

8. SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The Lord Street Conservation Area with its central boulevard is of national importance, being one of the two major examples of this type of street layout in the Britain (the other example is Prince's Street in Edinburgh). Lord Street is a vital component of Southport's attractiveness and distinctiveness. It has a memorable sense of place due primarily to the interplay of the buildings and line of cast iron verandahs overlooking the spacious planted and leafy boulevard.

The architecture of the buildings and spaces portray the character of a prosperous 19th and early 20th Century civic and commercial centre and is a clear indicator that Southport was a very prosperous town in its heyday. The persevering fashion for seaside holidays meant that the prosperity lasted well into the mid-20th Century. The current desire for holidays abroad however means that the town is now less a destination for long breaks, but remains popular for days out and weekend breaks. Decay as a result of a lack of maintenance, vacancy and poorer quality changes to buildings are taking their toll which has resulted in the Lord Street Conservation Area being added to the national 'Heritage at Risk' register in 2014.

The Conservation Area has suffered through the recession with several units having been vacant for a period of time. Many of the upper floors to a number of commercial properties have been vacant or underused for much longer.

A great deal has been achieved in terms of landscape improvements and the renovation of individual buildings. However much work remains to be done in terms of enhancing the public realm, encouraging the reuse of vacant buildings, the repair of historic buildings, the proper reinstatement of missing architectural features and securing of higher design standards for new buildings and intelligent alterations to existing properties.

8.1 CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUILDINGS

A high proportion of buildings within the Lord Street Conservation Area are listed in recognition of their architectural quality. Together the quality of both the listed and unlisted buildings is a key determinant of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

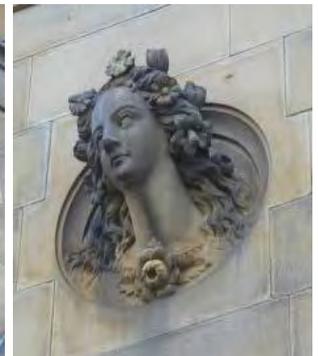
Of particularly outstanding value to the Conservation Area are:



The Atkinson and Christ Church

Christ Church and the three buildings which form The Atkinson grant a sense of civic importance and grandeur to this section of the townscape. The turrets offer a lively roofscape visible for some distance, and the bespoke carved stonework exudes quality. At each corner of the main tower stand four carved figures representing the British, Roman, Saxon and Norman periods of the English history in the persons of Caractacus, Julius Caesar, Edward the Confessor and King Alfred. Between the window heads are four medallions, each one representing one of the four seasons.

With the exception of Christ Church, all are grade II listed buildings.





St Georges United Reformed Church

The spire is positioned forward of the established building line and elegantly pierces the skyline such that it is appreciated from several viewpoints. Built 1872-3 in sandstone, the building is grade II listed.



The War Memorial

The combination of the architectural quality, impressive size and central location of the monument gives it a landmark quality which defines the central modal point of Lord Street. It is listed grade II*. The scale and proportions of the obelisk were very carefully decided in order to fit in with the proportions of its Monument setting.



Verandahs

Southport is rightly famous for its almost continuous row of verandahs. While such features are found elsewhere in the country, the level of survival of these features in Lord Street is unsurpassed. The majority are grade II listed buildings.



Corner Banks facing The Monument

The bank and former banks facing The Monument form imposing architectural structures in their own right, however in combination with each other and the War Memorial the effect is multiplied. They enclose the square and secure the importance of the nodal point. The former banks are all made from stone, three being Portland Stone which enhances the relationship with the War Memorial further. Two of the buildings are listed at grade II.



Wayfarers Arcade

Opened in 1898 as Leyland Arcade, the comparatively modest entrance opens into a glorious light and airy space with two storeys of shops boasting a consistent Victorian design style and is spectacularly well preserved. The decorative iron and glass arcade complements the verandahs.



479-491 Lord Street

Designed in 1877 by MacGibbon and Ross of Edinburgh, the elaborate stonework, brightly coloured tiling and unusual fenestration make it a particularly eye catching and earlier example of Lord Street's variegated architecture.



253 & 331 Lord Street

253 Lord Street (grade II) and 331 Lord Street (grade II*) both have an unusual but imposing single storey form that reaches as high as the multi-storeyed buildings adjacent. Their scale and magnificent architectural designs gives them particular prominence in the street scene.



