

Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

PLACEHOLDER—ESPLANADE IMAGE / TOWN HALL SQUARE

EDITED DRAFT—May 2023



Historic England



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1.0 Foreword

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been commissioned by the Rochdale Development Agency on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council, in association with Historic England. The work is being funded as part of the Rochdale Heritage Action Zone programme, which is centred on Drake Street – the historic route from the railway station down to the Town Hall.

The Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is a heritage-led regeneration programme run as a partnership between Rochdale Borough Council and Historic England, but which involves key stakeholders also including The Cooperative Heritage Trust, The Cooperative College, Your Trust and Rochdale Boroughwide Housing. Rochdale Business Improvement District also supports the programme, and local communities including residents, business owners, developers and landlords are an integral component.

The ambitious HAZ scheme aims to reverse the neighbourhood's economic decline, attract new residents to the town centre and use its distinctive heritage to support the development of new communities, businesses and development opportunities. By celebrating and promoting Rochdale's heritage, the HAZ also aims to protect and preserve it for future generations to enjoy.

To ensure an enduring positively legacy of the HAZ programme, this Conservation Area Appraisal has been produced as a tool to ensure that the areas and buildings of significance within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area are identified, alongside opportunities for restoration and enhancement.

The Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and its surroundings, are undergoing significant changes. Given the ongoing changes in the area, it is considered an appropriate time to create a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. This will provide an opportunity to guide new development, preserving the elements which contribute to significance and identifying areas for enhancement and better management.

Contributions

Special thanks to Shakra Butt of the Local Studies Centre for the access and provision of information. A series of accounts, photographs and images in this report are reproduced from sources made available.

Present day photographs used are property of Rochdale Borough Council.

Reproduced images and maps have their sources cited and a bibliography for all references can be found at the end of the document.

PLACEHOLDER—ESPLANADE IMAGE / TOWN HALL SQUARE

2.0 Introduction

The Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area was first designated in 1980. Following an extension to the boundary, an Appraisal was completed in 2011. The previous appraisal gives an overview of the history and development of the town and an analysis of the character and significance of the conservation area. This forms the basis of this updated appraisal to aid consistency.

Given the expanse of the designation, the previous appraisal split the area into a series of smaller character areas.

These are:

- Cenotaph & Memorial Gardens
- Old Town
- Regency Drake Street
- Rochdale Parish Church of St Chad
- Town Hall, Square & Esplanade
-

This report explores the character and significance of each of these areas to ensure that their special character can be preserved and enhanced for future generations. It also considers the boundaries of these smaller areas and makes recommendations for these.

The report is paired with a Conservation Area Management Plan to help prioritise and provide a background strategy for regeneration and improvement works.

3.0 Legislation and Planning Policy

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to “...determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate those areas as conservation areas”.

Local Planning Authorities also have a duty to review past designations to ensure that areas remain worthy of protection and to promote enhancements where possible.

Permitted development rights are more restricted in conservation areas to help reduce the erosion of this special character. The ability to control development in a conservation area can also be strengthened through the inclusion of Article 4 Directions. These are restrictions that remove permitted development rights.

Currently, Planning permission is required for:

- Substantial demolition of any building or structure in a conservation area.
- The demolition or erection of a wall, gate or fence abutting a highway if this is over 1m or over 2m elsewhere.

Further to these restrictions, works to trees also require notification to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement.

Conservation areas are then further controlled by Planning Policy, both at a National and Local level.

The Government has set out its planning policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Section 16 *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, details how development is expected to consider the needs of heritage assets.

The Local Plan for Rochdale is made up of a suite of policies and plans.:

- The Core Strategy 2016 provides the lead document for this. Within this, Strategic Objective SO3—*To improve design, image and quality of space*, along with Policy P2: *Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage* are the key elements relating to the protection of heritage assets.
- The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2016 is also a material consideration as the Allocations Plan is not yet adopted. G/BE/9 Conservation of the Built Heritage concerns Policies BE/16, BE/17 and BE/18 all consider the impact development can have on conservation areas. Other relevant policies include those under Section 19 of the UDP concerning Design and the Built Environment.
- The Places for Everyone combined Greater Manchester Plan Policy JP-P2 supports the celebration and protection of heritage assets.
- Rochdale Borough Council has also published a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) relating to design, housing, retail and the environment. The additional guidance within these documents helps applicants and their agents interpret policy so that their schemes are able to gain the relevant permissions.

In light of both the legislative and policy requirements, it is important that a clear definition and analysis of the special qualities of an area is clearly communicated. This document presents these such findings in written, map and photographic form to help demonstrate this.

Beyond Statutory Legislation and Planning Policy, there is a wealth of Best Guidance available within England.

