.6 Windows and doors.

Stone window cills, lintels, door surrounds and stone steps should be retained together with any original windows and doors.

Any doorways or windows no longer in use should be retained and not blocked up. Historic joinery should be maintained in good condition and not replaced with modern imitations.

Owners should be encouraged to use the following styles when replacing windows and doors:

- For eighteenth and early nineteenth Century properties, vertical sliding sash windows with glazing bars and six-panelled doors.
- For late nineteenth and early twentieth Century properties, vertical sliding sash windows and four-panelled doors.

Windows and doors should be made of timber and should be painted. Staining is not a traditional finish for timber and should not be used. PVCu windows and doors are not acceptable as they are not in keeping with the character of traditional buildings.

New windows and doors should be recessed to the original depth and should not be fitted flush with the face of the wall or project from it.

8.7 Chimneys and Roofs.

Chimney stacks should be retained. If rebuilding is necessary this should be in the same materials used to construct the remainder of the building, this may be brick or stone with clay pots. Where central heating flues are installed, these should be contained within the original chimney pot or a traditional replacement.

Roof repairs or replacements should be in natural slate, stone flags or red clay tiles to match the existing materials. Where ridge tiles need replacing these should be in stone or clay.

New rooflights may be acceptable but these should be flush fitting and should not be on prominent roof slopes.

8.8 Rainwater Goods.

Replacement rainwater goods should be in cast iron or moulded aluminium with a black coating. Plastic rainwater goods are not acceptable.

8.9 Boundary Walls, Gates and Railings

Brick and stone boundary walls, iron railings and gates should be retained and any repairs carried out using the same materials and methods of workmanship.

8.10 Shop fronts and Advertisements.

The installation of traditional-style painted timber shop fronts will be encouraged on historic buildings, incorporating the use of stall risers, pilasters and cornices to frame the shop window. Hand painted fascia signs and hanging signs will also be encouraged. Contemporary shop front designs of high quality will also be encouraged on appropriate buildings.

Advertisement consent will not be given for internally illuminated box signs. The use of external lights and concealed lighting will be encouraged, in conjunction with well-designed signage. Temporary plastic signage is not appropriate in the conservation area.

Security shutters should preferably be fixed inside the shop windows and be of a perforated grille type to allow for a view of the window display. If external shutters are unavoidable, they should be incorporated into the overall design of the shop front with the shutter box concealed behind the fascia. The shutter system should be colour-coated to match the colour of the shop front and the shutters should be perforated.

Externally-fixed shutter boxes which project from the facade of the shop, galvanised finishes and solid shutters are not in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and are not acceptable.

8.11 Minor Fixtures and Services.

Standard external fixtures including satellite dishes, meter boxes, burglar alarms, central heating flues and security cameras should be sited in unobtrusive positions wherever possible. They should be colour-coated to match the background materials i.e. walls or roofs. Air-conditioning units should only be located on hidden, rear elevations.

8.12 Wheeled Bins.

The layout of traditional properties can create difficulties for storing bins. Wherever possible they should be stored out of sight and not left out on the street or footway where they are visually intrusive and can create obstacles for people with disabilities. New development should incorporate well-designed, discreet bin storage.

8.13 Archaeology

Where there is the potential for archaeology to be discovered on development sites, appropriate recording or investigation should take place in advance of development, with the advice of Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit.

8.14 Interpretation

Historic Bolton is an interesting place for people to live, work and visit. Well-designed and carefully sited interpretation boards or plaques can enhance people's enjoyment and understanding and raise awareness of good conservation area management. New interpretation should be provided where appropriate.

References:

Bolton Vision, *Building Bolton*, SPG, 2006

Bolton Council Environment Department, *Silverwell Street/Wood Street Conservation Area*, n.d. (c.1999)

C.Hartwell, M.Hyde and N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Lancashire: Manchester and the South-East*, 2004

English Heritage, *Conservation Area Appraisals*, 2006

English Heritage, *Streets For All North West*, 2006

Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, *Bolton: Areas of Archaeological Interest*, 1982 (unpublished)

Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record, University of Manchester

Gordon Readyhough, *Bolton Town Centre, A Modern History*, 1998

APPENDIX 1

Unitary Development Plan

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas represent a significant element of Bolton's architectural and historical heritage. The council will preserve and enhance these areas through the control of development and through positive schemes of enhancement. Development which is allowed should contribute positively to the quality of the environment. The Council is empowered to designate further Conservation Areas and will consider designating them as appropriate.