182 Lord Street The Grand Casino

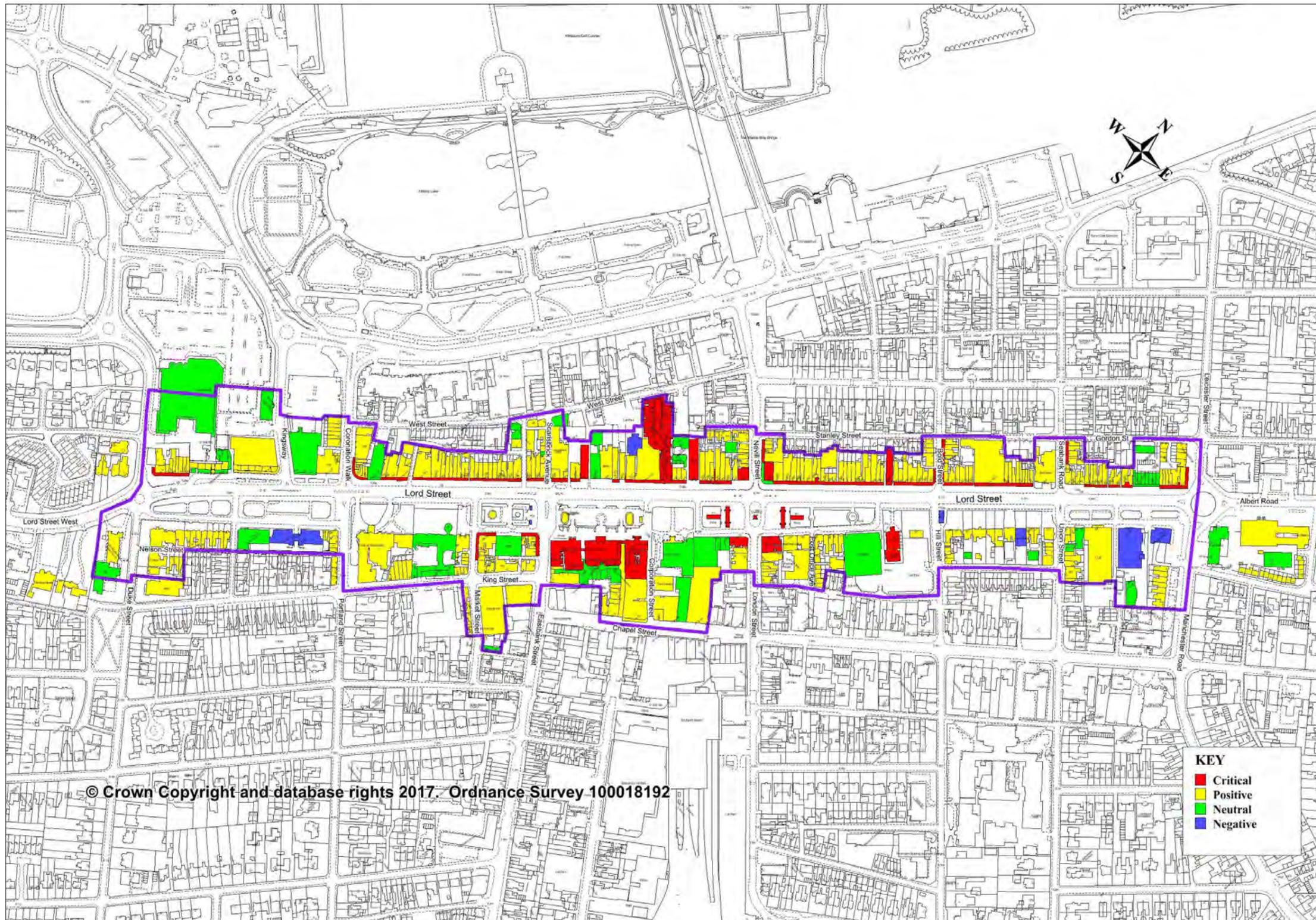
The former Grand cinema is a 1938 reconstruction of Richard Woodhead's car showroom dating from 1923. It is grade II listed but currently stands empty and in need of major refurbishment. This former cinema has a large and relatively unaltered auditorium and the foyer also retains significant interest. The streamlined styling of the auditorium is particularly dramatic and successful.



Tower Buildings

Tower Buildings stands at the junction of Leicester Street. Its landmark tower acts as a distinctive focal point within the Lord Street Conservation Area and its overall size makes this building one of the most substantial in the locality.

Plan 8 Contributions of Buildings



8.2 CONTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

The linear sequence of private and public spaces on the landward side of the street make a critical contribution to the townscape of the Conservation Area. The different public and private spaces illustrate the historic phases of the area's development. The consistent appearance of the Classical style gardens is an essential unifying feature. Together the public and private spaces play a significant role in softening this densely developed environment, provide a setting for the buildings on both sides of the street and sitting areas for town centre workers and visitors.

In terms of the public spaces the most prominent are the hard landscaped square formed by Town Gardens and the fine group of civic buildings that overlook it, and The Monument with the War Memorial and its adjacent gardens. The current emphasis on shrub planting rather than seasonal displays unfortunately undermines the formal character and horticultural interest of the gardens. As a result of these management changes, the contribution made by the formal gardens and the public realm does not maximise its potential.

Some of the spaces, notably the private spaces have become degraded through the increased levels of hard standings for car parking. Car parking in front of the public buildings also takes place which diminishes the contribution made by their otherwise formal setting.



Car parking surfacing has harmed the original domestic character of a number of former dwellings on the landward side of the street

9. NEGATIVE FACTORS

9.1 POOR QUALITY MID-LATER 20TH AND EARLY 21ST CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

A number of sites have been redeveloped in the latter half of the 20th Century and the early part of the 21st Century for commercial and residential purposes. Some of the residential blocks including, Forum Court, Regent Court, Percival and Viceroy Courts, within the Conservation Area as well as Sandown Court, just beyond the northern boundary, arguably detract from the traditional character and setting of Lord Street. Similarly 'Claire House' at 166 Lord Street is of three storeys and of a wholly different architectural form to the consistent two-storey development which surrounds it.