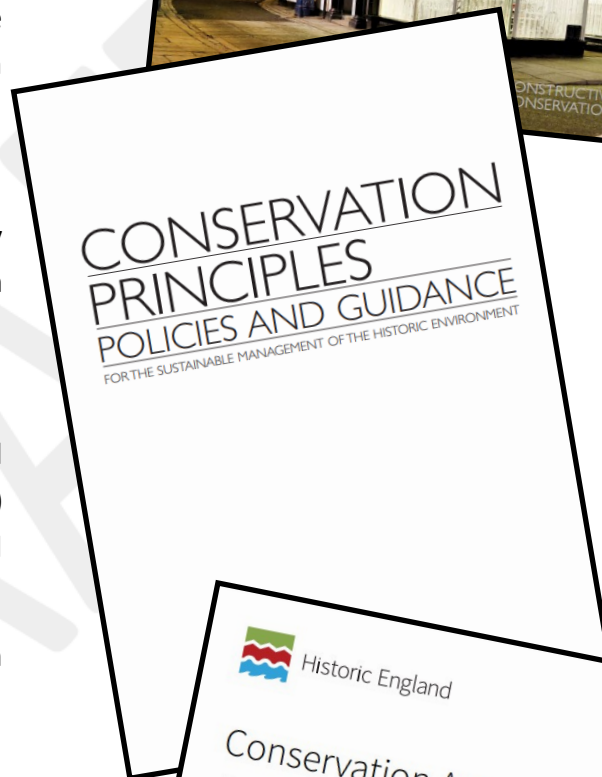
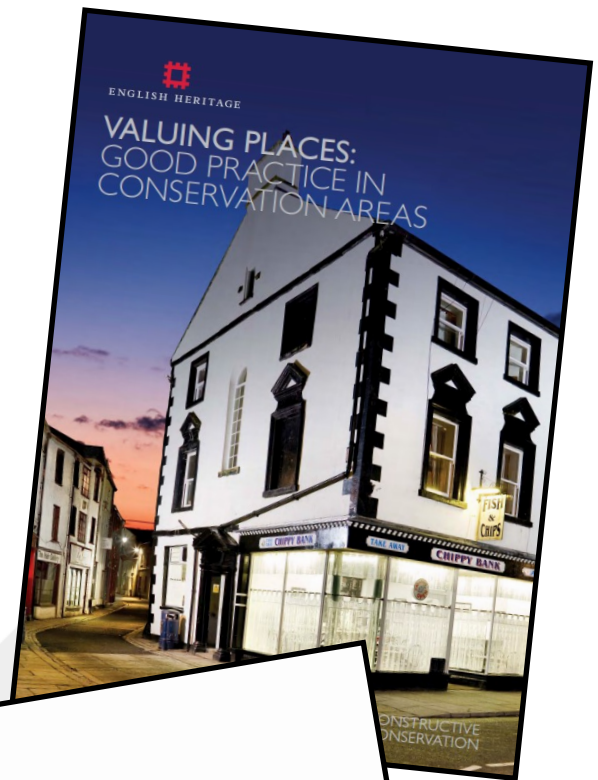
Historic England have published guidance on the value, designation and management of heritage assets and specifically conservation areas. The guides look at understanding the value of assets through to the management of change. These guides have been consulted with through the appraisal process and their specific details can be found in the bibliography of this report.