D7. The Council will permit development proposals that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. They should:

- (i) be of appropriate height, size, design, materials, roofscape and plot width;
- (ii) retain materials, features, trees and open spaces that contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- (iii) utilize appropriate materials for highway and footpath surfacing; and
- (iv) not adversely affect important views into, and across, a conservation area.

The desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas is prescribed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation Areas represent a significant element of Bolton's architectural and historical heritage and contribute to local distinctiveness. The Council will preserve or enhance these areas through the control of development and through positive schemes of enhancement. The number and extent of Conservation Areas in the Borough has been recently reviewed, with a total of 25 Conservation Areas within the plan area (Appendix 3). However, it is possible that further Conservation Areas might be proposed during the life of the plan or the boundaries of existing Conservation Areas reviewed. This policy outlines some of the elements which the Council will take into account when considering applications in Conservation Areas.

D8. The Council will permit development proposals - involving the demolition of an unlisted building or feature within a conservation area that contribute to its character or appearance - provided that the applicant can demonstrate that:

- (i) rehabilitation is impractical and there is no viable new use for the building; and
- (ii) redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community that would outweigh the loss resulting from demolition; and

- (iii) detailed proposals for the reuse of the site, including any replacement building or other structure, have been approved by the Council which incorporates agreements made to ensure that the replacement works will be carried out within a specified timescale.

Conservation area consent procedures for the demolition of most buildings within a conservation area are dealt with under Section 74 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Under the consent procedures, English Heritage must be notified of all proposals to demolish listed buildings, and allowed access to buildings that it wishes to record before demolition takes place. For unlisted buildings within a conservation area, in the case of a demolition proposal the Council will in specific instances condition any consent, requiring recording. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Applicants should refer the Conservation Area Character Assessments which identify buildings and features of particular interest and note.

Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas may lead to the creation of 'gap sites', which can remain vacant for long periods before redevelopment takes place, damaging the appearance of the area. It is therefore important that consent should not be given for demolition unless it is clear that the site will be redeveloped in a way which will preserve or enhance the character of the area within a reasonable timescale. Before demolition, the Council will require an assessment to establish whether the building contains a protected species, such as bats (policy N9).

D9. The Council will require proposals for new or replacement shopfronts in Conservation Areas to:

- (i) respect the period and style of the building and relate to it as a whole;
- (ii) be of a high standard of design, and use appropriate materials;
- (iii) avoid the use of large expanses of undivided glass;
- (iv) include historically accurate detailing; where the proposal is of traditional character; and
- (v) retain any features of architectural or historic interest.

Shopfronts can play an important part in establishing the unique character of town centres. The Council will endeavour, through control of development and design advice, to improve the standard of shopfronts in the Conservation Areas in particular. Where the building involved is 'listed', the introduction of a new shopfront or changes to an existing one will almost always require Listed Building Consent. Because of the historic and architectural interest of these areas it will be essential that shopfronts should not conflict with the style or period of the building, weakening its character and its contribution to the area as a whole. Equally the quality of the design must be high: poorly proportioned shopfronts, for example, will detract from the visual quality of the area. Large expanses

of undivided glass are a feature of modern shopfronts, and conflict with the historic character of these areas, as well as reducing the interest of the building in order to let the displayed goods predominate. Applicants should refer to Planning Control Policy Note 4 – Shopfronts.

