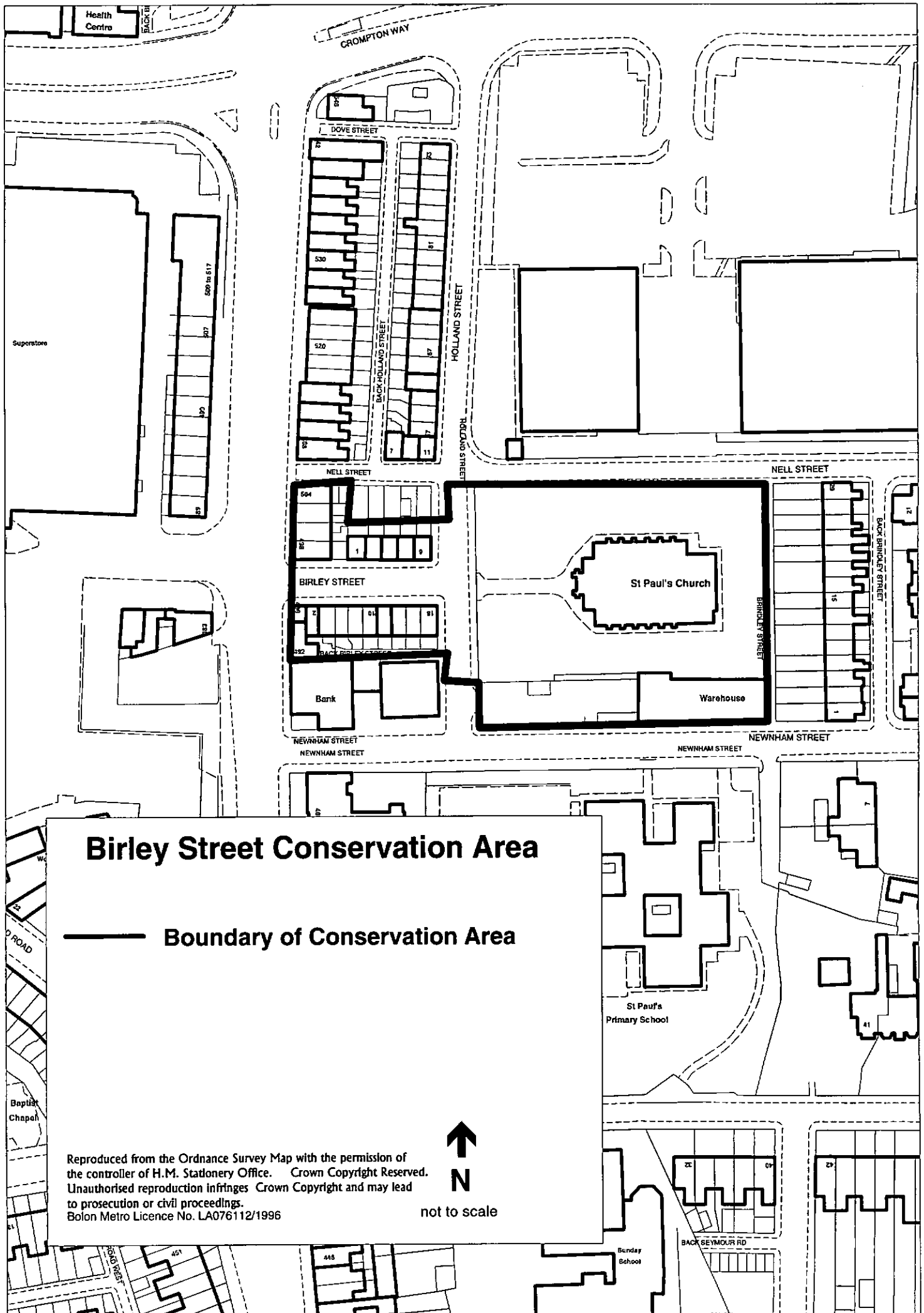


BIRLEY STREET CONSERVATION AREA



Environment Department



Birley Street Conservation Area

— Boundary of Conservation Area



not to scale

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SECTION ONE

Character Assessment

Introduction

The Birley Street Conservation Area is situated in the Astley Bridge District, 1.5 miles north of Bolton Town Centre, and is located off the main Blackburn Road (A666). It consists of two groups of commercial buildings fronting Blackburn Road, two terraces of houses on Birley Street, St. Paul's Church the former St Pauls Infant School and the southern end of Holland Street. The buildings date from the mid 19th Century.

