

Churchgate Conservation Area



Draft Conservation Area Appraisal

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CHURCHGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 Introduction

Churchgate Conservation Area is situated in the eastern part of Bolton town centre. The focus of the area is the Church of St Peter, set in an attractive, ancient burial ground; there has been a church on this site for over 1000 years. Churchgate itself is a principal business street and historically one of two principal streets in the town. The properties lining this street, and the east side of Bradshawgate include some of the earliest buildings in Bolton, but also more recent post-war 20th century development.

The purpose of the conservation area appraisal is to reassess the designated Churchgate Conservation Area, and to evaluate and record its special interest. As part of this review, extensions to the conservation area are proposed. This review of the Churchgate 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. It supplements the guidance within *Building Bolton* (2006), to offer additional guidance and provide a starting point for developing initiatives in the area.

AHP is grateful for assistance in preparing this report from Jackie Whelan, Diane Vaughton (Bolton Council), Norman Redhead (GMAU) and the Librarians at Bolton Archives.

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 adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) guide the Council’s planning decisions 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 Churchgate Conservation Area was originally designated in 1970, and the boundary extended in 1987 to include St Peter’s Hall. The conservation area was last reviewed by Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council in the late 1990s.

3.0 Summary of special interest

The Conservation Area includes two contrasting areas; the large open burial ground dominated by Grade I listed St Peter's Church, and a tight area of densely developed urban streets to the west along Churchgate, Bradshawgate, part of Silverwell Street and north to Bank Street. Although many of the buildings have been rebuilt, including the Church which dates from 1867-71, the street pattern is little altered from the layout first established in the medieval period.

There has been a church on the site of St Peter's for around 1000 years; the late Saxon cross found here in 1866 suggests that the first church was Saxon. St Peter's Church was re-built in 1871 and is a large town church designed by the respected Lancaster architects Austin and Paley. The church is a key landmark and the tall tower and gabled west front dominate views eastwards along Churchgate. The former burial ground is an important green space in Bolton's town centre, with the many memorials, mature trees and grass providing an attractive setting for the church and the Old Grammar School. The Church marks the edge of the town centre where the ground falls away to the deeply cut River Croal to the north and east; the topography of this area adds interest to the street scene. The south side of the burial ground is bounded by the post-war Friends Meeting House and late 20th century office buildings, the latter in a neutral neo-Georgian style.

Churchgate takes its name from the parish church, to which it leads. The street was the heart of the medieval town and important for the weekly markets held here from the medieval period until the early 19th century; Bolton was granted a market charter in 1251. The present market cross was erected in 1909, replacing an earlier structure. The street is lined with buildings of all dates, including re-fronted 17th century timber-framed former houses and inns, Victorian commercial buildings and 20th century offices. The latter office buildings are not sensitive to the scale, grain and pattern of development along Churchgate and have had a negative impact on the character of the conservation area. The street is partially pedestrianised and the recent repaving scheme has enhanced the character and appearance of Churchgate; views along the street in both directions are important. Bank Street is the northern continuation of Bradshawgate and its east side is lined with 19th and 20th century 3-storey buildings, mostly altered.

The topography of the river Croal enables dramatic views into the conservation area from the east and north, although these views are marred by St Peter's Way and late 20th century office development and car parks on the north side of Churchgate. Views north and south along Bradshawgate are also significant and this street retains some good Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings, although it suffers from heavy traffic and poor quality hard landscaping.

The historic buildings in the conservation area are generally no more than 3 storeys in height, punctuated by the tall tower and west gable of St Peter's. The fine historic grain of the area, defined by the former burgrave plots, has survived well on sites towards the west end of Churchgate and along Bradshawgate, but this historic townscape has been severely disrupted by late 20th century development at the east end of Churchgate. Materials and building styles in the area are varied, with timber-framing on the earliest buildings, usually painted black and white, red brick on most 19th century commercial

buildings, with stone and terracotta on later 19th century and early 20th century buildings. Stone is used to face the highest status buildings.

Two areas of extension are proposed; the south side of Princess Street and the north side of Church Bank.

4.0 Assessing Special Interest:

4.1 Location and setting

Churchgate conservation area includes the east part of Bolton town centre, on a low spur 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 Manchester basin.

The conservation area is bounded by the deeply-cut River Croal to the north and east, beyond which are industrial inner suburbs of Bolton. This area is now dominated by St Peter's Way, a 1960s inner ring road. To the south is the Silverwell Street and Wood Street conservation area, covering a grid of 18th century streets. To the west is Deansgate, the westward continuation of Churchgate and also one of the town's principal medieval streets.

4.2 Historic Development and Archaeology

Early Bolton

Archaeological work in Bolton has shown that there were probably 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. This pub was demolished in 1998 and is now The Varsity, on the north side of Churchgate.

Although Bolton is not mentioned in Domesday, a settlement almost certainly existed by then suggested by the Anglo-Saxon cross found during the construction of the present church. 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. Churchgate was the heart of the original settlement of Bolton, the street leading to the church, and close to river crossings reached by Church Bank and Bank Street. The west end of Churchgate was marked by a market cross, at the junction with Deansgate, Bradshawgate and Bank Street.

Bolton's first church was built on the site of St Peter's which is believed to be the fourth church on this site since the Saxon period. An Anglo-Saxon cross was found in the churchyard during excavations for the building of the present church in 1866. The churchyard is archaeologically sensitive.

Bank Street was formerly known as Windy Bank and was the steepest street in Bolton until the creation of a high river embankment lessened its gradient. Bradshawgate originally led, via Bank Street, to Tonge Moor, Bradshaw and Harwood. Along with Bank Street, Bradshawgate was originally a very narrow road but was widened at the beginning of the 20th Century when the west side was set back and lined with new buildings.