APPENDIX 2

Historic Maps

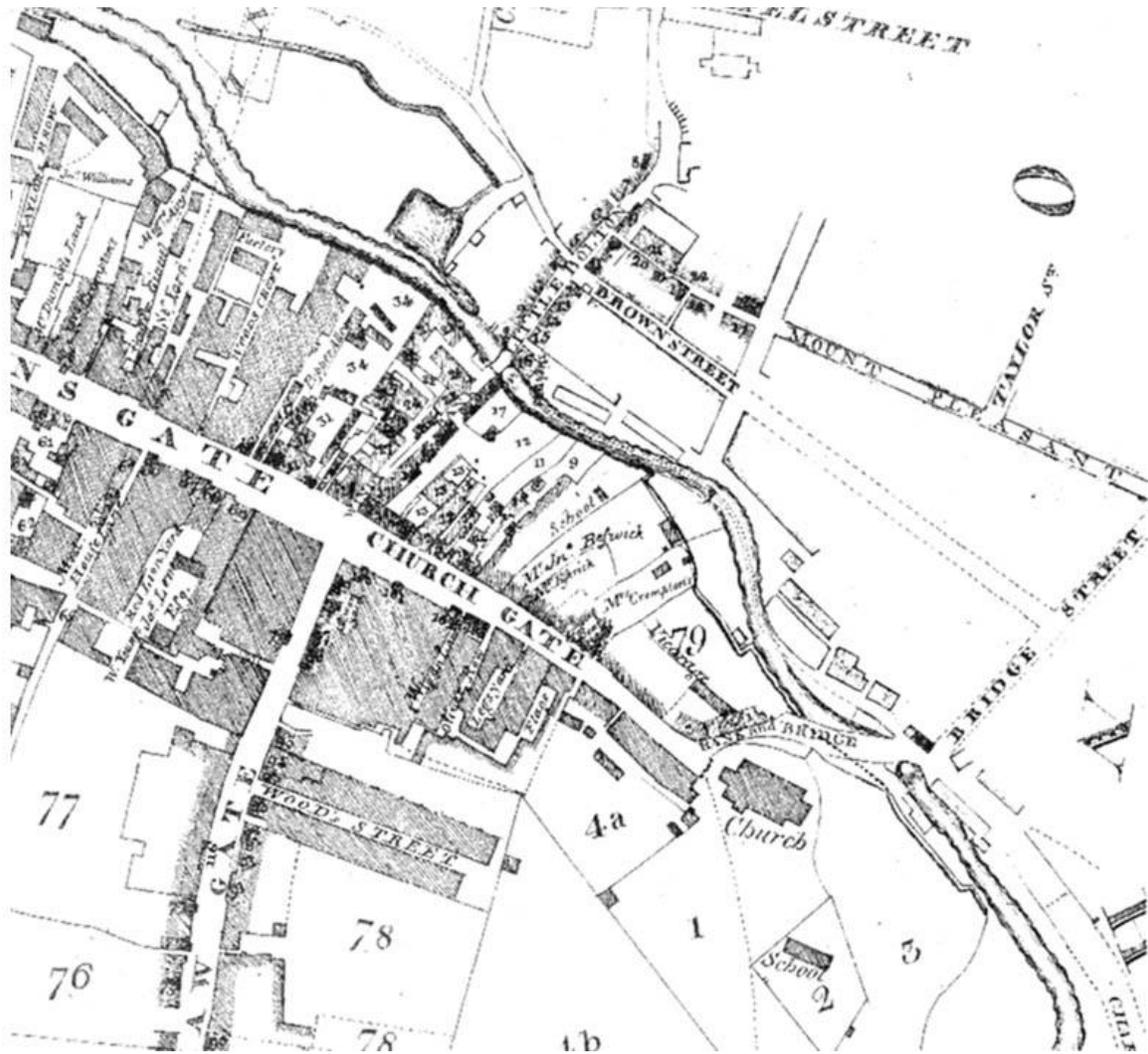


Fig.26: detail from 1793 map of Bolton, showing the Silverwell Street and Wood Street area (Bolton Archives)