History

Astley Bridge was originally an agricultural settlement completely separated from Bolton by open countryside. It grew up where the main road from Bolton to Blackburn crosses the Astley Brook, a tributary of the River Tonge. The name Astley is possibly derived from "ast" meaning east or ash and "lay" an Old English work for an "open place in a wooded area" It could therefore mean "the clearing in the east" or "the clearing among the ash trees".

Textile production began in Astley Bridge in the 17th Century as a domestic industry, largely as a result of the enterprise of John Ashworth. The Ashworth family came from London to Bolton in 1665. John Ashworth bought cotton in Liverpool and Manchester, distributed it to local cottage spinners and weavers and marketed the finished cloth. This provided a welcome income for local people in an area which was of poor agricultural quality. The business flourished and the Ashworths and neighbouring gentry became manufacturers.

Henry Ashworth (1728 - 1790) was a major figure in the development of the local cotton industry and after his death his two sons John and Edmund carried on the family business. In 1803 the Ashworths built their first major mill, New Eagley on the banks of the Eagley Brook. In 1892 Henry and Edmund purchased Egerton mill, extended it and installed a 62ft water wheel. Between 1862 and 1864 John Ashworth founded his own cotton spinning firm and in 1865 opened New Mill on Holland Street. By this time the mills were powered by steam and no longer needed to be located in the river valleys. As a result Astley Bridge developed rapidly into an industrial and residential settlement during the second half of the 19th Century.

The road to Blackburn was originally a meandering track, unfit for traffic in winter, until it was taken over and improved by the Bolton and Blackburn Turnpike Trust, at the end of the 18th Century. The toll gate was situated where Bar Lane meets Blackburn Road.

St. Pauls Church was built at the heart of Astley Bridge in 1848 at a cost of £4,000, to accommodate 745 people. It was extended in 1868 to accommodate 1,168 people. The site of the church and burial ground were a gift from the Earl of Wilton. Early benefactors of St. Pauls Church and Schools were the Ashworth Family and other prominent local people including the Greenhalgh brothers of Thornydyke, Thomas Thwaites of Watermillock, Sir John and Lady Holden and Colonel George Hesketh.

Birley Street, leading to the church was originally called Church Street, but as there

was already a road of that name in Bolton, it was renamed after the Reverend A Birley, Vicar of St. Pauls between 1858 and 1869.

The stone houses on Birley Street and Blackburn Road were built shortly after the church, probably for mill workers.

In the early 19th Century the parish had a day school called the Penny School and there was a Sunday School by 1840. This accommodation was soon inadequate and a school teacher's house had been built by 1858. By 1871 there was an infants school and a girls school was built in 1881. A Parochial Church Hall was completed in 1915.

Astley Bridge was incorporated into Bolton by the Extension Act of 1898 but retained much of its independence and did not lose its District Committee of an alderman and three councillors until 1950.

Townscape

The Conservation Area consists of two distinct forms of development; the tightly built terraced houses on Blackburn Road and Birley Street and St. Pauls Church located in the centre of a burial ground. This landscaped area is an important open green space in a densely developed area of terraced housing.

Blackburn Road is wide and open and carries a heavy amount of vehicular traffic, being a major route in and out of the Town Centre. It is also well used by pedestrians because it contains a wide variety of shops and services.

Birley Street and Holland Street are more narrow and much quieter, being residential roads. In spite of alterations to the buildings, the St. Pauls Conservation Area has retained much of the character of a mid 19th Century residential district and industrial community.

Enclosures

There are clear views along Blackburn Road towards the Town Centre to the south and to Astley Bridge in the north. There is a view westwards from Birley Street across a car park, of the housing area beyond Blackburn Road. The view eastwards along Birley Street is terminated by St. Pauls Church with its prominent tower and spire. The church forms the focal point of the area and the tower and spire are a local landmark.

The terraced properties front directly onto the footpath. St. Pauls Church is bounded along Holland Street and Nell Street by a low stone wall with stone copings topped by plain iron railings painted black. The main entrance from Holland Road has a vehicular entrance with double gates, flanked by pedestrian gates. These are fixed to two pairs of ornamental stone piers and are of decorative wrought ironwork incorporating the letter M. There is a side entrance to the churchyard from Nell Street with an iron gate, this is of plain ironwork to match the railings. The southern and eastern boundaries have two metre high plain iron railings. Residential properties have rear yard walls of brick and stone.