Churchgate was the centre of town life for several centuries. It was the site of a market; the market charter was originally granted to William de Ferrers, the Lord of the Manor by Henry III in 1251. A market cross stood at the Deansgate entrance to Churchgate from 1486 until 1786 and John Wesley spoke there on several occasions. The present column of Dartmoor granite was given to the town by George Harwood, M.P. for Bolton from 1895 to 1912 and was unveiled in 1909. Four bronze plaques around the base illustrate and record some of the principal events in Bolton's history. The market stretched for 150 metres along Churchgate and Deansgate, and by the early 19th Century, market stalls had encroached onto nearby streets and were causing traffic congestion and inconvenience to both traders and customers. In 1826 the market was moved to a new site where the Town Hall and Victoria Square now stand.

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. In 1288, there were 69 of these burgage plots, each long plot had a narrow street frontage. Excavations and maps show that these plots had a standard width of just over 8 metres, or multiples thereof. 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 probably due to the town's merchant class and non-conformist leanings. 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. From the 17th century onwards, the Churchgate area was important for manufacturing and trade, with warehouses for textile and building trades built on the rear of burgage plots. These were used by merchants for storing cotton, textiles and other materials. The 1793 map of Bolton shows the layout of the medieval town, expanding north and south of Churchgate and Deansgate with densely-developed courtyards behind the frontage buildings (Fig.18).

A hundred and fifty years ago Churchgate was a prosperous street lined with town houses, shops and inns; some of these two and three-storey buildings are shown in the mid Victorian photograph below (Fig.1). Stage coaches left the street for Liverpool, Yorkshire, Manchester and the rest of Lancashire, with many inns, including The Old Man and Scythe and the Swan Hotel providing refreshments and stabling for horses.



Fig.1: Photograph of Churchgate in the mid 19th century, before St Peter's was taken down and rebuilt in the 1860s.

Bolton and Churchgate 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 as the centre of the bleaching and finishing branch of the cotton industry, and also for engineering. 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.19).

In the early 19th Century many of the long narrow burgage plots and alleyways at the rear of properties facing Churchgate were developed to provide courtyard housing for working people. These are clearly shown on the 1847 OS map (Fig.20), and formed short rows of one-up, one-down cottages, with a single-aspect and often back-to back, facing narrow lanes or courts. Gaskells Court on the north side of Churchgate was an example of a densely developed plot; for 400 years this was occupied by Gaskells House, used as Davis's lodging house in the late 19th century and demolished in the

1960's. The lack of sanitation and cramped dwellings in close proximity to industry created poor living conditions.

The railways arrived in Bolton in the 1840s, skirting the south side of the town centre. The dramatic Croal Viaduct, built in 1847, carries the Bolton Blackburn and Helliwell branch line over the river Croal and still is a landmark east of the Church. The River Croal was a serious health hazard until stone-lined in the 1860s as part of a programme of public health improvements.



Fig.2: Churchgate in the 1930s, with theatres and cinemas, and a K6 phone box on the right

By the second half of the 19th Century the area around Churchgate was densely developed with a wide variety of buildings, shown on the 1893 OS map (Fig.21); most of the courtyard housing had been cleared. Antelope Court at the rear of the Pastie Shop contained a three storey silk mill, an old bakehouse, tenement dwellings and the Antelope Inn. The scale of buildings increased as cramped plots were re-developed for larger purpose-built premises, illustrated by comparing the scene in figures 1 and 2. Entertainment in the area ranged from the cock pit at the rear of Antelope Court, to two theatres designed by Frank Matcham, built on the site of earlier workers' housing east of the Olde Man and Scythe Inn (Fig.2). St Peter's school occupied a site between Paley Street and Silverwell Street, with St. Peters Vicarage on the north side of Churchgate at the top of Church Bank.

Churchgate in the 20th century

Churchgate was a thriving town centre street throughout the first half of the 20th Century. As well as business activity, it was a popular entertainment centre. In the 1930's, the two theatres were joined by the Capitol Cinema (Fig.2), but all three were demolished in the 1960s. Retail was important until the post-war years when Churchgate and Church Bank were cut off from the eastern part of the town by St. Peters Way; today there are only a few shops. A one way traffic system and the partial pedestrianisation of Churchgate was implemented, recently upgraded using natural materials. A number of sites along Churchgate, Paley, Silverwell and Institute Streets have been redeveloped for offices over the last 40 years, and office use is now the principal business activity in the conservation area (Fig.3). The Friends Meeting House was built south west of the Church, in contemporary style in 1970.



Fig.3: Stone Cross House, 5-storey offices built in 1991 and dominating adjacent historic buildings, including the Old Pastie Shoppe to its right

The eastern stretch of the River Croal was partly culverted in the 1960s, in advance of the construction of St. Peter's Way. This highways scheme resulted in the demolition of all the property from the Croal Viaduct to Church Bank and the obliteration of the Canal Wharf, although the 1840s Croal Viaduct still dominates views on the east side of the conservation area, spanning St Peter's Way.

4.3 Open Spaces

The former burial ground of St Peter's Church is the most important open space in the conservation area; there has been a churchyard here for over a thousand years. The site overlooks the valley of the river Croal to the north and east with a steep wooded bank dropping east to St Peter's Way. The burial ground contains an interesting collection of burial memorials to some of Bolton's most famous inhabitants, including Samuel Crompton. Mature trees and shrubs provide shelter from traffic noise and the wider urban environment, and the area has a tranquil atmosphere (Fig.4). It is bounded by a high retaining wall along the south side of Bank Street, with 18th century gate piers facing Churchgate. The low wall along Silverwell Street has lost its railings. The east side is bounded by the vicarage and Old Grammar School, now the parish centre, with 20th century buildings to the south. The car park on the south side of the church intrudes into the character of the burial ground.



Fig.4: St Peter's Churchyard, viewed from the south towards Church Bank

4.4 Views and vistas

Due to the tall scale of the St Peter's Church, the building and its tower is a focal point in many views across the town. Views eastwards along Churchgate are terminated by St. Peters Church (see cover). The tower was designed to be visible from Deansgate when the church was rebuilt in 1871 (Fig.2), and is also a landmark from St Peter's Way and from the north and east. Views of the church from Silverwell Street and Institute Street are partly obscured by the Bolton Quaker Meeting House. There are important views westwards along Churchgate down Deansgate. The Market Cross at the western end of Churchgate is a smaller local landmark.