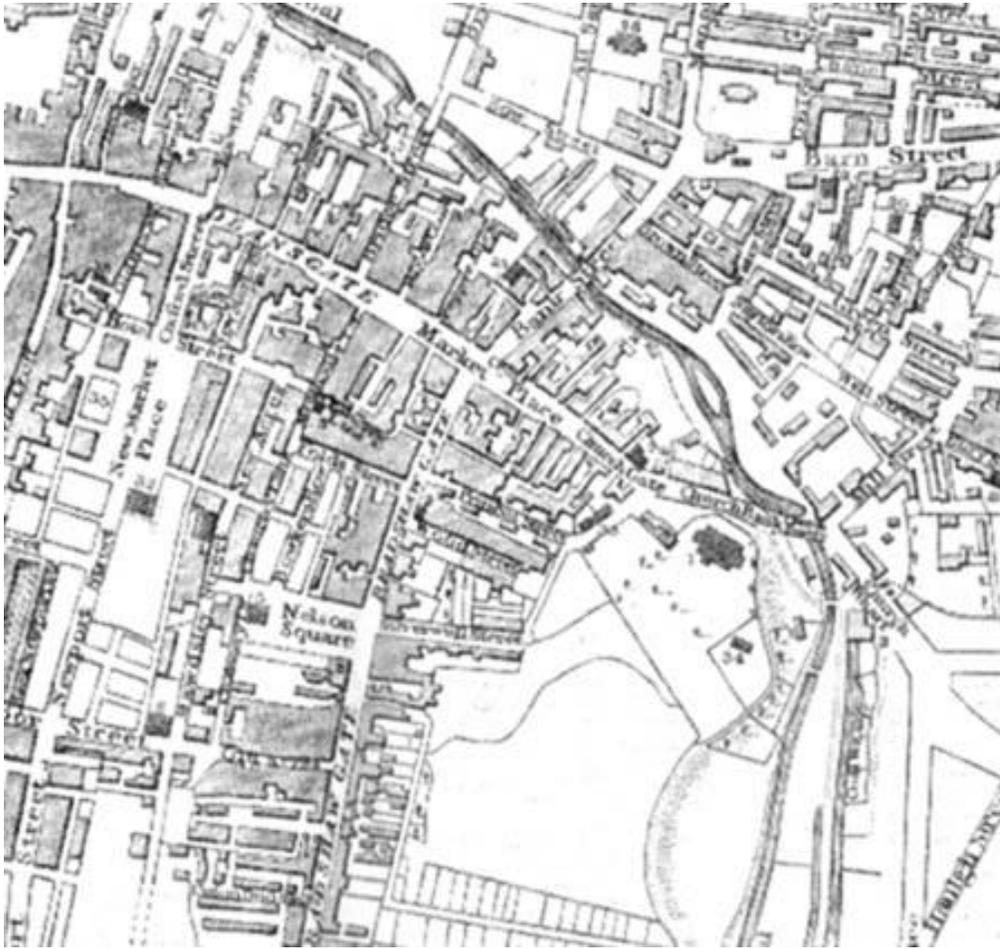


Fig.27: detail from 1824 map of Bolton showing the Silverwell Street and Wood Street area (Bolton Archives)