Street Frontages

The Conservation Area is tightly developed with all the properties apart from the church, fronting the back of the pavement. The church is the only building with a garden and grounds.

Street Furniture

Most street lights within the area have concrete columns and modern metal lanterns. Along Blackburn Road the lights have tall steel columns. There are concrete bollards on the southern side of the footway to Birley Street near the junction with Blackburn Road and metal bollards on Holland Road to prevent

vehicles parking on the pavement. There are traffic signs at either end of Birley Street.

Carriageways throughout the area are tarmacadamed. The footways to Birley Street are paved in stone flags, elsewhere they are tarmacadamed.

Architectural Character

The buildings within the Conservation Area date from the Mid 19th Century. With the exception of numbers 492 and 504 Blackburn Road and the former infants school, they are Listed Grade II as being of Special Architectural of Historic Interest as follows:-

ST. PAULS CHURCH, HOLLAND STREET

The church was constructed in 1848 and the aisles were added in 1869 to the designs of J. Medland Taylor. It is built of coursed and squared stone with slate roofs and consists of a nave with clerestory and two aisles, a chancel with flanking chapel and vestry and a west tower and spire. The four stage tower has a west doorway, a bell chamber and a broach spire. The aisles have lancet windows and are divided by buttresses. The clerestory is divided into two bays by shallow buttresses and has round arched windows with a chevron moulding forming the hoodmould and string course. The interior of the building has a wide nave with a queen post roof, a large western gallery with pierced trefoiled panelling and late 19th Century stained glass windows.

The burial ground contains an interesting variety of stone monuments and headstones.

1 - 9 (ODD), BIRLEY STREET

This terrace of five houses dates from around 1850 and is constructed of coursed and squared rock faced sandstone with slate roofs and moulded stone gutters. The doorways have plain square cut stone architraves with rectangular oval lights. The window openings have wedge lintels and the original twelve pane sash openings have been replaced.



Figure 1.
1 - 9 Birley Street

2 - 18 (EVEN), BIRLEY STREET

This terrace of nine houses incorporates a shop and also dates from around 1850. It is built of coursed and squared stone with slate roofs and moulded stone gutters. The doorways have round arched moulded stone architraves with fanlights over the doors. The window openings have plain square cut stone architraves and the original twelve pane sash openings have been replaced.

The Non-Listed Buildings also make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and merit retention and special care when repairs or alterations are being carried out.

492 - 504 BLACKBURN ROAD

The properties are similar in appearance to the adjacent terraced houses on Birley Street