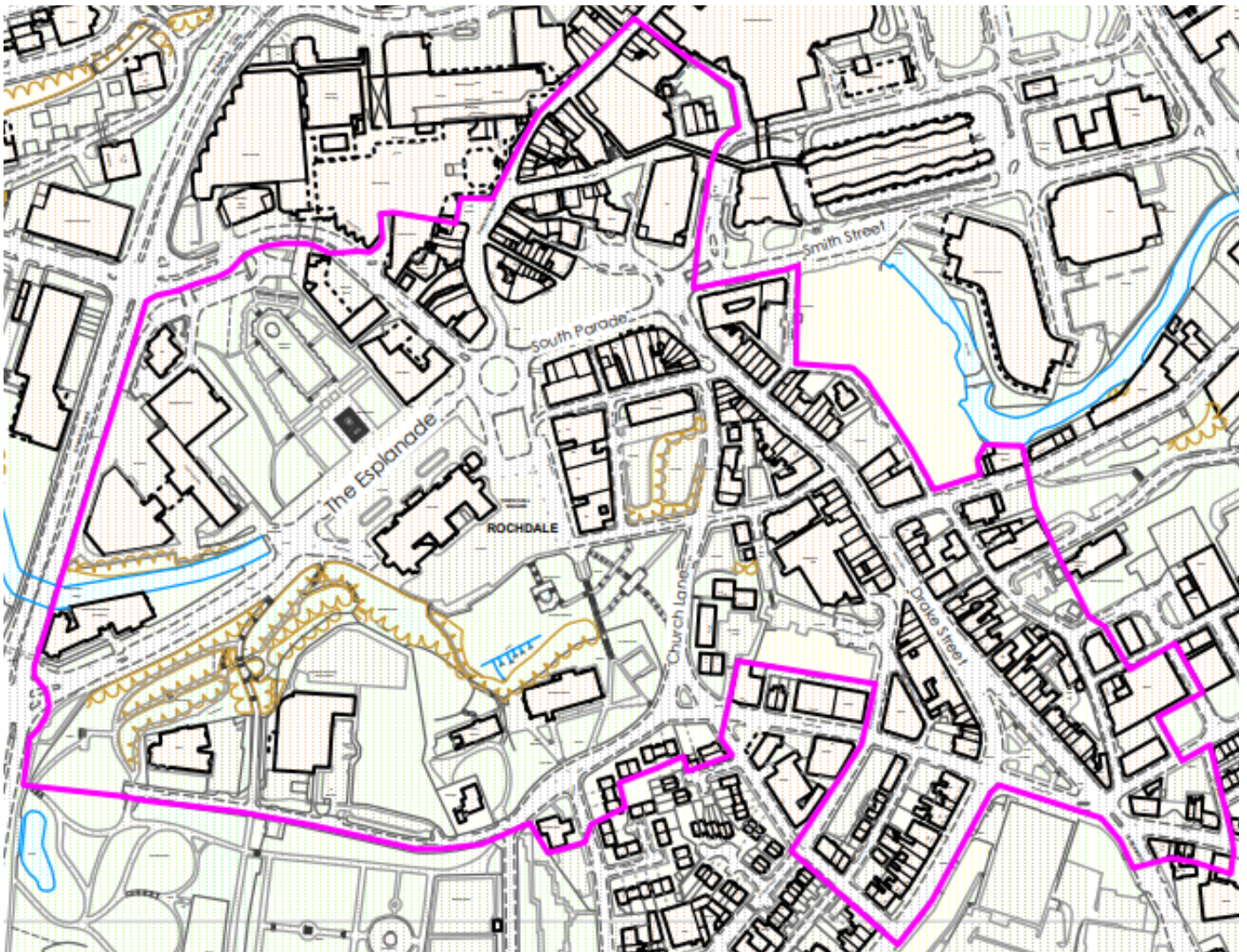
There are also some useful guides for property owners and occupiers available through Historic England's website.

Rochdale Borough Council have published Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) aimed to guide property owners, occupiers and developers.

The most relevant SPDs to the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area are:

- Shopfront and security shutters SPD
- Design and planning process - A Guide to Good Practice SPD
- Public Realm Design Guide SPD
- Residential design guide SPD
- Rochdale Town Centre East Area Framework SPD
- Climate Change and Adaption SPD





Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area Boundary Map

4.0 The location and setting of Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area

Rochdale sits at the foot of the Pennines, directly north of Manchester City Centre. The town's location contributed to its growth and success as a woollen town, opposed to most other Lancashire towns and cities which made their wealth on the cotton industry.

Rochdale Town Centre is located some 0.5 miles north of the railway station. Development in the town centre is focused around the River Roch with Drake Street and Yorkshire Street providing the main shopping areas in the town during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. The prominence of Yorkshire Street as the main shopping area grew following the erection of the Wheatsheaf and Exchange shopping centres

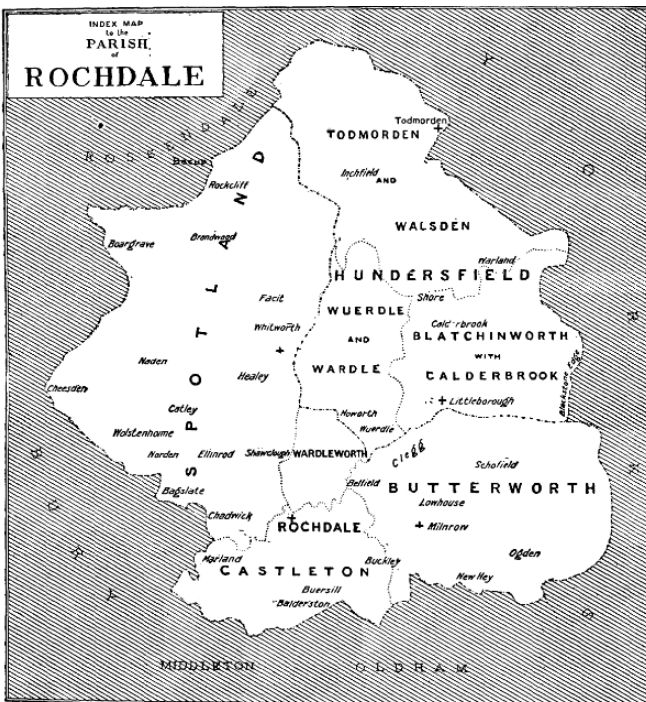
The Conservation Area extends over the core of the town centre, bound by St Marys Gate to the west, Sparrow Hill to the south and Kenion/Drake Street to the east. It is clearly characterised by the topography created by the river, with a valley floor running east-west at the centre of the conservation area and sloping land to the north and south. The lack of even ground led to the culverting of the River Roch in the early 20th century, parts of which were reopened during the award winning 2016 *Revealing the Roch* scheme that was led by Rochdale Borough Council.