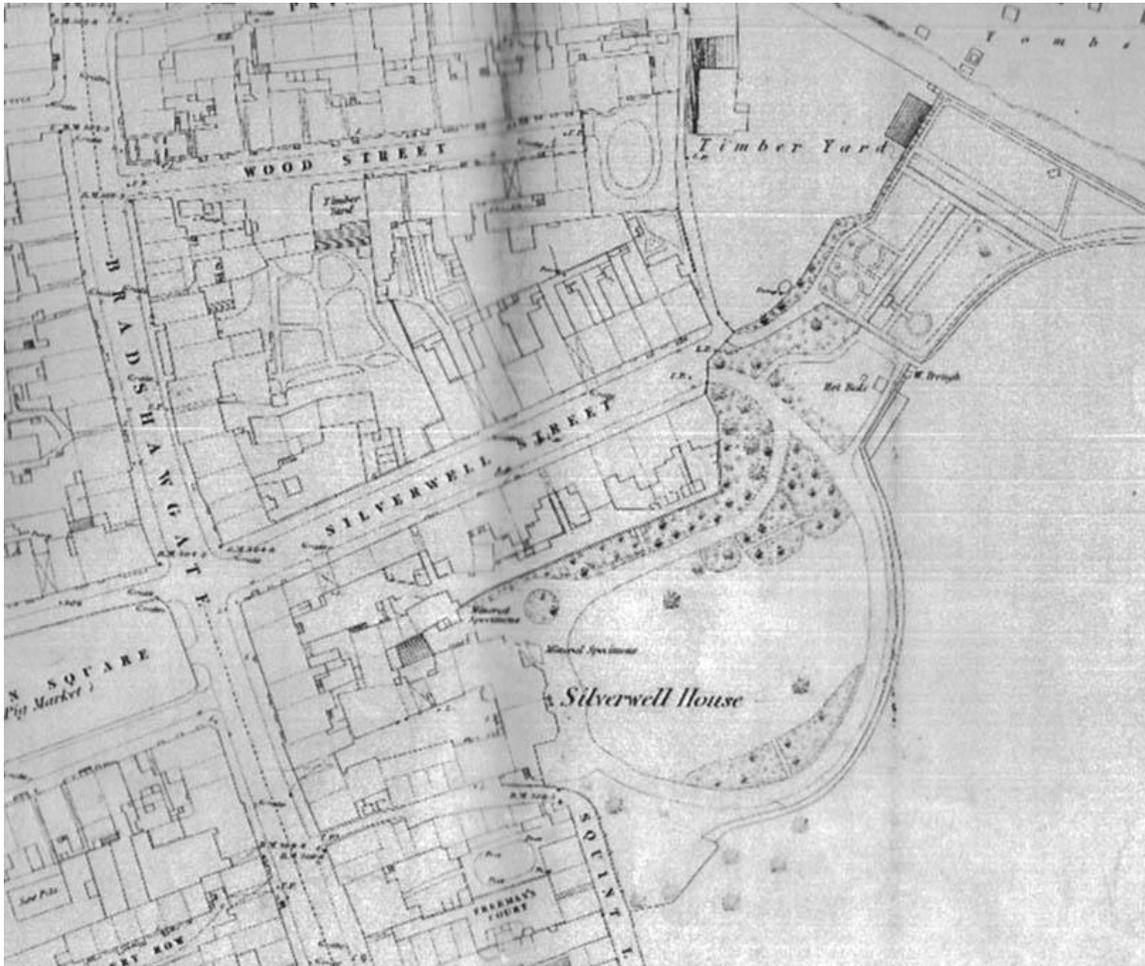


Fig.28: detail from 1847 Ordnance Survey map showing Silverwell Street and Wood Street area (Bolton Archives)