There are good views of the wider Bolton area north and north-east down Bank Street and Church Bank across the Croal Valley. Mill Hill Mill (Tower Works) between Kestor Street and Mule Street is clearly visible on the horizon from Church Bank. The West Pennine Moors can be seen from Bank Street and St. Peter's churchyard on a clear day. Views into the conservation area from the north of the River Croal are spoilt by late 20th century office buildings (Fig.5).



Fig.5: View of St Peter's Church and the north side of Churchgate from the Brown Street car park, across the river Croal

4.5 Character and appearance

Churchgate is a wide and open street, which reflects its former function as a Market Place. The plots in the western part of the Conservation Area are densely developed with properties built-up to the back edge of the footway, the eastern side of the conservation area around the Church is more open. Historic buildings tend to be no more than three storeys high, although this historic scale has been disrupted by late 20th century office buildings, up to eight storeys high on Churchgate. The Church remains the dominant building with its tall tower. The use of red brick from the 19th century has dominated the character of the conservation area, although the Church is stone and 20th century offices are clad in a variety of facing materials (Fig.6).



Fig.6: Travel House, an office building constructed in 1974, with the late 1990s Varsity pub to the left, and the church beyond.

Vehicular traffic along Churchgate is light, with most of the street now allocated to pedestrians and paved with natural stone. The western side of the conservation area is busier; Bradshawgate is used as a bus route and has a heavier flow of vehicular traffic. It is also well-used by pedestrians all day, as it contains a variety of shops and leisure facilities. Bank Street is a busy road for vehicles but less used by pedestrians. The streets around the Church are quieter, with most buildings used as offices. There is almost no residential property within the conservation area, in contrast to over a 100 years ago.

The northern section 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 bank on the corner of Princess Street and Bradshawgate is now a bar. St. Peter's Church, a Victorian building, is set in an ancient burial ground which retains its historic atmosphere and is also important as a landscaped open space. The area around St Peter's Church has a tranquil character in contrast to the commercial streets; it provides a welcome green oasis in the town and the churchyard is one of the few open spaces with mature trees and shrubs in Bolton town centre. The buildings around the edge of the burial ground have a less formal arrangement than buildings on Churchgate and Bradshawgate.

The pre-industrial market town character of Churchgate, once a townscape of fine grain with narrow plots and frontages has been seriously eroded in recent years by large-scale office redevelopment schemes towards the east end of the street. The northern parts of plots, overlooking the Croal now have an unattractive character, used for car parking and servicing for the frontage properties. The town effectively "turns its back" on the river Croal which is hidden and inaccessible from the south (Fig,5).

4.6 Character areas

The Churchgate conservation area contains two contrasting character areas, St Peter's Church and Churchgate.

- a) **St Peter's Church.** The eastern part of the area consists of St. Peter's Churchyard and adjoining streets. The former burial ground is the dominant

feature, a large open green area, containing trees and shrubs, dominated by the church. Enclosing this space is low density development around its south eastern and south western boundaries including the Vicarage and Parish Centre, Bolton Friends' Meeting House and recent office buildings. This area and its enclosing streets are relatively quiet and give the area the character of a backwater. Church Bank drops steeply towards the river, with a few 19th century buildings and cleared ground on its north side, and the high retaining wall to the churchyard on its south side.



Fig.7: St Peter's Church from Silverwell Street

- b) **Churchgate.** The western part of the conservation area is densely developed, with built-up frontages along Churchgate, the east sides of Bradshawgate and Bank Street. Historic buildings such as the Swan Hotel and Old Man and Scythe occupy long plots with courtyards and property boundaries that reflect the historic medieval burgage plots. 20th century office buildings at the east end of Churchgate have been built across historic plot boundaries, and the rear of these plots used for car parking. The street frontages are lined with retail and business premises of varying dates. The main streets are busy with road traffic and pedestrians, with part of Churchgate pedestrianised.



Fig.8: The east side of Bradshawgate

4.7 The Qualities of Buildings

The conservation area contains a varied range of building types, built in different architectural style and over a long time-span. The earliest buildings on Churchgate date from the medieval period and are timber-framed, although often re-fronted in different materials. The Old Man and Scythe and part of the Brass Cat are very significant survivals from Bolton's early development. Early 19th century buildings are represented by the Swan Hotel, built in late Georgian style, in red brick with slate roofs. Later 19th century and early 20th century buildings are faced in a variety of materials, and built in an eclectic range of styles; there are good examples on Bradshawgate. No single style or type of building dominates the conservation area. Late 20th century buildings have generally not been of a high design quality; the area lacks good quality, contemporary buildings.

Listed Buildings

Six buildings are listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest within the Conservation Area:

2 and 4 Churchgate (Swan Hotel), Grade II

The Swan Hotel, originally a coaching inn, was built in four main phases between 1800 and 1930. Built in red brick, the older portion of the Churchgate frontage has a central Tuscan portico porch flanked by full height shallow bays with tripartite sash windows. On Bradshawgate the early 19th Century part of the hotel has an elliptical-headed carriage arch leading to the rear yard, with a Palladian window above. The Churchgate and Bradshawgate buildings are linked by a three storey block constructed around 1850. The portico was used by various political agitators in the 19th Century to address the crowds.



Fig.9: the Swan Hotel on the corner of Churchgate and Bradshawgate

6, 8 and 10 Churchgate, (Old Man and Scythe Public House), Grade II

This property is reputed to date from 1251, but the present structure was largely built in 1636, including some of the internal timber-frame. It was re-fronted and remodelled in the mid 19th Century. The frontage is of brick, painted white with applied timbering although part of the building has a genuine timber frame. The roof is of stone flags.



Fig.10: The Old Man and Scythe.

31 Churchgate (Ye Olde Pastie Shoppe), Grade II

This shop is reputed to have a datestone of 1667 but the frontage dates from the late 18th Century. It is built of painted brick with a stone slate roof. The frontage has a rare example in Bolton of a late 18th or early 19th Century shopfront of two bowed windows with small panes, flanking a reeded doorcase. This is partly obscured by the modern canopies.