The Metrolink tramline runs along Drake Street and down to Rochdale Interchange, which has improved linkages between Rochdale Railway Station and Rochdale Town Centre.

5.0 The historical development of Rochdale

Rochdale is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086 and the town began as one of the largest parishes in England.

It was administered as four parishes: Castleton, Spotland, Butterworth and Hundersfield, shown in the below image map. Each of these parishes was subdivided in to important estates and hamlets. Three of these parishes converged at Rochdale which led to the growth of the rural market town.



Copy of *Index Map to the Parish of Rochdale* Source: British History Online. Source: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/lancs/vol5/pp187-201>

In 1251 Edmund de Lacy, Baron of Pontefract and Earl of Lincoln who held the manor at this time, was granted a market charter by King Henry III for a market on a Wednesday and an annual fair on the 28th October in Rochdale.

The Manor passed through many families over the years by both inheritance and through sale. The most famous Lord of the Manor was Lord Byron.

The growth of the woollen industry developed rapidly in the 1500s and, being the primary market town for the agricultural area, Rochdale became one of the principal wool towns of Lancashire. The town centre became well known as a hub for wool merchants who would gather raw materials, distribute to cloth producers and then move products to fullers and dyers, before selling on the fully processed goods.

In 1724 Defoe remarked that Rochdale was “a good market town, and of late much improved in the woollen manufacture, as are also the villages in its neighbourhood”.

Rochdale’s Industrial success boomed in the 18th and 19th century which is when the town experienced considerable growth in the form of mills, warehouses and housing.

Embracing the technologies of the industrial revolution, particularly the automation of cloth and textile production and beginning to process cotton rather than wool, led to the erection of large mill complexes in and around the town.

The introduction of the power-loom unfortunately meant that the livelihoods of the hand loom weavers began to decline at this same time.

In recognition of the poor living conditions, low wages and high costs which the weavers of Rochdale were facing, in 1844 The Rochdale Pioneers introduced a system for pooling resources and bulk buying to allow people basic goods at lower prices. The new system also allowed members to gain ownership of the business, in turn generating profits for them. This very work was the establishment of the world wide cooperative movement.



PHOTOGRAPH OF THIRTEEN OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS
OF THE
ROCHDALE EQUITABLE PIONEERS' SOCIETY.
1. JAMES STANDRING. 2. JOHN BENT. 3. JAMES SMITHIES. 4. CHARLES HOWARTH. 5. DAVID BROOKER. 6. BENJ. REDDEN. 7. JOHN GOODCROFT.
8. JAMES MANDOC. 9. JOHN COLLIER. 10. GEMUEL ASHWORTH. 11. WILLIAM COOPER. 12. JAMES TWEEBLE. 13. JOSEPH SMITH.

*Photograph of Thirteen of the Original Members of
The Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society. 1865.*

Sourced: <https://www.eurocoop.coop/coop-page/history.html>

The first Pioneers shop was established on Toad Lane where the Rochdale Pioneers Museum is situated today. Other buildings occupied and used as part of the Cooperative empire include the purpose built store at Nos. 7-9 Oldham Road Oldham Road.

In the following years many new branches and societies opened across the country and by 1900 there were around 2million members.

During the same period, radical and liberal John Bright, son of a Rochdale Mill owner and cotton manufacturer, came to prominence following his involvement with the Anti-Corn Law League. He became a powerful speaker and was noted as one of the most influential politicians of the Victorian era. Bright voiced opinions on the American Civil War as the raw cotton used to supply Lancashire Cotton Mills was mostly imported from slave plantations in South America. Bright understood that without demand, slavery could not continue to flourish in the USA. As an alternative, he advocated the building of relationships with countries able to supply raw cotton in free labour countries such as India. A statue of Bright is situated in Broadfield Park (shown right) and a further stands in Albert Square in Manchester city

The combination of the break out of the American Civil War and an overproduction of Cotton Cloth are both blamed for sparking the Lancashire Cotton Famine between 1861-65. Cotton production re-commenced in 1864 when it began to be imported from India and Egypt, and as the industry began to gain traction once more.