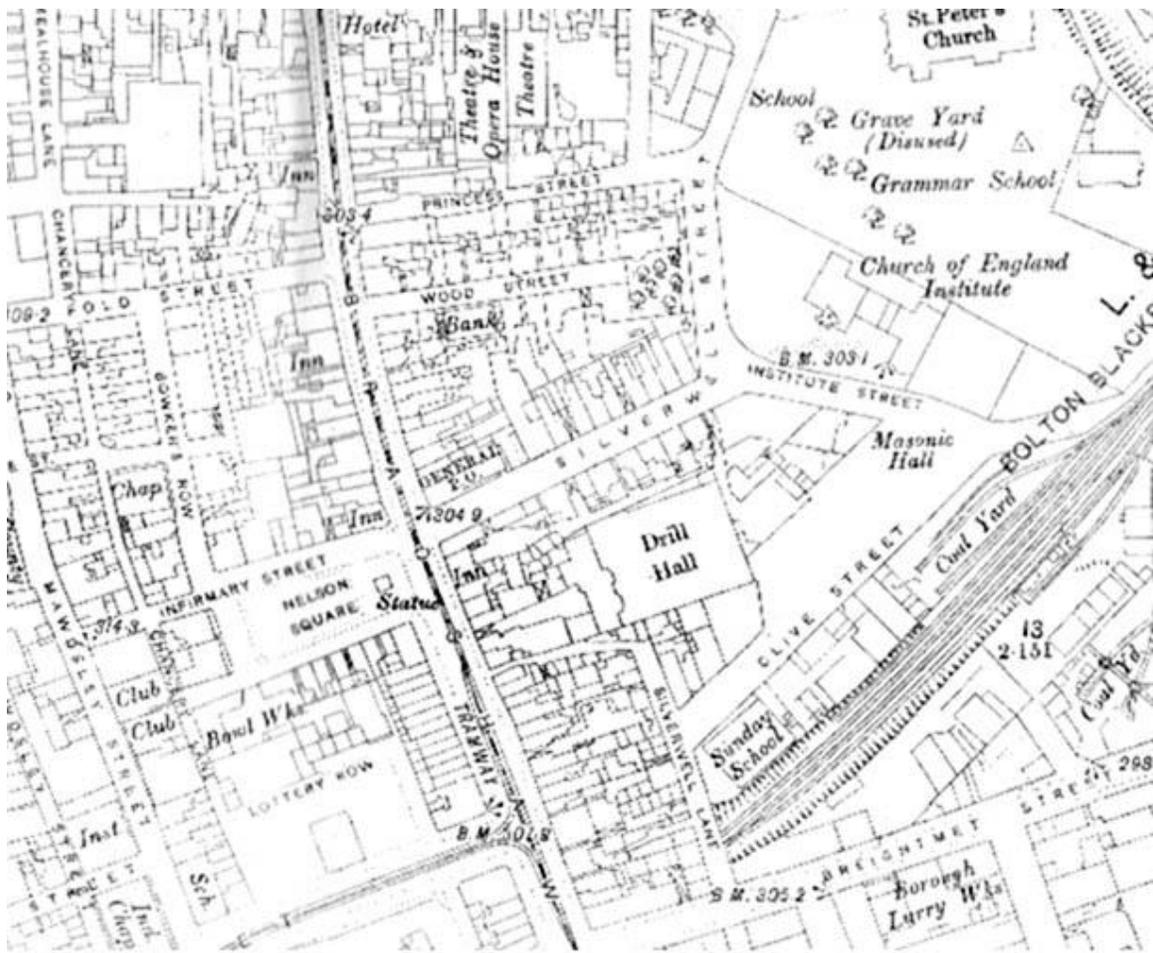
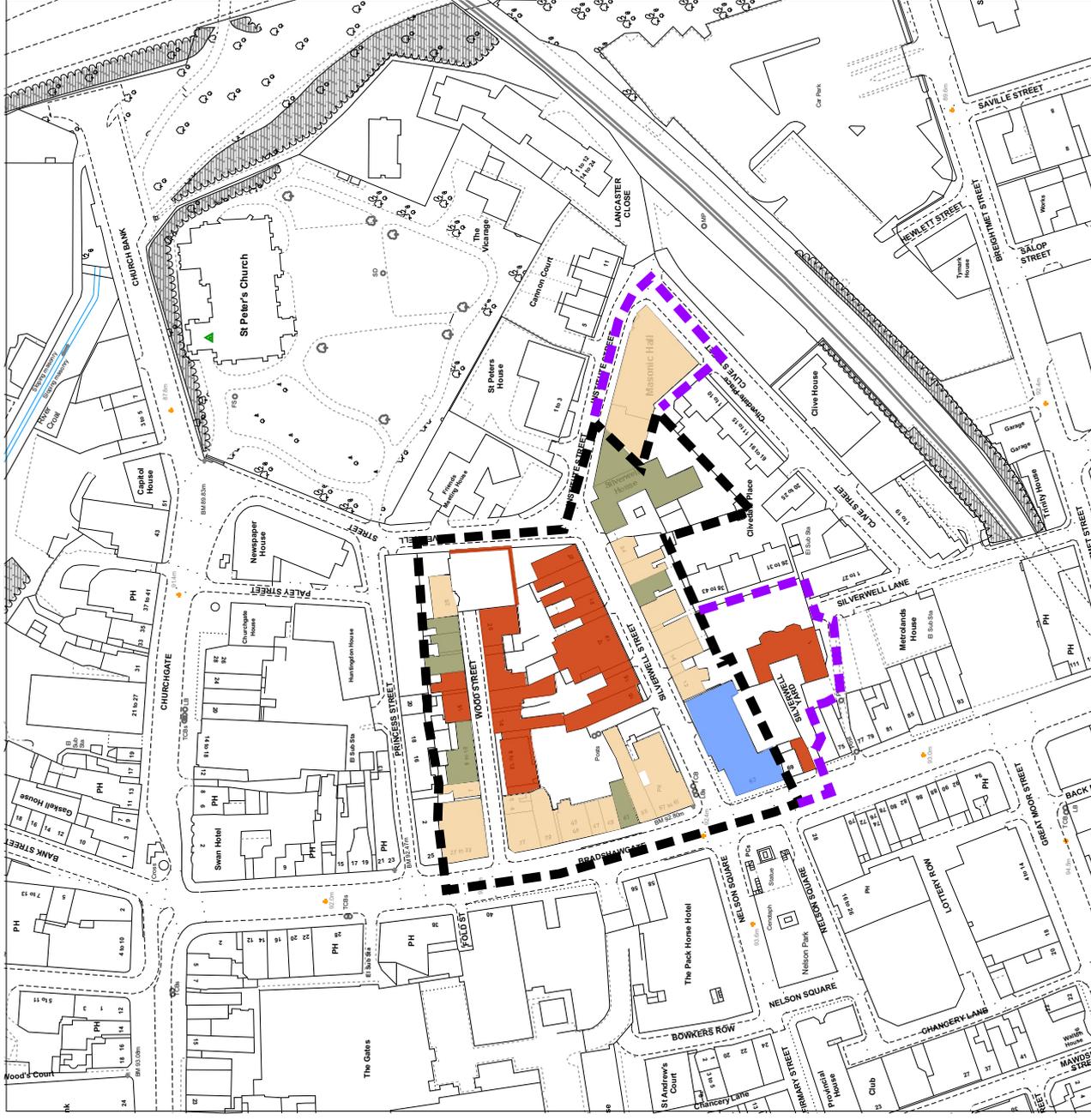