These buildings, particularly Regent and Sandown Courts are out of scale with their surroundings. Their form, massing, materials and details are also inappropriate in the traditional context of Lord Street. Other modern buildings are more appropriate in scale, form and materials but are disappointing in design terms, given the high quality of the buildings around them.



Modern residential tower blocks are not in keeping with the Conservation Area's wider context

The public toilets sited between Bandstand Gardens and Eastbank Street are 21st century installations. Their design involving metal construction, flat roofed design and brightly coloured doors is somewhat obtrusive. Their relatively small scale limits the impact somewhat; however their designs and colour scheme could have been more sympathetic. Opportunities to secure their removal or improvement should be taken.

Bus stops throughout the Conservation Area lack uniformity and the corporate colours of Merseytravel being bright yellow, contrast with the character of the

streetscape. Some bus stops include advertisements which block views and are illuminated. Illuminated signage in general is not in-keeping with the character of the conservation area and a coordinated effort to reduce instances of such would be beneficial.

9.2 POOR CONDITION OF BUILDINGS AND VERANDAHS

The declining condition of the historic buildings has a particularly immediate impact on perceptions of the Conservation Area.

A high number of the historic buildings have visible signs of a lack of maintenance and are in need of some degree of repair. Typical issues include problems such as paint flaking away from joinery details, weeds growing out of gutters and brickwork and dislocated flashings.



Verandahs are in particularly poor state of repair due to a lack of maintenance. Common problems include plant growth and leaves blocking the guttering, cracked and leaking rainwater goods, broken glazing, rusting ironwork and lost or damaged features. Large weeds growing in the gutters are a particularly visible problem during the summer, while leaking gutters are seen during periods of rain. The ironwork of the verandahs reacts poorly to salts, so in this seaside locality corrosion is accelerated.

As a consequence of the above problems the regular maintenance of the verandahs is essential to them remaining in good condition. Unfortunately there are many examples where this is not taking place to the detriment of their physical condition and their appearance.

Sustained neglect can create serious problems later on. Verandahs can become very unsightly and require significant intervention

9.3 UNSYMPATHETIC ADDITIONS

Disproportionately sized and poorly designed extensions disfigure some properties. Unusual convoluted arrangements of external plumbing and external stairs are sometimes created, adding further to the harm.

Given that the rears and sides of properties often have become the primary access route to the upper floors e.g. for flats, the secondary elevations need to be maintained as attractive parts of the Conservation Area, this is in order to ensure they remain viable prospects.

9.4 ALTERATIONS TO HISTORIC FEATURES, DETAILING AND MATERIALS

The removal of, or alteration to the architectural features of buildings is fortunately quite limited, however there are some examples where losses of historic details and replacement with inappropriate details has had a significant impact on the character and architectural integrity of buildings. Where alterations have been made to some of the simpler properties, the changes mean that the age and original appearance of these is not always evident.

9.4.1 DECORATIVE ELEVATION TREATMENTS

Alterations to traditional details, such as removal of projecting stone details and change to the constructional details of timber boarding, results in a simplification of the architecture. This lessens the architectural integrity and harms the appearance of buildings.

9.4.2 WINDOWS

Changes to the proportions of windows or removal of bay windows have a damaging and significant effect on the architectural appearance of the building. The additions to historic building of double glazing or changes from traditional casements to modern weatherproof casements are changes which are cumulatively detrimental to the character of the area.

The use of uPVC for windows is fortunately limited, though there are some unauthorised examples. Such changes should not become established or accepted as the material is alien to the age and architectural character of the buildings and does not display the same fineness of detail as the original timber features.

9.4.3 RAINWATER GOODS

Rainwater goods have been altered in quite a number of cases. The sections which remain demonstrate that several of the buildings involved the use of quite ornate cast ironwork. Occasionally downpipes are used as architectural ornament, not just used functionally. The losses of these details are particularly unfortunate, especially

given that most of the replacements lack the design detail and robust appearance of traditional cast iron rainwater goods.

A small number of gutters on verandahs have been altered to uPVC, others have been altered in their design e.g. from ogee to half-round. The verandahs are largely Grade II listed. The materials used in their construction (i.e. iron and glass) are one of their key features; such changes are therefore highly detrimental.

9.4.4 SHOPFRONTS

The overwhelming majority of early shopfronts have been lost. Replacement shopfronts are of variable quality though most fail to match the quality of the building they front. Many commercial buildings have inappropriately designed shop fronts which are not in keeping with the good, traditional detailing seen within the upper floors. Roller shutters where installed have a detrimental effect on the traditional architectural appearance of the buildings as well as a negative effect on the perception of the area's vitality.



Some of Southport's more recent shopfronts are far inferior and unsympathetic to the buildings on which they sit

9.4.5 ADVERTISING

Since the last appraisal in 2005 there has been an increase in the amount and size of signage visible in the Conservation Area.

While the size and scale of Lord Street helps to reduce visual impacts from wider views, the impression at closer quarters is not positive, with some sites visually damaged by inappropriate, poorly located or overbearing signage.

Lower quality temporary PVC banners are sometimes used in a quite permanent fashion and have become worn and soiled.



Banners are wholly unsuitable additions to the streetscape

There has been a recent increase in the use of 'A' boards & signage on banners and umbrellas associated with pavement cafes. As a whole, the signage increases the perception of clutter within the boulevard environment. Opportunities to address this problem should be sought.