Figure 2.
10 - 18 Birley Street



Figure 3.
492, 494 & 496, Blackburn Road

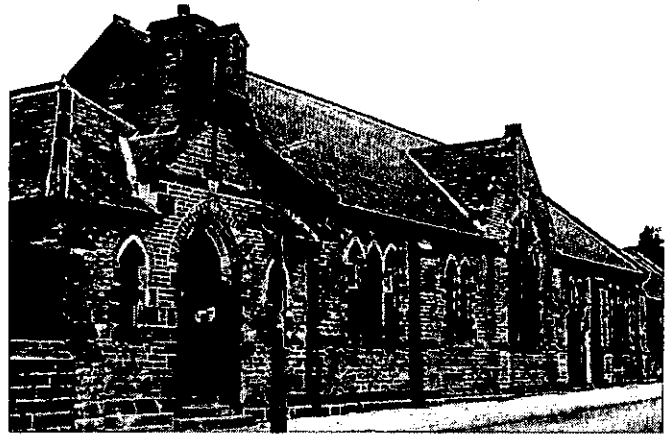


Figure 4.
Former St Pauls Infant School

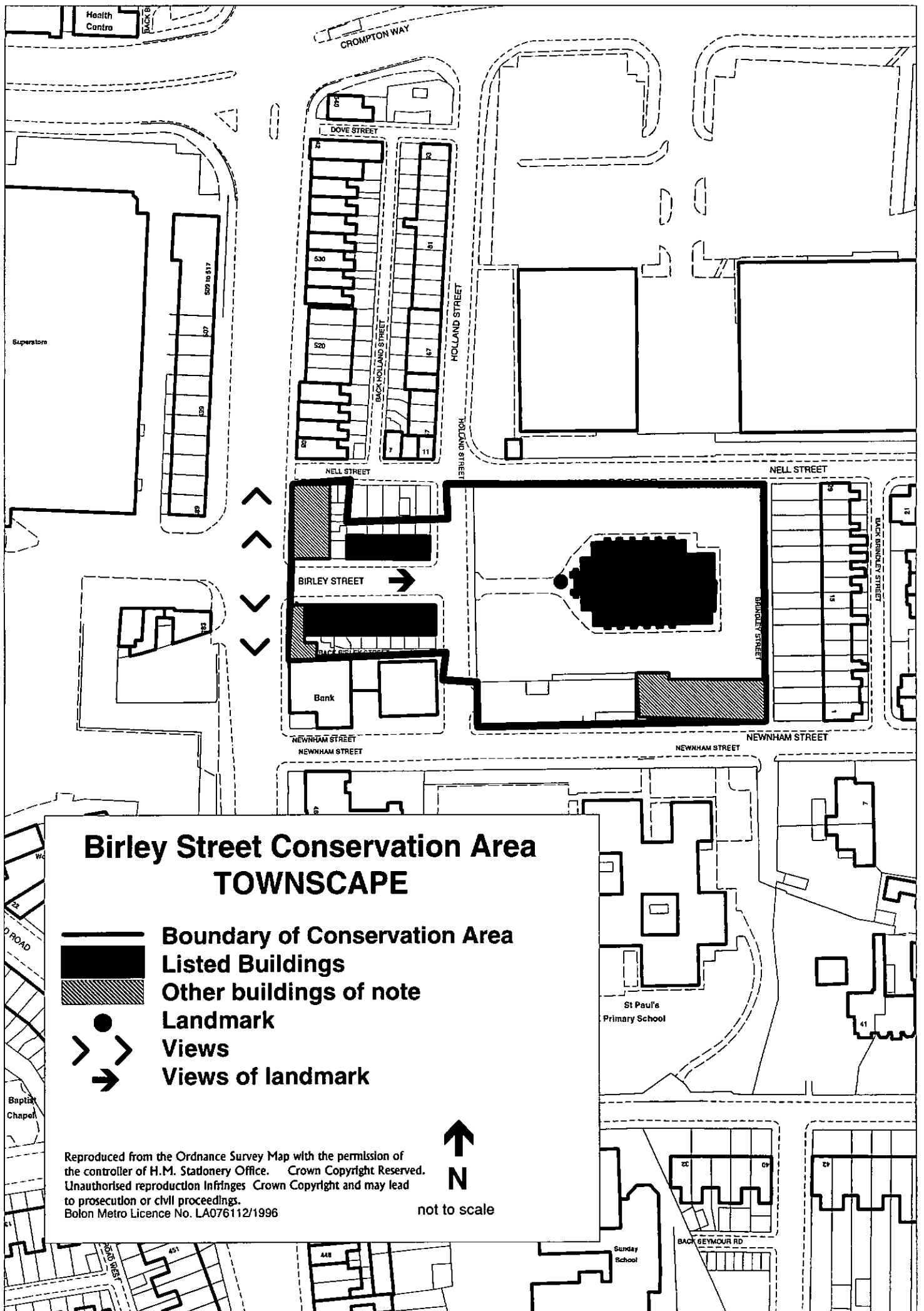
but have been altered on the ground floor by the insertion of shop windows.

THE FORMER ST PAULS INFANT SCHOOL

This single storey building dates from around 1870 and is constructed of stone with pitched slate roofs. It has pointed arched windows with stone mullions and is now used as a cash and carry warehouse.

Negative Factors

A number of buildings in the Conservation Area have been altered in ways which detract from their traditional character. This includes painting brickwork and the installation of modern windows and doors. Inappropriate shop fronts and signs have been installed in properties fronting Blackburn Road.



Birley Street Conservation Area TOWNSCAPE

-  Boundary of Conservation Area
-  Listed Buildings
-  Other buildings of note
-  Landmark
-  Views
-  Views of landmark

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SECTION TWO

Policy Guidelines

Statutory Controls

The Birley Street Conservation Area was designated in 1970. There are a range of Planning Controls to protect its character.