Continued investment within infrastructure and manufacturing meant improvements were being made across all elements of cotton cloth production. The building of the Canals was a particularly notable contributor to this.

Rochdale Canal was constructed and opened in the late 18th eighteenth century, improving connections with Manchester and other important industrial towns such as Leeds and Liverpool. The canal basin was situated at the top of Drake Street however, this has now been infilled.

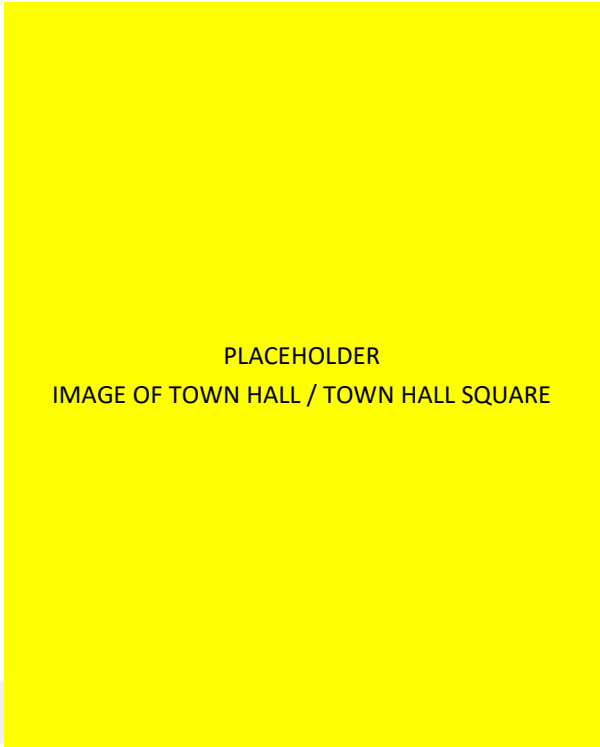


In 1856 a charter of incorporation under the Municipal Corporations Act constituted Rochdale as a Municipal Borough. In celebration of this momentous achievement the towns most prestigious building, Rochdale Town Hall, was commissioned.

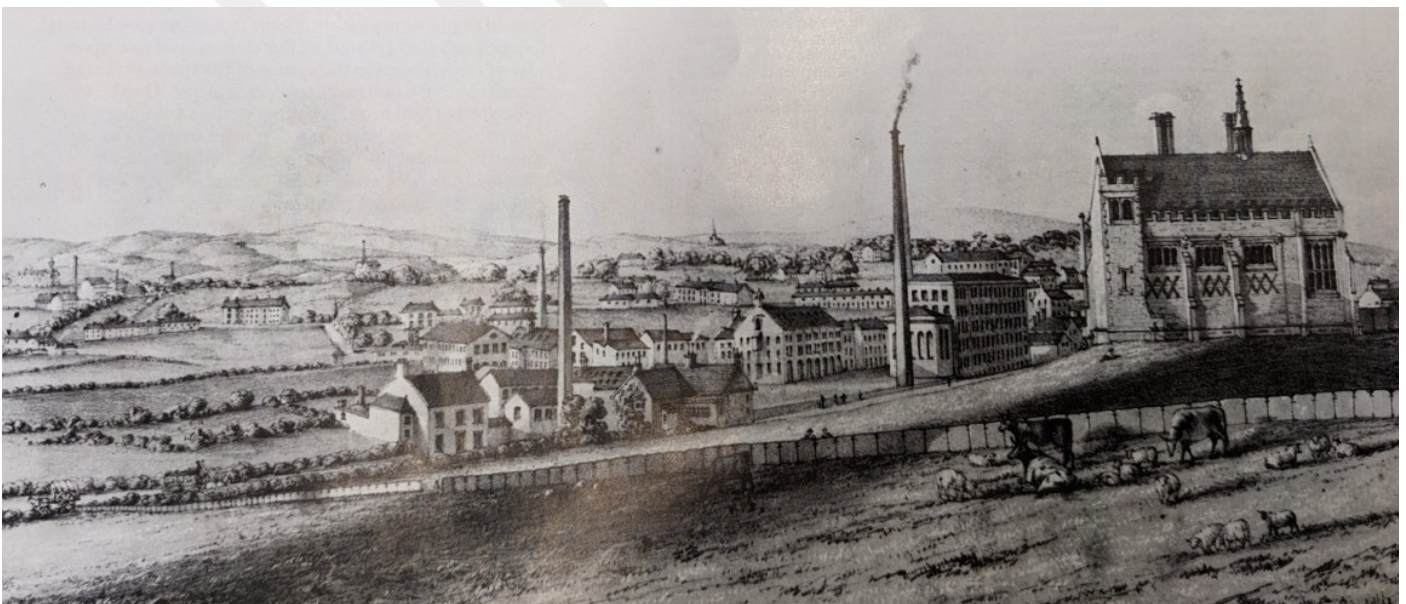
The Rochdale Corporation held a design competition and William Henry Crossland's design was successfully chosen.