Market Cross, Churchgate Grade II

A square column of granite, designed by Bradshaw and Gass and unveiled in 1909. The plinth has bronze relief panels recording events in Bolton's history. The latest in a sequence of market crosses on this site since the medieval period.



Fig.11: the Market Cross in the early 20th century (Bolton Archives)

St. Peter's Church, Churchgate, Grade I

St. Peter's was entirely rebuilt between 1867 and 1871, in a late 13th gothic style designed by the architect E.G. Paley and paid for by Peter Ormerod a cotton manufacturer. A large example of a Victorian town church, the building is constructed of ashlar stone, with transepts and a fine imposing tower, 55 metres high, at the north west corner. The lofty interior is on a cathedral-like scale.

Gates and gate piers to St Peter's Church, Silverwell Street, Grade II

The handsome stone gate piers are late 18th century and pre-date the present church. The cast-iron gates are gothic in style and dated 1883, with the makers name, John Crook of Bolton.

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

11 Bradshawgate, the Apple Tree (Fig.8)

Formerly the Prince William pub, the right hand part of this pub is three storey building and dates from the early 20th Century. It is faced in buff-coloured glazed terracotta. There is a shallow porch over the entrance door supported on moulded brackets and the second floor has three circular windows with swag decoration.

13 and 15 Bradshawgate

These three-storey properties with modern shop fronts were built around the turn of the century. They are rendered and painted with ornate applied timber framing. Number 15 has a gable end fronting the street with two oriel windows.

19 Bradshawgate, Eden (Fig.12)

This ornate building on the corner of Princess Street was constructed in the early 20th century as a bank. Stone-built, it is two storeys high with a dentilled eaves cornice and a corner dome topped by a ball finial. There is an elaborately carved stone doorway with a canopy on the corner, and the building has long brick frontage to Princess Street.

11 and 13 Churchgate, "The Brass Cat"

Known as The Golden Lion in the early 19th century, the building has late medieval timber-framing and stonework to the rear, and within the passage. Parts of the building date from the 17th Century or earlier, including the rear wing overlooking Gaskells Court. The present frontage is rendered and dates from the early 20th century.

15, 17 and 19 Churchgate

This two storey commercial building dates from the 19th Century, with evidence of at least two phases in the frontage. The ground floor shop fronts are partly framed by Tuscan columns, dating from the early 19th century. The upper part of the frontage is late 19th century, faced in pressed red brick with decorative terracotta details, including a heavy dentilled cornice and balustraded parapet, arched window with swags and a shield. A plaque records that Sir Richard Arkwright, inventor of the spinning frame, had a barber's shop here from 1760 to 1768.

Silverwell Street, St Peter's Parish Centre

Built as the Old Grammar School in 1883, the stone-built school has an attractive gabled south frontage and forms part of the setting of the Church. The present building, designed by the architect R.Knill Freeman replaced a 17th century school on this site.

Silverwell Street, Crompton memorial in St Peter's Churchyard.

Granite tomb with inscription to Samuel Crompton, inventor of the spinning mule who died in 1827.

Silverwell Street, Hargreaves memorial in St Peter's Churchyard.

Square plinth with volutes, and inscriptions to the Hargreaves family, owners of a prominent Bolton engineering works.

Walls to Churchyard

The high retaining wall on Church bank is a strong feature in the street, and the low walls along Silverwell Street define the west edge of the churchyard (Fig.7), although the railings are missing.

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 Church, and for details. Hand-made red brick was used for many 19th century buildings, with machine-made bricks and terracotta in a variety of colours popular in the early 20th century. Pitched roofs are covered in Welsh slate, with a few rare examples of stone slate on earlier buildings. A number of brick-built properties have been rendered and painted white, and there are also examples of mock timber-framing, applied to brick or timber-framed structures.



Fig.12: A mixture of stone and brick on the former bank on Bradshawgate, now the Eden bar

St. Peter's Church and its grounds are bounded to the north and east by a substantial stone retaining wall, topped with an evergreen hedge. The stone gate piers to the main entrance on Church Bank date from the 18th century, and the gothic-style iron gates are late 19th century. The boundary along Silverwell Street is a low stone wall, with missing railings, and a high brick wall further south along the Silverwell Street boundary. A double row of headstones bounds the south western boundary.

Buildings constructed in the second half of the 20th century are faced in a variety of materials, including brick. The rear yard to Huntingdon House on the corner of Princess Street and Paley Street has a buff brick wall which matches the facing brick to the building.

4.9 Public realm: roads, pavements and street furniture

Carriageways on Bank Street, Bradshawgate, Church Bank and Silverwell Street are surfaced in tarmac. The only historic street surface is on Paley Street which has retained its original stone setts. Churchgate has been re-paved with a combination of natural stone setts for the vehicular areas, and stone paving for pedestrian areas, which has significantly enhanced the character and appearance of the street (Fig.13). The footways to Bank Street, Paley Street, Princess Street and Institute Street are tarmac, with concrete paving for footways on Bradshawgate with small sections of brick pavements and granite setts. Bradshawgate has retained its wide granite kerbs.



Fig.13: High quality natural paving and setts, with a traditional-style bollard on Churchgate

The entrance passage to Gaskells Court off Churchgate is paved in stone and the alleyway leading to the rear of the Old Man and Scythe is paved in stone setts; these are now rare examples of historic entrance passages with original stone surfaces.

As part of the Churchgate improvements, new lighting has been installed, in a traditional form, together with traditional steel bollards and new seating in a contemporary design. Some Victorian cast-iron lighting columns survive in St Peter's Churchyard, but with 20th century lamps. On the remaining streets, street lights have concrete columns with modern lanterns and there also late 20th century wall-mounted street lights along Bradshawgate. The Church yard has functional bench seating with concrete frames and timber slatted seats and backs, and plastic litter bins. The car park in the Church yard is laid with concrete setts.