Conservation Area consent is needed from the Council to demolish or part demolish all but the smallest buildings. Part demolition includes the removal of features such as chimney stacks and bay windows. It also includes the demolition of elevations of a building.

The Council must be notified six weeks in advance of any proposals to cut down, top or lop trees in a Conservation Area.

A number of buildings within the Conservation Area are Listed Grade II. Listed Building consent is needed from the Council to demolish or extend a Listed Building or to alter it either outside or inside in any way which would change its character.

Bolton's Unitary Development Plan contains a number of policies relating to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. Numbers 492 - 504 Blackburn Road lie within the identified Astley Bridge District Centre and are subject to the District Centres shopping policies of the plan. All these policies are set out in the Appendix.

General guidance on policy for Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is given in Planning Control Policy Notes 19 and 20. Guidance on shop front design and advertisements is given in Planning Control Policy Notes 4 and 6. These notes are available from the Planning Department.

Guidance leaflets on the care, maintenance and alteration of traditional buildings are also available free of charge.

Development Guidelines

DEMOLITION

- Consent will not usually be given to demolish buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

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".

NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 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.

STREET SURFACING AND FURNITURE

- Any original stone flags, setts and kerbs should be retained and relaid where necessary.
- New paving on Birley Street should be in reclaimed or new stone. Concrete flags

incorporating an appropriate aggregate may be acceptable in other locations.

- Brick paving or black top should not be used as these materials are not in keeping with the character of the area.
- Any tarmacadam resurfacing to carriageways should incorporate an appropriate aggregate.

Building Materials

- Alterations should utilise traditional materials to match those used to construct the building. These include brick, stone and slate. Reclaimed local stone or new stone to match the existing should be used in preference to 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 run off of water.
- External 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.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Stone window cills, lintels, door surrounds and stone steps should be retained together with any original windows and doors.
- The integrity of the terraces depends on the retention of an uninterrupted flat facade relieved only by the subtle modelling of the surface, achieved by the

recessing of doors and windows. The following are unacceptable:

- porches
- bow and bay windows
- external shutters
- changes in size or shape of window and door openings
- dormer windows
- Any doorways or windows no longer in use should be retained and not blocked up.
- Owners should be encouraged to use the following styles when replacing windows and doors: Vertical sliding sash windows with glazing bars and six panes of glass to each of the opening lights, six panelled or vertically boarded 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. U.P.V.C. 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.

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 to match the existing materials. Where ridge tiles need

replacing these should be in stone or blue clay.

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

RAINWATER GOODS

- Replacement rainwater goods should be in cast iron or moulded aluminium with a black coating.

BOUNDARY WALLS AND GATES

- 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.

SHOP FRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

- The installation of traditional style painted timber shop fronts will be encouraged in appropriate buildings. This will include the use of stallrisers, pilasters and cornices to frame the shop window. Hand painted fascia signs and hanging signs will also be encouraged.
- Advertisement consent will not be given for internally illuminated box signs. The use of external lights and concealed lighting will be encouraged.
- 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.