Much of the signage is poor quality and overlarge. Plastic signs with shiny finishes and overcomplicated graphics are not in keeping with the grandeur of the historic shops within which they are set. Built up box signs generally relate poorly to the shopfront to which they are attached as they project in front of pilaster details where these exist, and look over heavy and inconsistent with modern flat fronted shopfronts.

The verandahs in some cases are dominated by oversized signage. Where signage beneath the canopy spans the whole depth of the verandah, or obscures the glazed ends these are particularly detrimental.

9.5 SERVICES

Service installations involving, pipes, extracts, wiring and alarm boxes have impacts in some locations, as they appear alien to the age and style building. Those on frontage locations have the greatest visual impact on the Conservation Area. Modern service installations particularly feature on frontages where residential conversions have taken place. While adaptations are usually necessary to ensure buildings can continue to be beneficially used, care needs to be taken to minimise the impacts of services. Additionally, some of the service installations are deteriorating and appear to no longer be in use; these should be removed to minimise cumulative effects.

Ventilation and extraction equipment is not an attractive or sympathetic addition to historic buildings. In some cases the vents or external ducting is sited in visually obtrusive locations, the colouring of such units sometimes means they particularly stand out against the brickwork. A high number of units or significantly sized ducting increases the degree of harm. Such units can be noisy and vent unpleasant odours and these issues mean that the locations of vents often become less desirable places.



Significantly sized ductwork gives a poor appearance to rear elevations



Deteriorating and numerous poorly located satellite dishes

Where satellite dishes are large, obtrusively located, are numerous or are in poor condition they have a poor appearance and are of detriment to the Conservation Area. They seem particularly out of place on the purpose built commercial buildings.

Television antennae are generally affixed to chimneys, the impact of these is poor, especially so where they have become dislodged or have bent and rusted. Cables are run across the faces of some of the buildings, the effect is universally detrimental but particularly so where these have become dislodged and are loose, are of a colour which stands out in front of the masonry or are numerous.

Redundant service installations should not be left in place, as these cause unnecessary additional harm to the visual appearance and add to the poor perception of the condition of the Conservation Area.

9.6 STREETScape FEATURES

Much of the traditional Southport pavements which once characterised the footway surfacing in the Conservation Area has been removed over the years. They have been replaced with a variety of materials, some of which detract from the character of the Conservation Area.



A large section of Southport's unique pavements has survived modernisation

Some elements of street furniture need repainting. A variety of colour schemes, materials and finishes are used creating discordance in the streetscape.

The clutter created by traffic signs, advertisements and various items of street furniture also detracts from the appearance of the area. Pavement cafes can add to the vitality of the street, however at present many pavement cafes are demarcated using banners or panels. Overall these fail to preserve the character of the Conservation Area and also fail to create a safe environment for the visually impaired. The banners form solid visual barriers interrupting the longer views along the street. They also tend to catch the wind and so are unhooked at the base meaning they occasionally flap in the wind, giving an untidy appearance. Unfortunately this also means they can no longer be detected by a cane. Where pavement cafes incorporate a high degree of signage on banners/umbrellas the visual impact is additionally harmful. Those incorporating metal tables and chairs are

harmful to the traditional character of the street scene and create a largely obtrusive feel. Dark timber seating often provides a more traditional appearance.



In recent years Lord Street has seen a rise in the number of pavement cafes

The heavy amount of through traffic and large numbers of parked vehicles detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area along Lord Street. It can be difficult for pedestrians to cross the road especially given the distance between crossing points.

9.7 TREES

The stumps of felled trees create unnecessary obstacles within the pavements and present a poor ill-maintained appearance.

It does not appear that replacement trees have been planted to compensate for the losses of trees. Over time the periodic loss of trees due to disease etc. without replacement will harm the character of the street and create undesirable vistas.

Parts of the Conservation Area suffer from insufficient tree cover which detracts from the consistency of the tree lined character of the street. Where there are gaps in tree planting the successful but incomplete fairy light scheme cannot be completed. By

contrast some of the gardens are overshadowed by trees creating undesirably over-shaded spaces where plants and lawns do not thrive.

9.8 PRESSURES FOR CHANGES AND LOSS

9.8.1 PRESSURES ON BUILDING TYPES

Cinemas & Theatres

The theatres and cinemas, particularly the earlier ones generally displayed flamboyant architecture, however the majority have since been demolished. Their loss has meant a significant loss to the area's historical and architectural value. The surviving former Grand Cinema is of considerable interest and is a grade II listed building. It is currently vacant and in a deteriorating condition. It occupies a larger plot which would potentially be valuable as a development site, however as the last surviving cinema of the Conservation Area there is a presumption against demolition or significant alteration. This highlights the vulnerability of this building type in Lord Street. The former Garrick Theatre which first opened its doors in 1932 is now a branch of Mecca Bingo and remains as one of the largest buildings in Lord Street still in regular use.



The former Grand Cinema is in a poor condition and in need of refurbishment and re-use



Plan 9 showing losses of entertainment venues

Banks

Banks appear to be less vulnerable to loss, though several of the original banks have been converted to new uses. Conversions to new uses often seem to necessitate significant changes such as lowering of window cills and additional substantive advertising, which detracts from their architectural appearance. Only three of the original banks remain in use as banks. Demands for more 'friendly' banking, difficulties re-using upper floors and security requirements can be difficult to reconcile with their historic features. If the banks continue to move out of their traditional premises, this will leave some of the most iconic architecture in Lord Street vulnerable to decay or undesirable changes.