The grand gothic building was one of the largest undertakings seen in the country at its time and the building remains to be one of the finest gothic town halls in the country.

The development of the Town Hall also saw considerable improvements undertaken within the surrounding area, including the development of Town Hall Square, the rebuilding of properties on Packer Street and the appointment of Messrs Stansfield & Sons, to create a public Park. Broadfield Park subsequently opened during the 1870s, over a series of phases.



This image below shows the former Rochdale Grammar School now on the site occupied by Broadfield Hotel, and cattle grazing on what is now Broadfield Park. Interestingly, a flag stone boundary wall can be seen separating the livestock from the school. This feature is unique to Rochdale. Remnants of these can be found dotted through the conservation area and across the wider Borough, in both rural and urban locations.



Copy of Engraving dating from 1850, taken from publication *Yesterday's Rochdale*, 1983.

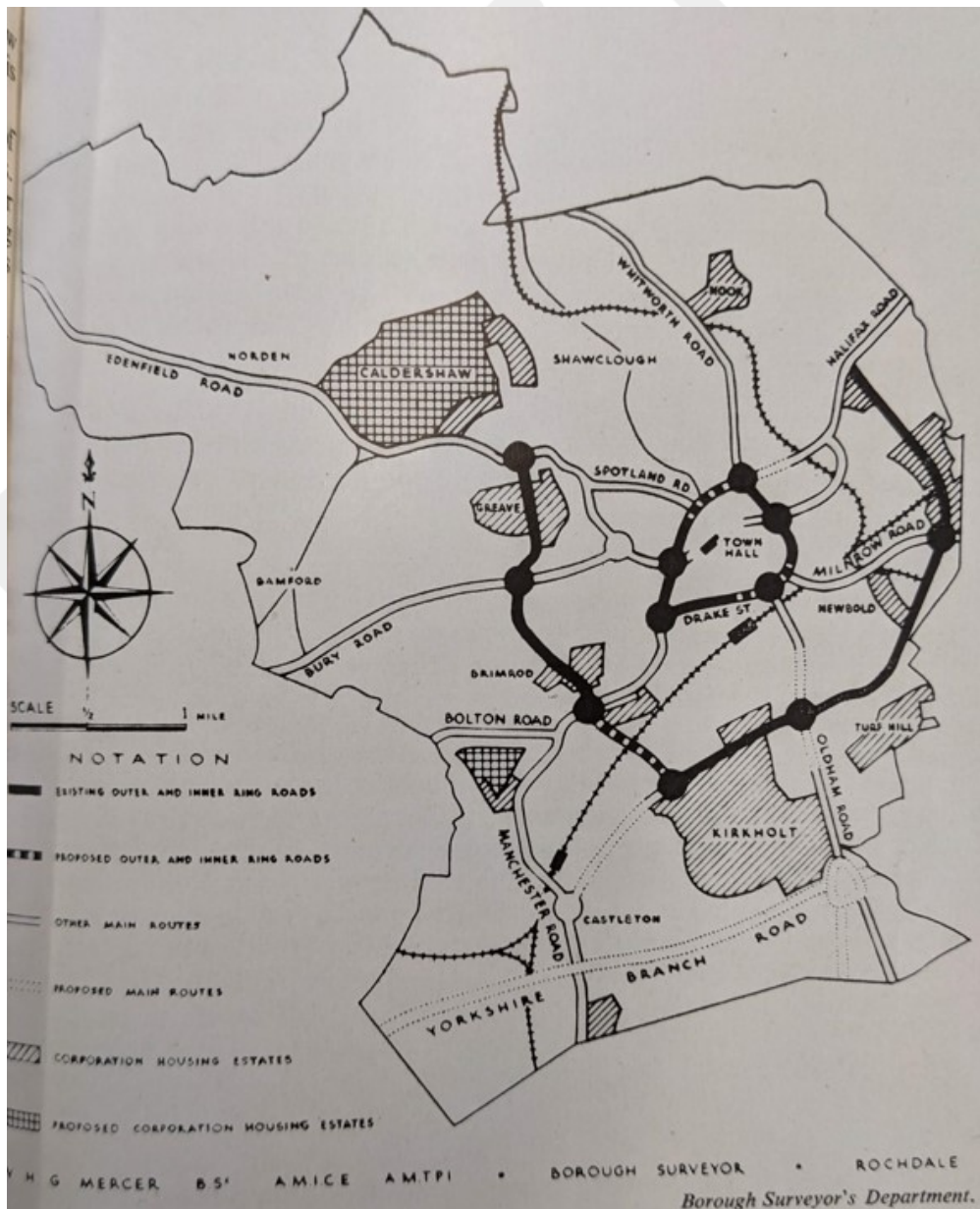
The ambition for improvement within the Rochdale Borough continued throughout the 20th century.