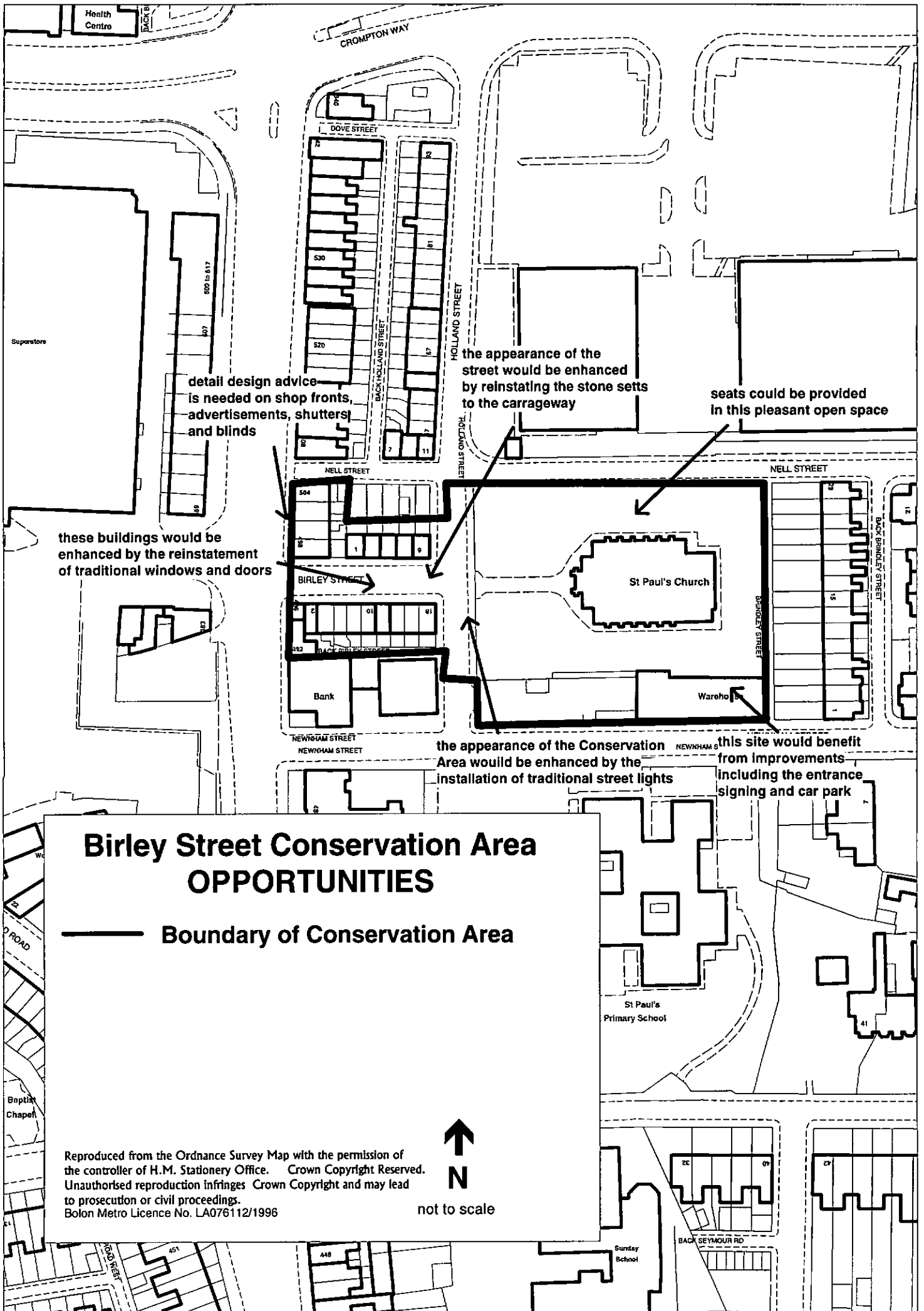
- Externally fixed shutter boxes which project from the facade of the shop, galvanised finishes and solid shutters are not in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and are not acceptable.

MINOR FIXTURES

- 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 material i.e. walls or roofs.

WHEELIE BINS

- The layout of traditional properties can create difficulties for storing bins. Wherever possible they should be stored out of sight and not left on the street or footway.



Birley Street Conservation Area OPPORTUNITIES

— Boundary of Conservation Area

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not to scale

detail design advice is needed on shop fronts, advertisements, shutters and blinds

these buildings would be enhanced by the reinstatement of traditional windows and doors

the appearance of the street would be enhanced by reinstating the stone sets to the carrageway

seats could be provided in this pleasant open space

the appearance of the Conservation Area would be enhanced by the installation of traditional street lights

this site would benefit from improvements including the entrance signing and car park

SECTION THREE

Opportunities for Enhancement

This section highlights issues. It does not put forward detailed proposals for enhancement.

Listed Buildings Birley Street

The character and appearance of the two terraces of houses on Birley Street would be enhanced by the reinstatement of traditional timber sliding sash window and traditional timber doors.

Street Surfaces

The character of Birley Street would be enhanced by reinstating the original stone setts to the carriageway.

Street Lights

The appearance of the Conservation Area would be enhanced by the replacement of modern street lighting with traditional style columns and lanterns.

St Pauls Churchyard

The provision of seats in the churchyard would enable local people without gardens to enjoy this pleasant open space.

Shop Fronts, Advertisements, Shutters And Blinds

Detailed design advice on shop fronts, advertisements, shutters and blinds is needed to encourage higher standards throughout the Conservation Area.