Shops

Standard modern retailing requirements are for square shaped spaces, the deep plots with narrow frontages of the shops which characterise Lord Street do not fit this

standardised model. Pressures to knock through into adjacent units arises occasionally and should generally be resisted, particularly within the listed buildings which front Lord Street where the regular form and grain of the units is a locally distinctive feature. This helps to set the area apart from other retail destinations and gives Southport added appeal.

Hotels

A number of new hotels have been constructed in the town centre in recent years. Over half of visitors to Southport stay in hotels and older establishments require regular maintenance and care. Given the increasing number of modern hotels in Southport, improvements and refurbishments must be carried out to older buildings to prevent deterioration, closures and vacancy.



The Vincent Hotel, which first welcomed guests in 2008

9.9 VACANCY

At the time of the survey the Conservation Area was carrying a relatively high number of vacancies of commercial units. However retail demand fluctuates considerably over time and care should be taken to ensure that trends are long term and irreversible before considering allowing changes of use which could harm the resilience, sustainability and historic value of the town centre in the future.

A considerable number of commercial buildings have vacant or underused upper floors. The lower maintenance levels which goes alongside lack of use gives a run down and economically depressed appearance to certain sections of the street frontage.



Empty shops can create a depressing atmosphere whilst risking potential problems with maintenance

10. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

This section highlights a range of improvements, which if enacted would enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

The character and appearance of a number of buildings would benefit from structural repairs and the reinstatement of traditional architectural features including sliding sash windows, leaded lights and glazed verandahs. The conversion of vacant upper floors to new uses would also improve the appearance of individual buildings and boost the economy of the area.

10.1 RE-USE OF VACANT BUILDINGS AND FLOORSPACE



Access to upper floors within the Conservation Area may pose problems

The Grand Cinema is an important Grade II listed building which is an important remnant of this building type of Lord Street. Ideally this building would remain in an entertainment use, though if this is not viable a range of alternative uses could be considered that require a large space. Its sensitive adaptation would ensure this facet of Lord Street's history and character endures.

Upper floors above the shops on Lord Street where not being used, or underused, could be adapted to gainful economic uses such as cafes, offices or particularly residential uses. This would add vitality to the street, encourage regular maintenance of the upper floors including roofs and increase the number of people living within and using the town centre. Upper floors should be accessed from Lord Street itself where possible, rather than from back streets or side streets to create a higher quality residential offer. The retail frontage should nonetheless be maintained and the character of shopfronts retained.

The use of vacant shops for cultural events, pop-up shops and displays mitigates the appearance of empty shops. Such schemes could be usefully extended and encouragement given to pop-up-shops investing in better quality temporary signage. The long term aim should be to ensure that sustainable businesses locate in the area on a more permanent basis.

10.2 MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND RESTORATION OF HISTORIC FEATURES

The appearance of a number of the Victorian and Edwardian shops would benefit from repairs and maintenance works. Simple actions such as painting of windows

and other joinery details, and the removal of weeds from guttering would greatly improve perceptions of the town centre.

Where buildings are being refurbished the opportunity arises to restore lost features such as bay windows and other architectural details. Sensitive and appropriate works would significantly help to improve the character and appearance of the individual buildings and the Conservation Area as a whole.

10.3 SHOPFRONTS, SIGNAGE AND A-BOARDS

Commercial buildings would benefit from the removal of overlarge signs, external roller shutters and installation of shop fronts and signs which better reflect the age, materials, style and decorative detail of the upper floors. Ideally these should be based on the original designs. Such an approach would allow the architectural diversity and interest of the Conservation Area to be more easily recognised and therefore better enjoyed by visitors.

10.4 VERANDAHS



Regular maintenance and repairs to the historic verandahs will ensure their longevity and appearance

The repair and regular maintenance of Lord Street's multiple verandahs would significantly improve the appearance and public perceptions of Lord Street. This would increase the town centre's attractiveness and secure the future of these features which are critical to the distinctiveness of the Conservation Area and the town centre.

Consideration could be given the potential for a maintenance scheme to be developed and managed (e.g. by the Business Improvement District) whereby the various private owners responsible for the maintenance could be encouraged to contribute to a fund which would allow for the regular maintenance of the verandahs, organised centrally. This would effectively solve the problem of future decline.

The use of more proportionately sized hanging signage beneath verandahs would be less distracting and make for improved views along the length of the long runs of

verandahs. It would also reduce any unnecessary and additional strain upon the structures.

10.5 CONTROL OVER USES

Maintaining the distinctions between the 'resort' area and the 'shopping area' helps to keep the areas of the town centre distinctive and with their own character, and ensures that the town centre as a whole caters appropriately for different types of visitors. It is important where possible to seek to limit 'resort area' types of use and also to control the appearance and seasonal operation of these, so that the primary shopping area is not undermined. It is also noted that there seems to be a trend for retail establishments with a number of bars, cafes and restaurants opening in recent years. Whilst this may help vitality of the street, caution needs to be exercised to avoid large clusters harming the retail core of Lord Street.