With the influence of modern culture, specifically the Town & Country Planning Act in 1947, Rochdale produced a Development which received Ministerial approval in 1953. The plan included proposals for four major road schemes: the inner ring road, outer ring road, division of Queensway and improvements to the Yorkshire Branch Road. The works relating to the Inner Ring Road focussed on the business centre of the town and included aspirations for the closure of Yorkshire Street.

These works significantly shaped the development of the town centre (shown in the sketch image below).

The implementation of this plan saw further areas of demolition to make room for the new road network. The construction of the inner ring road has changed the historic layout of the conservation area specifically.

Town centre improvements to highways, particularly for buses and to meet modern parking demands were also implemented. This saw the redesign of the Town Hall Square to accommodate these. This area is currently being reinstated as a public square.



Copy of Image published in *Rochdale Retrospect*, 1956, showing Major Road Proposal by the Borough Surveyor's Department

6.0 The Character of the Conservation Area

Given the expanse of the area covered by the designation, the previous appraisal had subdivided the conservation area into smaller parcels.

These are shown in the map image below and are named as:

- Cenotaph & Memorial Gardens (Orange)
- Old Town (Pink)
- Regency Drake Street (Green)
- Rochdale Parish Church of St Chad (Yellow)
- Town Hall, Square & Esplanade (Blue)

The boundaries of these character areas will be reconsidered as part of this appraisal exercise to ensure that they are relevant and easy to understand and identify.

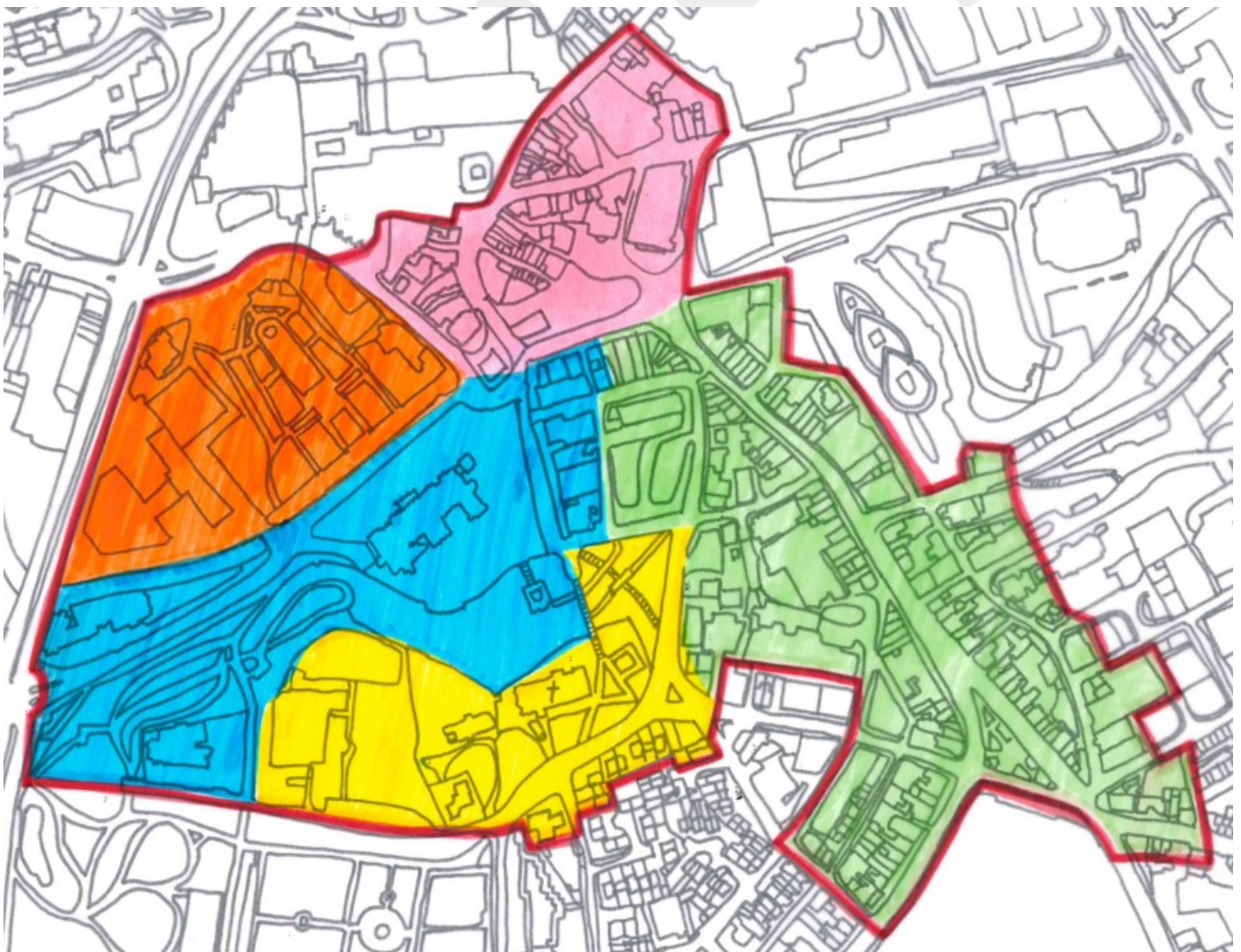
Whilst the conservation area is split in to character areas, there is an overriding special interest which binds all these parts together.