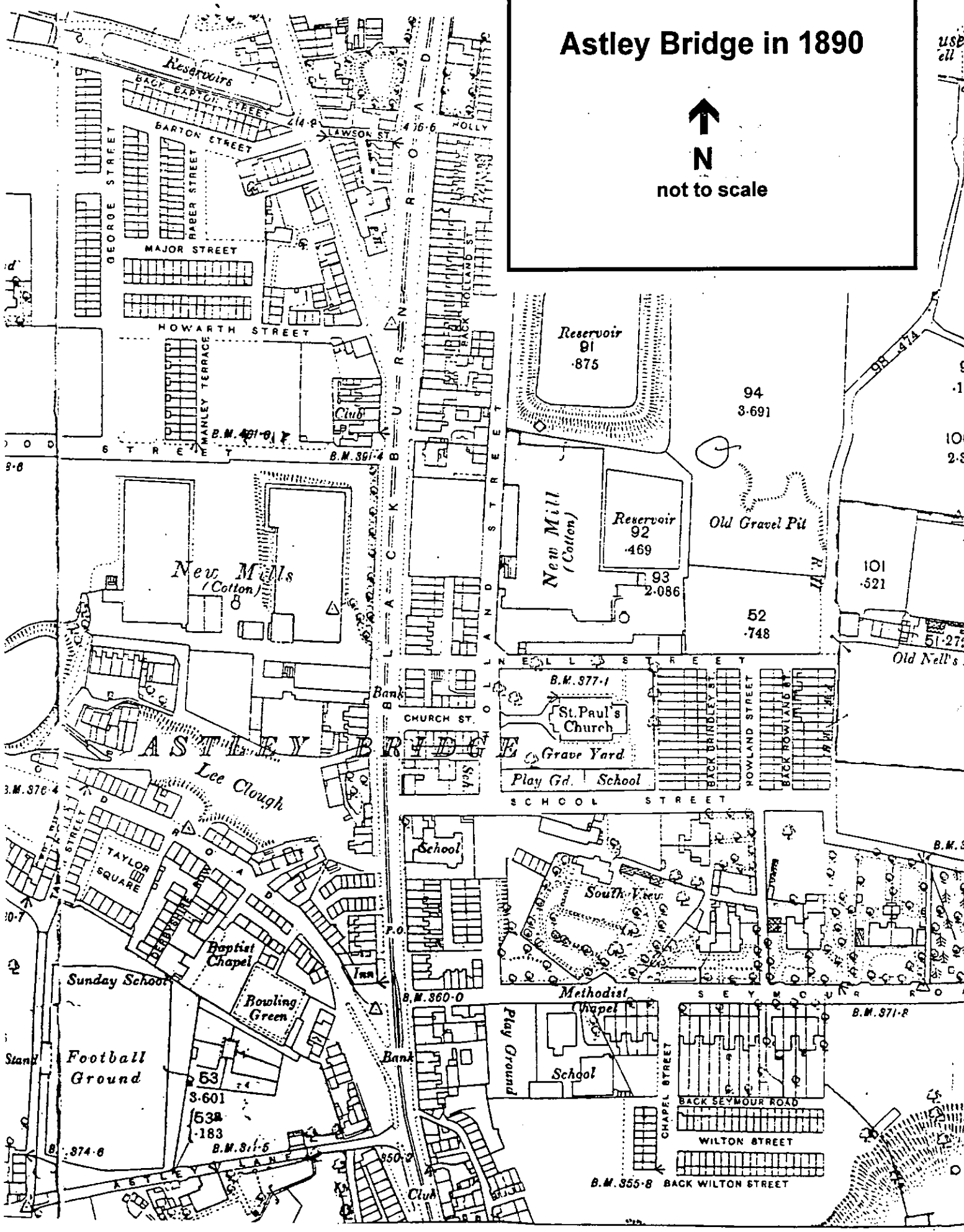
Former St. Pauls Infant School

This building and its grounds would benefit from an improvement scheme including a more appropriate entrance and signing and the resurfacing of the car park.

Astley Bridge in 1890



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APPENDIX

Bolton's Unitary Development Plan Policies

Conservation Areas

CE2. The Council will preserve or enhance the character of 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.