10.6 TOWN GARDENS

The setting of the civic buildings could be enhanced through the adoption of more stringent management and controls. Reducing access to Town Gardens for parking would enhance the attractiveness of the space. The commercial uses in the spaces require especially careful consideration to ensure that they do not detract from the formality of the space with inappropriate signage and other paraphernalia. Of additional benefit would be the sympathetic repair of the cracked tiles which form the surfacing.



Town Gardens with its impressive Princess Diana fountain

10.7 EASTBANK STREET SQUARE

The space would benefit from a scheme of enhancement to improve the ease of movement through the space and give it a defined identity. An enhancement to the classical scheme which characterises the public spaces on Lord Street and additional planting to enhance the otherwise quite hard landscaped character of the space would be beneficial.

10.8 LINEAR ROUTE THROUGH EASTBANK STREET TO SCARISBRICK AVENUE

The narrow nature of Scarisbrick Avenue creates a dark & uninviting space compounded by large expanses of solid roller shutters. These should be removed. Improvements to the historic shopfronts and wider public realm of this route would benefit both the Lord Street Conservation Area and the nearby Promenade Conservation Area, and it is an important gateway between the two. It has the potential to be a welcoming and visually pleasing focal point. A heritage regeneration scheme such as a Heritage Lottery Funded Townscape Heritage scheme should be strongly considered, along with a complementary public realm scheme,



Scarisbrick Avenue in particular would benefit from significant investment from a Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage scheme or similar.

10.9 PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT & SIGNPOSTING

Wayfinding and the quality of linkages from the Chapel Street train station to Lord Street and beyond could be improved. Ease of pedestrian movement across Lord Street is somewhat restricted. Measures to create a more pedestrian-centred environment which reduces the sense of the road as a barrier should be considered. This would help to support commercial uses throughout the centre, contributing to vitality.

10.10 ENTRANCES TO LORD STREET

The way that the roundabouts at both ends of Lord Street are maintained affects the first impressions of visitors. The highway signs on these roundabouts are relatively low key, however the advertising panels do not help to project a high quality image. Their removal and further improvements such as creating a more year-round soft landscaped display would be beneficial.

The repair and re-use of key buildings near the entrances to Lord Street would improve visitors' first impressions of the street.



The intelligent management of Lord Street's roundabouts is required to maintain good first impressions of the town

10.11 GREEN SPACES AND TREES

Lord Street is of strategic importance to Southport town centre and deserves a corresponding level of landscape maintenance. The pleasant environment is one of the reasons that visitors choose Southport as a destination. The formal identification of the trees, gardens and the roundabouts along Lord Street as high priority spaces within strategic plans would help to support proposals for improvements to the quality of landscaping, and levels of maintenance and management.

The green spaces and trees are managed by the Council's Parks and Gardens department, but input may occasionally be required from Planning, Building Control and Highways. It would be beneficial if these sections could together devise appropriate Management Plans and procedures relating to the trees, gardens and other green or planted spaces to ensure that these areas are managed coherently and appropriately.

A trees management plan could beneficially include a long-term plan for improving the tree stock on Lord Street. Such a plan could usefully include guidance on species and positioning, plan for the management/pruning/removal of trees, set out tree pit designs, plan for successional planting of trees, plan for maintenance of tree lights and identify proposals for replacement to failing trees. This would help support the mature planted character of the street. Pruning of overhanging branches would also help prevent blockages of verandah drainage from fallen leaves.



A selection of mature trees can be found located around the Conservation Area, including a number adjacent to footpaths

Reintroduction of herbaceous planting with bedding planting displays through the seasons would reinforce the historic character and appearance of the formal gardens. The grass areas would benefit from being maintained to a manicured high amenity level, in keeping with the formal character of the lawns and spaces.

Management proposals for the gardens and green spaces could additionally consider proposals for enhancing the quality of the native sandy soil, create a plant list and incorporate proposals for enhancements to the public gardens consistent with their historic layout and planting scheme. The private gardens on the landward side of the street would generally benefit from more appropriate boundary treatments being erected, and also the introduction of greater levels of planting. Where garden areas have been hard landscaped for car parking, such as at the front of 166 Lord Street the reintroduction and enhancement of planting would help soften their appearance and provide a more appropriate setting for the buildings.

10.12 SURFACING AND STREET FURNITURE

The general appearance of the area would benefit from the rationalisation of traffic signs and street furniture. A streetscape audit would help identify where features are redundant or unnecessary allowing these to be removed or combined.

It would be beneficial for the various Council services with responsibility for the streetscape to work together with the conservation team to develop a code of practice in relation to street surfacing and street furniture within the town centre, recognising that the architectural value and commercial importance of the area warrants special attention. This would help ensure that future work in the Conservation Area is properly co-ordinated and respects the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The appearance of a number of streets would be improved by resurfacing the footways with appropriate natural or “heritage” materials. The manufacture of new Southport pavements by an appropriate firm could also be investigated.

10.13 PLANNING GUIDANCE AND PROTOCOLS

10.13.1 DESIGN GUIDANCE

Production of detailed planning guidance for the following would be helpful:

- Revision of planning guidance regarding design of shop fronts, advertisements and security measures.
- Design guidance for new buildings, identification of ‘opportunity’ sites.
- Repair and the reinstatement of missing features of traditional buildings, identifying sites in need of reinstatements.