Fig.29: detail from 1893 Ordnance Survey map, showing Silverwell and Wood Street area (Bolton Archives)

Quality of buildings

- Listed building
- Unlisted buildings of merit
- Buildings making a neutral impact
- Building making a negative impact
- Existing Conservation area boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration *

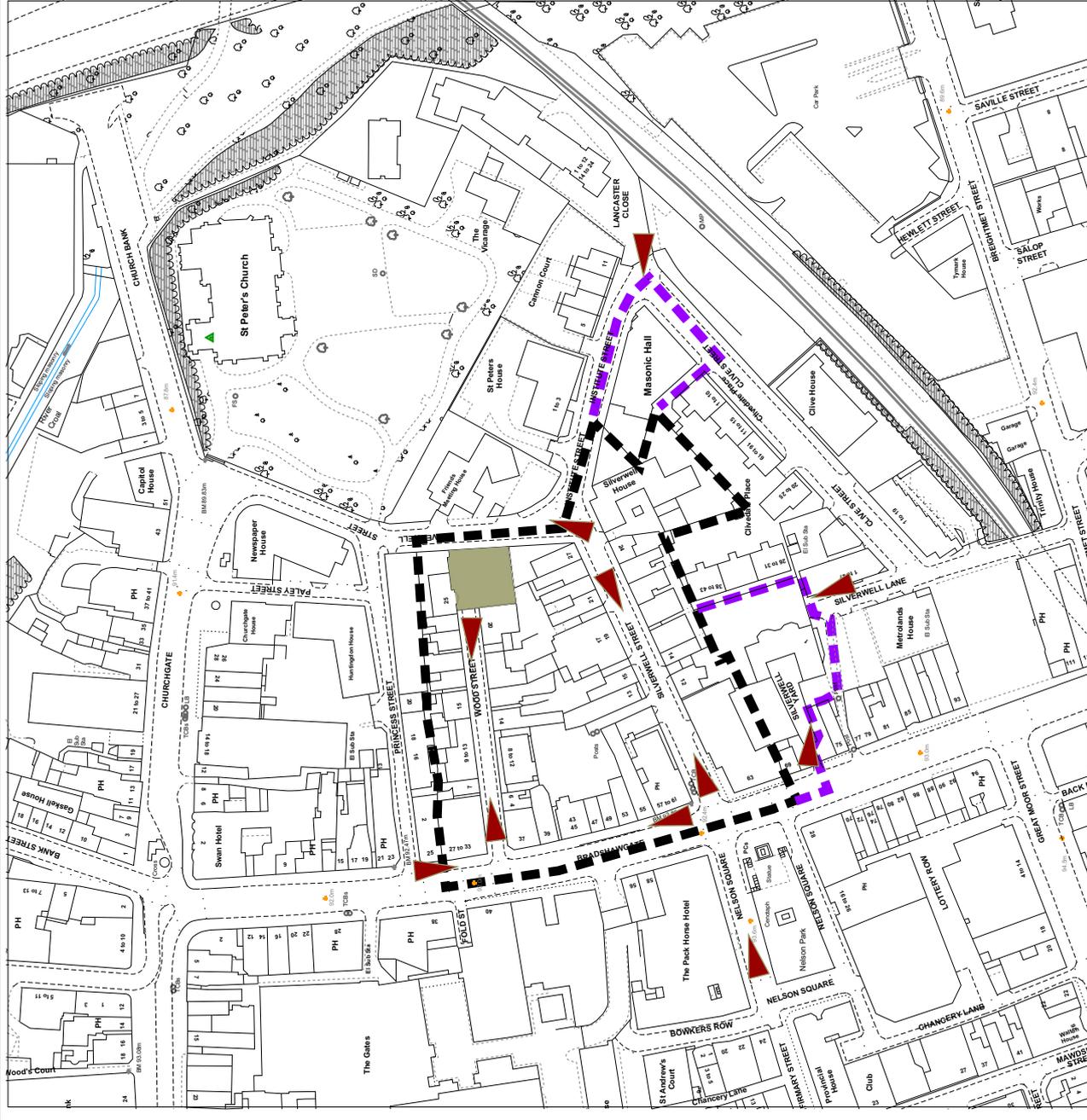


* Approved 2007

Map 1

Townscape Analysis

-  Important views
-  Important open space
-  Existing Conservation area boundary
-  Proposed boundary alteration *



* Approved 2007

Map 2



scale

not to scale