Fig.14: Victorian cast-iron lighting column in the Church yard, with incompatible post-war lamp, and plastic bins.

5.0 Extent of intrusion and damage

5.1 Negative aspects

The principal intrusion into the character and appearance of Churchgate conservation area is the scale and form of late 20th century office developments at the east end of the street. These buildings also harm the setting of St Peter's Church, particularly the 1970s Travel House and Churchgate House, six to eight storeys high. The Bolton News building is also large in scale and occupies a whole block. Although this building is less intrusive in views east along Churchgate due to its set-back position and brick elevations, it has a poor relationship to Paley Street with no defined boundary and exposed car parking and bin storage (Fig.15).



Fig.15: The poorly defined edge to the east side of Paley Street, adjacent to the Bolton News building

To the rear of properties on the north side of Churchgate are car parks and service areas which present an unattractive sight from Brown Street (Fig.5). In particular, the concrete-framed car park north of Stone Cross House visually dominates views across the River Croal from the north. The car park on the north side of Princess Street to the rear of Churchgate House has eroded the historic pattern of long narrow plots in this area, and its open frontage affects the sense of enclosure on Princess Street.

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.

The frontages of the properties along the east side of Bank Street appear neglected; there is a vacant shop and others have suffered from insensitive alterations and advertising. One property retains an early 20th century shop front.



Fig.16: The east side of Bank Street, with altered 19th and 20th century buildings, and intrusive signage

5.2 Neutral areas

Some late 20th century infill development has had a neutral impact on the character of the conservation area. The neo-Georgian office buildings south of the Church on Institute Street and on the north side of Princess Street (Huntingdon House) are of a scale and form that complements historic buildings in the conservation area, although their overall design quality is modest. The street frontage is broken with vehicular access to rear car parks.



Fig.17: Late 20th century neo-Georgian offices on Institute Street

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. On Bradshawgate, the number of bars has increased, occupying former

bank buildings, for example. Public houses are the most enduring of uses in the area, with three historic inns still in use. There are no historic “buildings at risk” within the conservation area.

The public realm is generally well maintained, and Churchgate itself is particularly well managed, benefiting from high quality natural materials. The public realm along Bradshawgate is now in need of enhancement, due to the poorer condition and quality of materials used for footways.

Rear yard areas are often hidden from view, but car parking and the management of waste and wheeled bin storage is increasingly intrusive in side streets and views into rear yards.

The churchyard of St Peter’s is no longer in use as an open burial ground, but is an important open space, generally well cared for. Part of the space is also used for commercial car parking, which intrudes into the tranquility of the space.

5.4 Pressure for change

Commercial pressure for increased advertising is becoming visually intrusive in some areas, particularly on Bank Street where night clubs and shops use large fascias or advertising hoardings. On Bradshawgate, the use of temporary banner advertising by bars and leisure businesses is adding clutter in the streetscene and obscuring attractive frontages.

Changes to waste management standards are resulting in large wheeled bins which are hard to conceal unless accessible rear yards are available.

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 Suggested conservation area boundary changes

At present, the boundary of the conservation area excludes Church Bank, an historic street which originally led to a bridge over the River Croal. The street is bounded on its south side by the high stone retaining wall of the Church yard, and to the north by a group of altered 19th century terraced houses (Fig.18). Number 1 is a post-war commercial building of indifferent architectural quality, but Numbers 3 and 5 are fairly complete mid 19th century terraced former houses, occupied by a hotel in the mid 20th century; Number 5 has a semi-circular-arched doorway. Number 7 is an early 20th century terraced house, now a shop. To the east, the terrace has been truncated and there is a cleared site; this presents a development opportunity which could reinstate the rest of the terrace and provide a sense of enclosure on this side of the street. Glimpses into the deep-cut trench of the River Croal are possible from Church Bank, screened by trees.



Fig.18: The north side of Church Bank

The south side of Princess Street is presently outside the conservation area. This narrow street historically functioned as a back lane to Churchgate and dates from the early 19th century. The east end of the south side is occupied by a car park for the offices on Wood Street, whose rear elevations are visible on Princess Street. In the future, this car park would benefit from being sensitive development, to reinstate the street frontage and the grain of this part of the area. Further west, there are two-storey 19th century terraced brick properties and single-storey former workshops, now offices. Although altered, these buildings provide enclosure to the street and reinforce the grain of the area.



Fig.19: The south side of Princess Street, from the west

7.0 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.

8.0 Guidelines for development

8.1 New Development.

Building Bolton 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 will guide the design and standard of new enhancement work in the town centre. In addition, an audit of original stone flags, setts and kerbs in the conservation area should be undertaken, and significant examples retained and relaid where necessary.

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 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 items should be minimized to reduce visual clutter and obstacles to disabled people. High quality contemporary designs may be acceptable, 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 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. 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.

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. This will include the use of stall risers, pilasters and cornices to frame the shop window. High quality contemporary shop fronts will also be encouraged on appropriate buildings. Hand painted fascia signs and hanging signs will generally be encouraged.

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 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 those who live, work and visit the town. Well-designed and carefully sited interpretation boards or plaques can enhance people's enjoyment and understanding and raise awareness of good conservation area management.