10.13.2 ADVISORY LEAFLET

Publication of a Lord Street Conservation Area Advisory Leaflet to help inform and advise the public of the significance of Lord Street and its heritage assets would be beneficial in raising awareness, as would a specific cast iron verandah maintenance guide. Advice on how best to maintain the structures and the problems that can arise would assist owners in ensuring their upkeep, appearance and longevity.

10.13.3 PAVEMENT CAFES & A-BOARD ADVERTS

Consideration should be given to reviewing the extent to which existing advertising installations have been granted licenses/planning permission & introducing planning guidance to restrict the numbers of these.

10.13.4 ENFORCEMENT

In view of the current 'At Risk' status of the Conservation Area the use of S.215 Notices, Urgent Works and Repairs Notices should be considered to tackle buildings in poor condition.

It appears that some works do occasionally take place without the benefit of appropriate planning permissions and consents. Lord Street could be made a priority area for enforcement works. Projects to establish the lawfulness of works undertaken to listed buildings such as new shopfronts, roller shutters, advertisements including A-boards would be beneficial. Enforcement notices should be served where appropriate.

10.14 CORPORATE STRATEGY

New regeneration, tourism or economic strategies for Southport should recognise that Southport's unique heritage is important to its tourism industry and its economic health. Strategies should take into account the content of this appraisal and seek to develop joined-up solutions to tackling the issues listed, as part of the vision to deliver improvements.

Consideration should be given to creation of a cross-departmental group tasked with creating a more joined-up approach to the management and maintenance of Lord Street. The group could set out a framework for all works to the highway, trees and gardens and in doing so seek to enhance the historic character of the area and reduce street clutter. Regular street audits would allow for effective monitoring of issues, such as vacancy, signage, etc.

10.15 HERITAGE TOURISM AND EDUCATION

The historic environment in Southport is the town's unique selling point and there may be potential to promote this as a visitor attraction in its own right.

Better engagement with local groups and organisations will allow for improved and better-informed outputs in regard to the promotion of Southport's heritage assets.

Events and exhibitions exploring and celebrating Southport's heritage would help improve the profile of the town's heritage for the enjoyment of visitors and residents. Creation of heritage trails, leaflets, talks and heritage skills training could be considered.

10.16 HERITAGE REGENERATION SCHEMES

Lord Street's unique heritage can act as a catalyst for its regeneration. Funding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery are able to grant aid works to historic areas that also support economic regeneration. In particular, Townscape Heritage schemes can help to reverse the decline of our historic townscapes by bringing buildings and public realms within Conservation Areas back to a high standard. Opportunities to draw on such funding for works in the wider area should be considered.

11. RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

Owing to the development of the Morrison's supermarket and the loss of Winter Gardens Terrace the currently designated boundary no longer relates to the existing built form. The supermarket does not contribute to the character of the Lord Street Conservation Area, its removal from the Conservation Area is therefore recommended. 'The Anchorage' along Kingsway has been assessed as harmful to the character of the area and its removal would also be beneficial.

The roundabouts at either end of Lord Street are highly important to the sense of arrival and setting of the Conservation Area. These also form a focal point for views along the street in either direction and each contain a coronation light, though the columns are not the same. It is recommended that both roundabouts be incorporated into the Conservation Area.



Roundabout at south entrance to Lord Street



Roundabout at north entrance to Lord Street

The former magistrates court, police station, ambulance station and police houses form an architecturally attractive and locally important civic group of buildings. They were developed during the 1930s as the functions outgrew their original premises at the Town Hall. They sit at a critical entrance to Lord Street, and enhance its civic character.



The former Magistrates Court at the entrance to Lord Street

The Masonic Hall on Duke Street is a fine Grade II listed building dating to 1878-9 designed by Maxwell & Tuke. Inclusion of this building would recognise the contribution the building makes to the area and also result in a more rational boundary, allowing the corner block to be more easily considered as a whole section of townscape on this entrance to Lord Street.



The Masonic Hall sited in Duke Street

The current boundary runs through the grounds of the Lord Street West United Reformed Church, meaning the more recent extensions to the building are outside of the Conservation Area. Although the extensions to the church are not of any value to the Conservation Area it would seem more rational and appropriate to include the whole of the church site and the whole of its original stone boundary wall, which does contribute to the setting of the church and the entrance to the Conservation Area.

Though enlarged and altered, the properties at 2, 2a 2b & 4 Lord Street West with their spacious grounds are examples of the earliest 'cottage' forms of the resort's development. Their inclusion would therefore recognise a key aspect of the area's history.



2, 2a and 2b Lord Street West



4 Lord Street West

Towards the rear of Wayfarer's Arcade the current boundary cuts through the building. It is suggested that to rationalise the boundary the whole of Wayfarer's arcade be placed within the Lord Street Conservation Area, rather than a portion being within the Promenade Conservation Area.



Rear of Wayfarer's Arcade

The site of 423-435 is only partially within the Lord Street Conservation Area. It is recommended that the whole be placed within the Lord Street Conservation Area in order to rationalise the boundary.