CE2/1 The council will preserve or enhance the character of Conservation Areas by:-

- (a) ensuring that all new development and alterations to existing buildings preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area;**
- (b) requiring the height, size, design, materials, roofscape or plot width of new development, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings, to respect the character of the Conservation Area;**
- (c) seeking to retain the materials, features, trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.**

This policy outlines some of the elements which the Council will take into account when considering applications in Conservation Areas.

CE2/2 The Council will not normally allow the demolition of buildings which contribute to the character of a Conservation Area. Where demolition is acceptable the Council will ensure that new

development enhances the appearance of the Conservation Area, and that building takes place as quickly as possible after demolition.

Consent from the Council is necessary for the demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas. If the building is important to the area's character, the demolition will be resisted. The Council will ensure that unsightly gaps are not left when demolition does take place by ensuring rapid development with good quality buildings.

CE2/3 The Council will not normally consider outline planning applications for development in Conservation Areas.

The Council will consider whether it has sufficient information to assess fully the environmental implications of a proposed development from an outline application.

Listed Buildings and Sites of Archaeological Interest

CE3. The Council will protect Listed Buildings and their setting, Ancient Monuments, and sites of archaeological interest from harmful development and operations.

Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments and sites of Archaeological Interest are valuable as part of Bolton's heritage and there is a presumption for their retention and against any damage occurring to them. The Council will also try to ensure that necessary repairs are carried out to Listed Buildings whose condition is deteriorating. In appropriate circumstances the Council will encourage the Department of the Environment to list buildings which are considered to be of

sufficient Architectural or Historical Interest. Where damage to archaeological sites is inevitable, action will be taken to try to ensure that the site is recorded fully.

CE3/1. Proposals for the alteration, extension or change of appearance of Listed Buildings should not detract from their character, appearance or setting. In considering applications for Listed Building Consent the Council will have regard to the following criteria:

- (a) proposals should retain the materials, features and details of the Listed Building;**
- (b) the height, size, design, setting and roofscape should respect the character of the Listed Building;**
- (c) proposals should not detract from the setting and open space which surround a Listed Building.**

This policy outlines the detailed criteria which will be taken into account in the determination of applications for Listed Building Consent. Apart from the basic design, it also highlights the importance of the setting and open space which surround Listed Buildings.

CE3/2. The Council will normally consider favourably proposals for appropriate alternative uses for Listed Buildings, provided that their character, appearance and setting are conserved. Some Listed Buildings are no longer required for their original uses. There is a danger that some buildings can lie empty and deteriorate, increasing the pressure to demolish them. The Council will try and avoid this by allowing alternative uses as long as they do not harm the character and appearance of the building and its setting and are in conformity with other policies of this Plan.

CE3/3 The Council will protect, enhance and preserve sites of archaeological interest

and their setting and the importance of archaeological remains will be recognised in the consideration of planning applications.

Archaeological remains are irreplaceable and, in many cases, subject to damage and destruction during development. The Council will continue to support the maintenance and development of a comprehensive record of archaeological sites and monuments. The importance of archaeological sites and Ancient Monuments will be recognised in the consideration of planning applications. Where it is not considered essential to preserve remains, then arrangements will be entered into to record archaeological evidence.

District Centres

S5. The Council will normally permit proposals for shopping development, which are appropriate in scale and character, in or immediately adjoining the district centres.

There are four district centres in the Borough, namely Astley Bridge, Farnworth, Horwich and Westhoughton. They are smaller centres than Bolton, and offer local people convenient shopping for a wide range of goods. The Council wishes to sustain and support the role of the district centres as a principal focus for retailing, arts and cultural provision, leisure and entertainment, commercial services and community facilities. Support will be given to proposals involving the refurbishment of existing centres and the Council will, where possible promote schemes which improve the overall shopping environment.

In addition the Council believes that there are opportunities to extend facilities within district centres, especially for non-food retailing. It will therefore encourage proposals which will enhance the range of goods and services available within the centres. Proposals will normally have to be in or adjoining the identified shopping centre. the Council will interpret "adjoining" to mean immediately next

to the shopping centre boundary. However, should a proposed site be separated from the shopping centre by a highway the Council will use its discretion as to whether the site is adjoining. A major factor in the analysis will be the class of the road, and whether it is

perceived as a boundary which signifies a change in land-use. The Council will consider preparing more detailed strategies or Action Plans for each of the four centres over the plan period.