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Bolton Council, *Churchgate Conservation Area* (n.d. – probably c.1999)

Bolton Vision, *Building Bolton, SPG*, 2006

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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

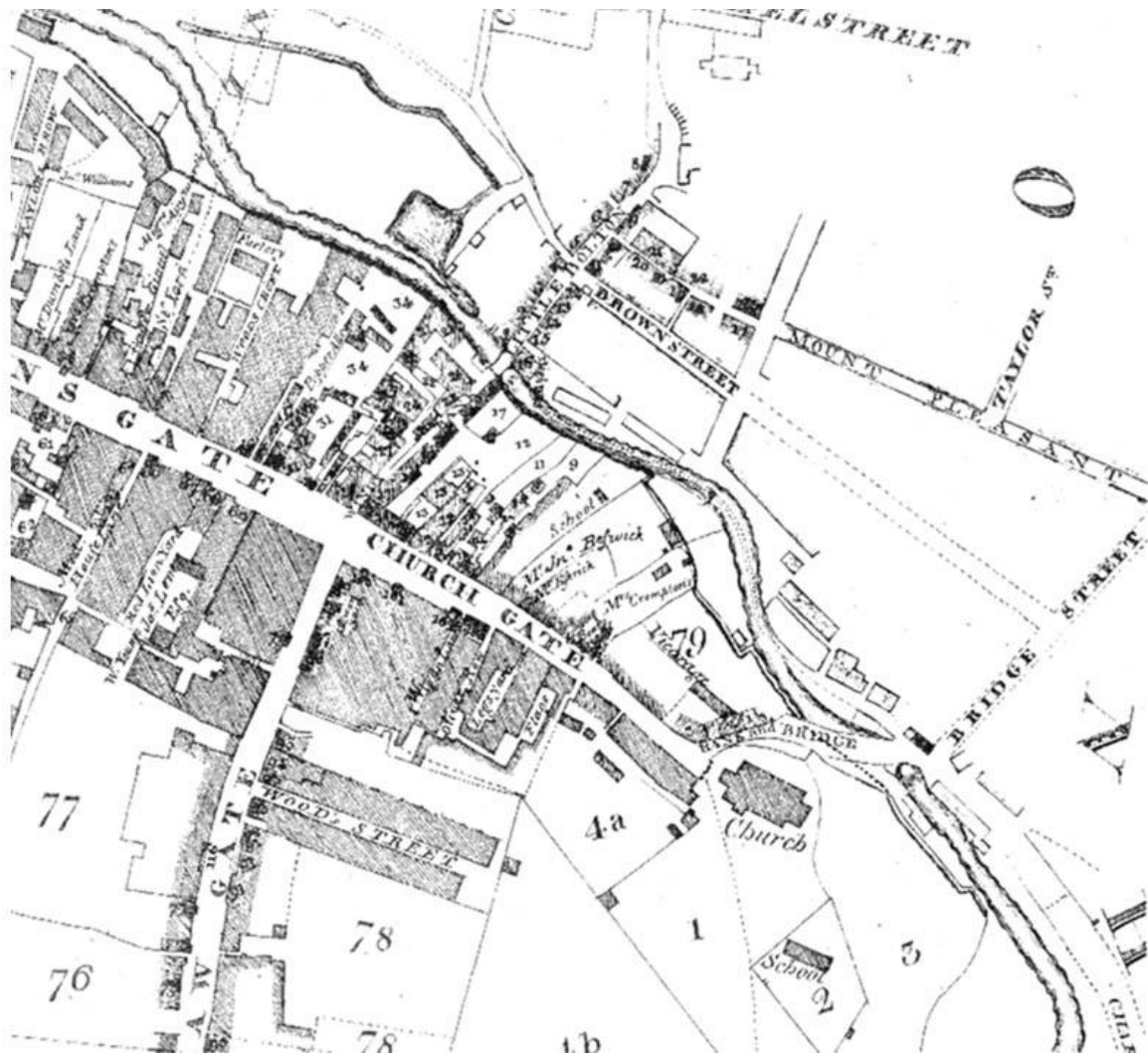


Fig.20: detail from 1793 map of Bolton, showing the Churchgate area (Bolton Archives)

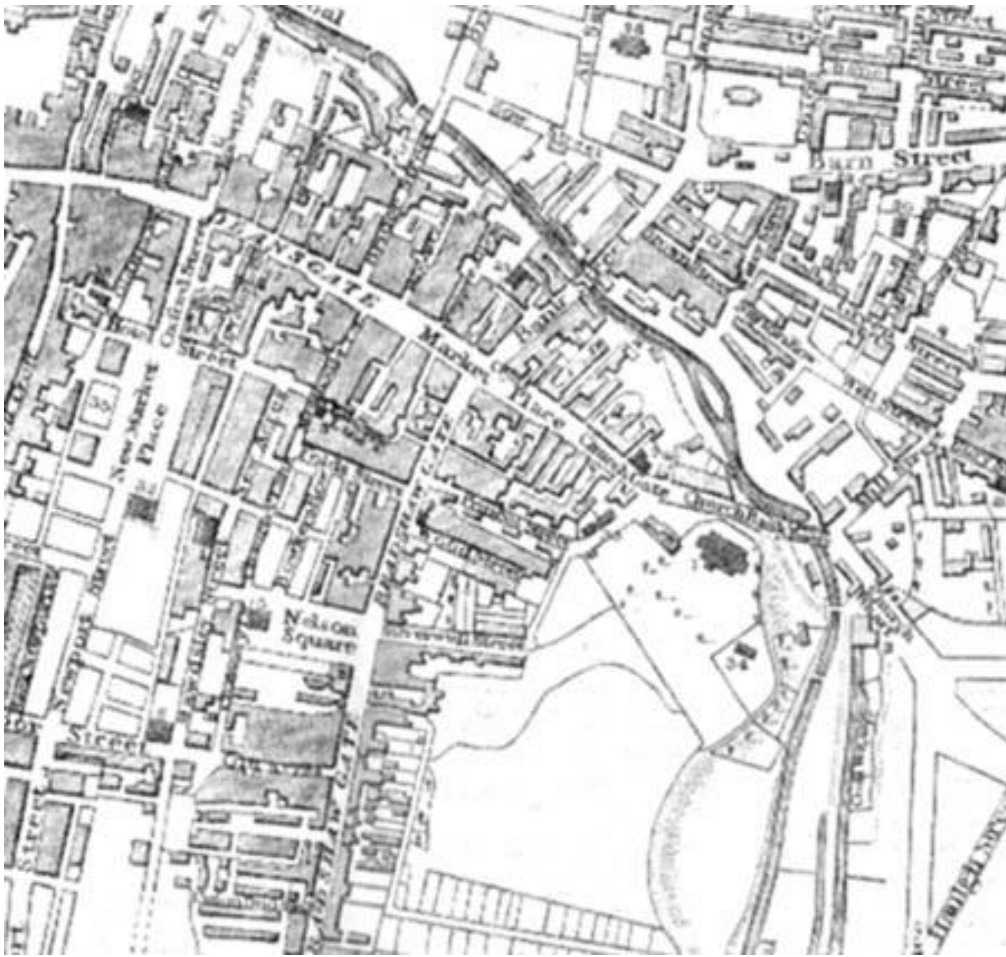


Fig.21: detail from 1824 map of Bolton showing the Churchgate area (Bolton Archives)