Properties on Waverley Street, 34-38 West Street, 21 Scarisbrick Avenue 13-19 Nevill Street and 1-13 Cable Street share more of the night time economy, seaside and residential characteristics with the Promenade Conservation Area. It is

suggested that the boundary be revised to reflect this different character and that these building be instead placed within the Promenade Conservation Area. Villas in Duke Street, as shown on plan, and 1-7 Lord Street West are largely in business uses. Although altered, their character as Victorian villas remains intact. Their prominent position means they are highly visible along Lord Street facing south west, and their appearance generally has a significant impact on the southern entrance to the Conservation Area.



**The Victorian villas
in vicinity of Duke
Street**

Chapel Street contains a wide variety of buildings in terms of their age and scale. No 55, is a particularly attractive arts and crafts half-timbered building with its exterior largely intact, though has an altered shopfront. It is recommended that this along with the other traditional buildings be included within the area to ensure that the best of the architecture on this street is preserved.



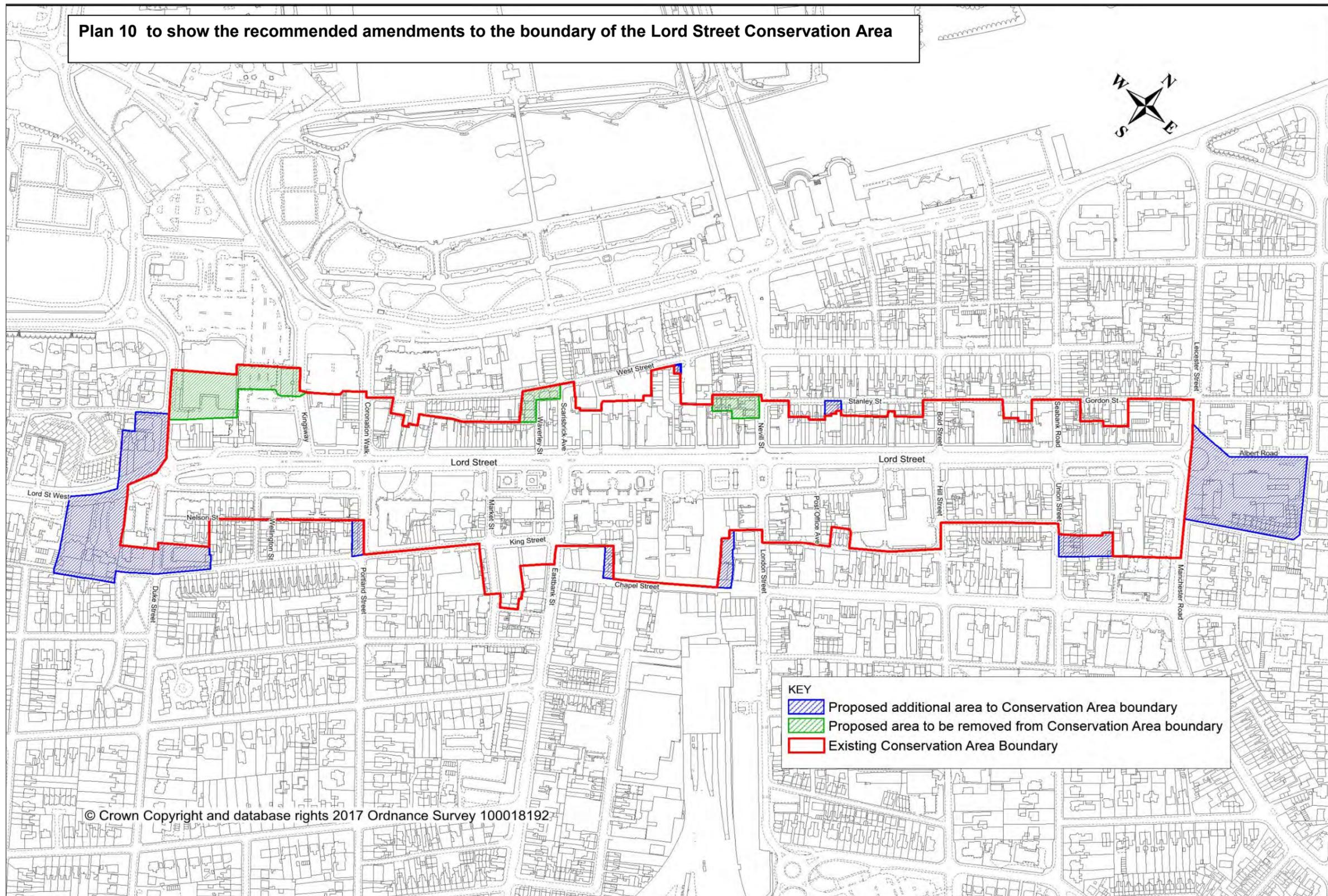
**Although highly
modernised, Chapel Street
retains some interesting
historic buildings**

6-8 Portland Street adds to the commercial and historic environs of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Prince of Wales Hotel. The upper floors have largely retained original sash windows with an attractive curved headed tripartite arrangement.



6-8 Portland Street retains examples of historic architectural details

The addition of 20-28 Union Street will bring a sense of continuity to the existing conservation area boundary by encompassing the remainder of the terrace dwellings, in addition to the substantial Victorian commercial property that helps bookend this historic section of the street.



Following adoption of this document on 16th November 2017 these boundary amendments have now been approved. This is explained further in chapter 11.

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