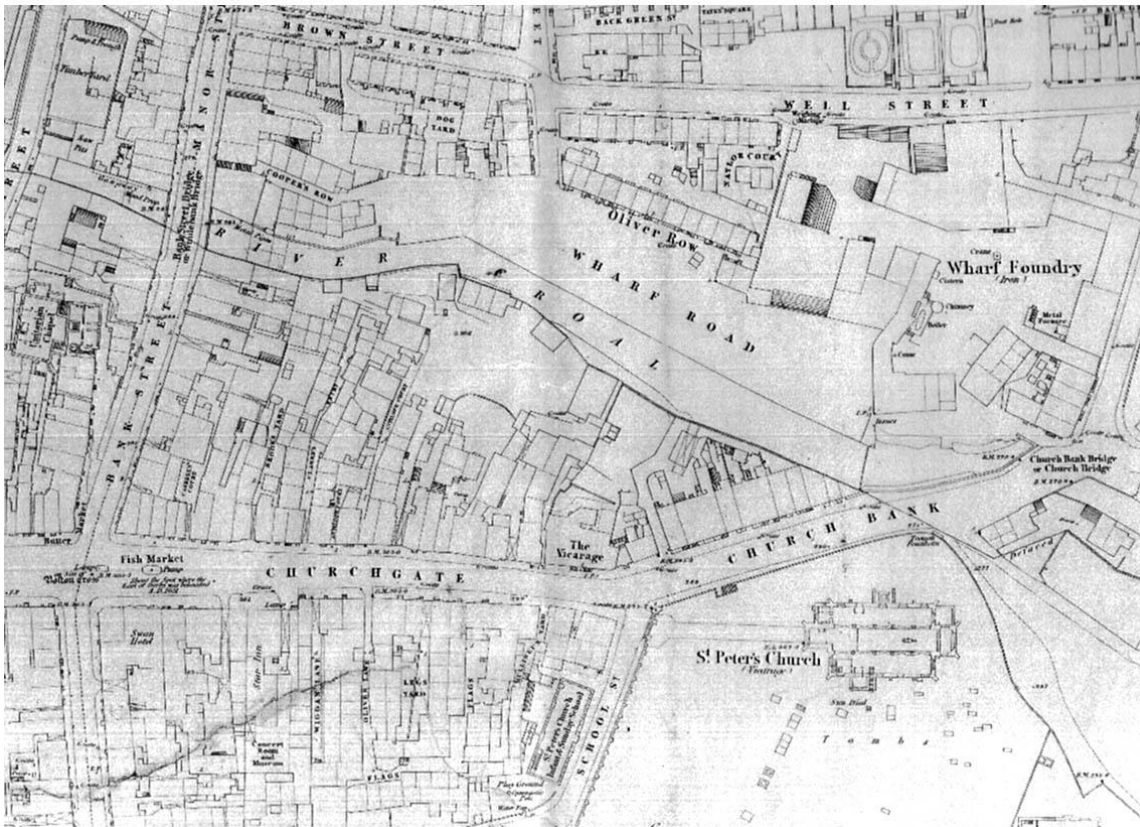


Fig.22: detail from 1847 Ordnance Survey map showing Churchgate area (Bolton Archives)

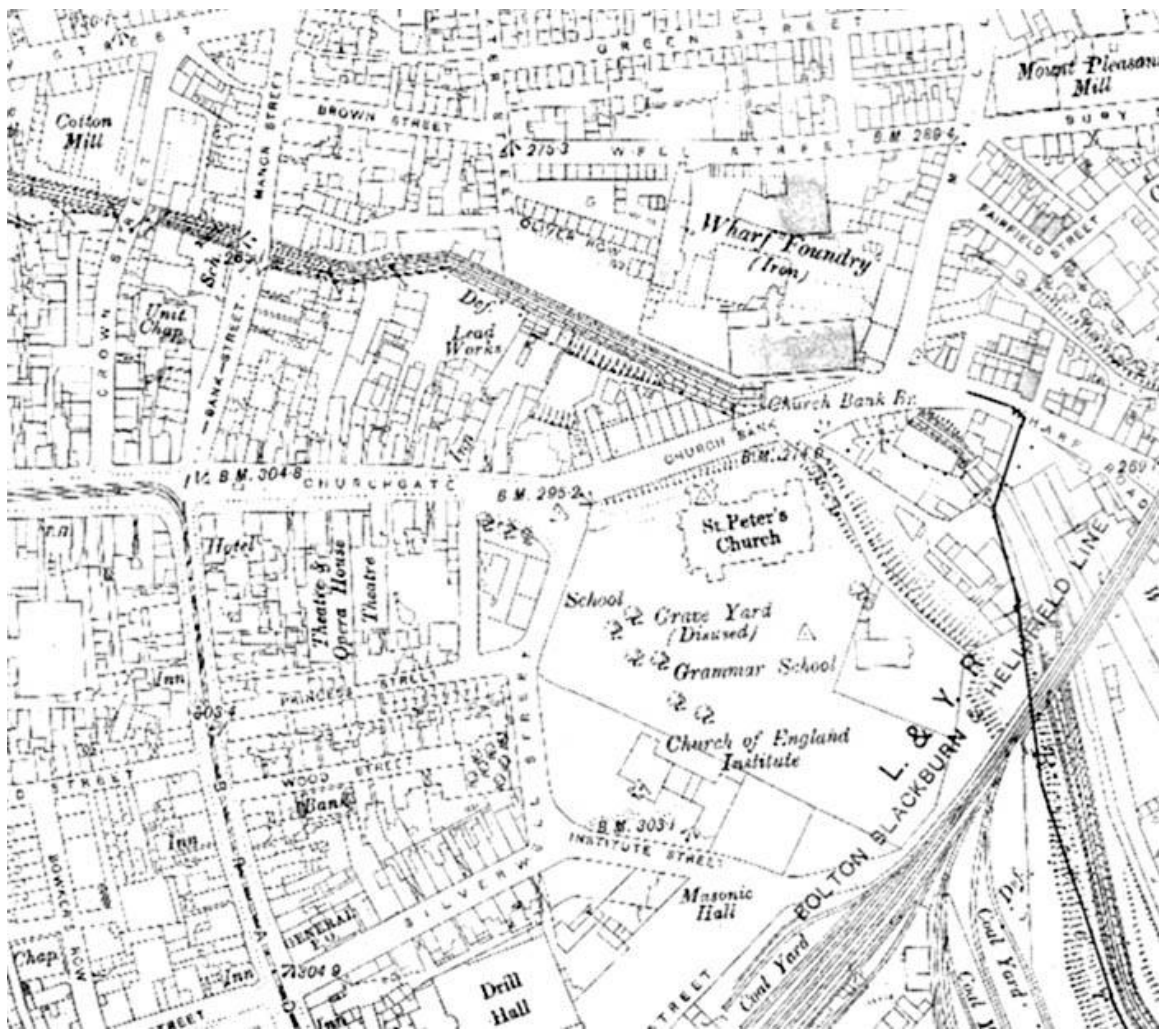


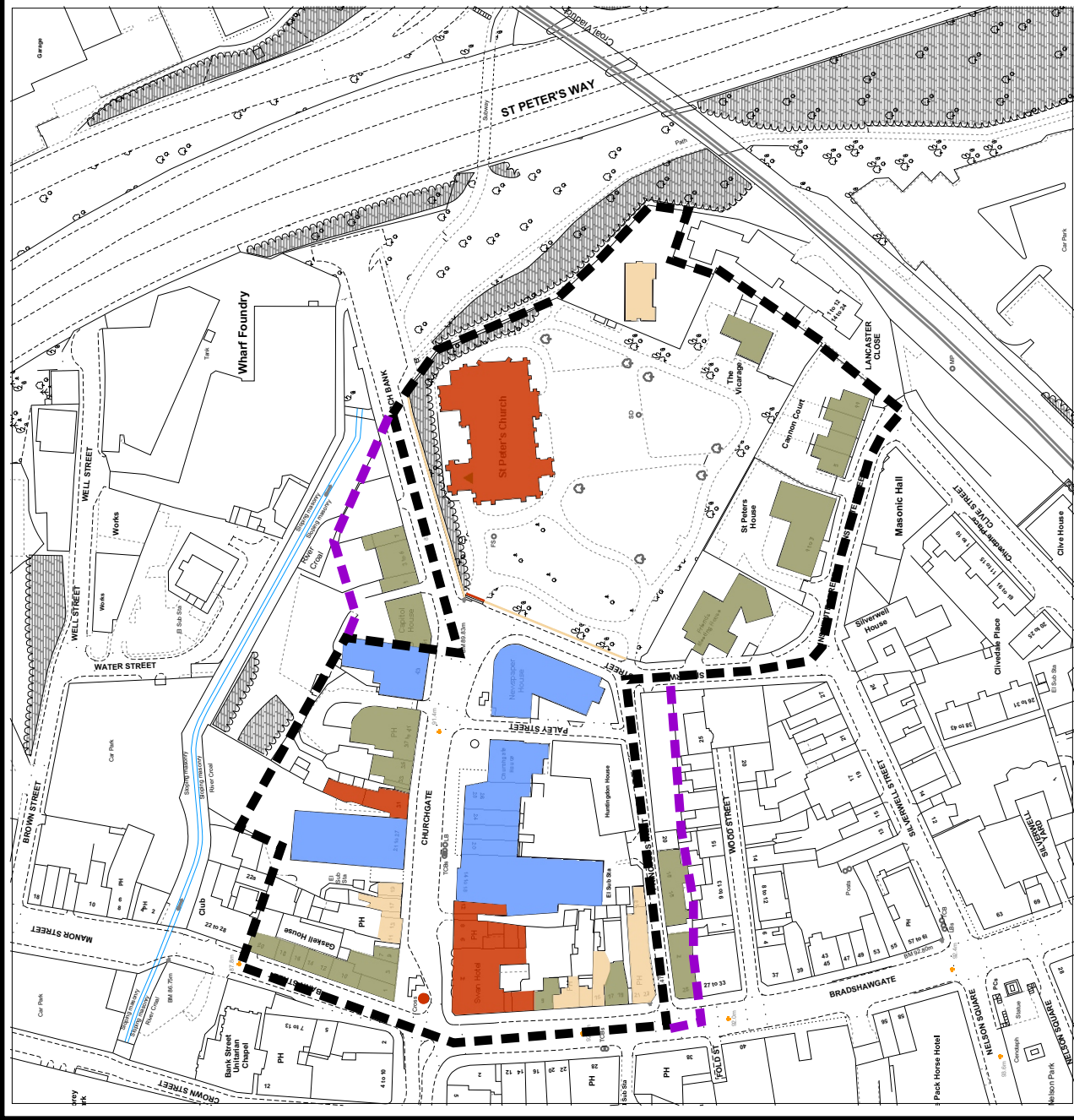
Fig.23: detail from 1893 Ordnance Survey map, showing Churchgate area (Bolton Archives)

Quality of Buildings


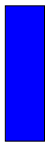




- Listed building
- Unlisted buildings of merit
- Building making a neutral impact
- Building making a negative impact
- Existing Conservation area boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration *

* Approved 2007

Map 1



Townscape Analysis

-  Important view
-  Landmark building
-  Potential development site
-  Important open space
-  Existing Conservation area boundary
-  Proposed boundary alteration *

* Approved 2007

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