The conservation area boundary covers the historic heart of the market town and important historical developments immediately surrounding this.

In order to understand the elements which contribute to the significance of the conservation area, this report first examines each individual character area before compiling commonalities and themes. Individual buildings and spaces not specifically mentioned does not equate to a lack of importance.

The report also explores the relevance of the character areas and makes recommendations in to their retention or alteration along with analysing their setting.

A review of the overall conservation area boundary is also included.



6.1 Cenotaph & Memorial Gardens

This area accounts for the land surrounding the cenotaph and memorial gardens, directly opposite the Town Hall. The area extends west to St Marys Gate and east/north along Newgate, with The Esplanade to the south. This part of the conservation area is characterised as being relatively flat and includes part of the culverted areas of the River Roch.

The 1851 published map shows this area occupied by a Manor House. The “Orchard” was constructed in the early 18th century and became the home to the Lord of Rochdale Manor from 1824. The common land adjacent became the cattle market by the 1892 map.



Copy of photograph of former “Wheelpit Court” from *Yesterday’s Rochdale*

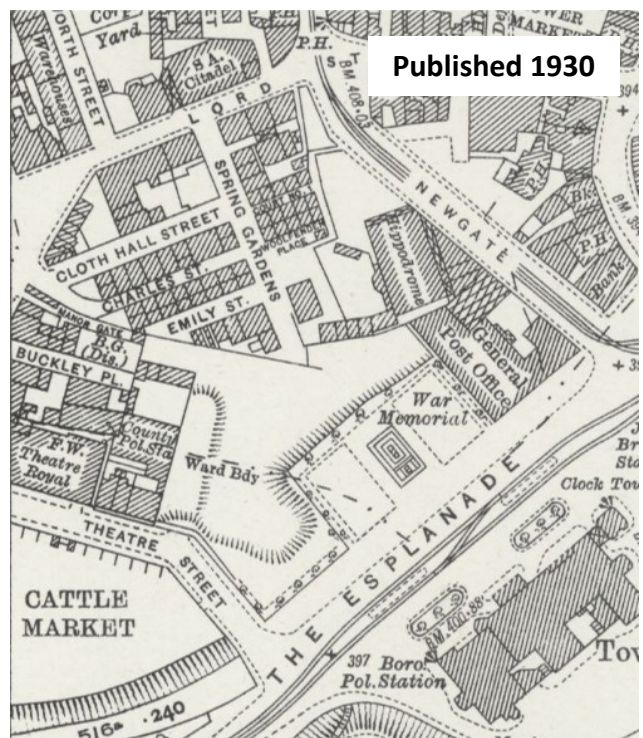
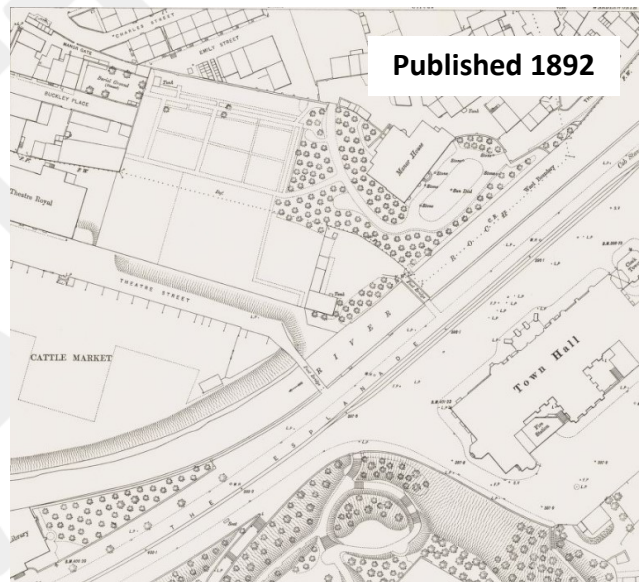
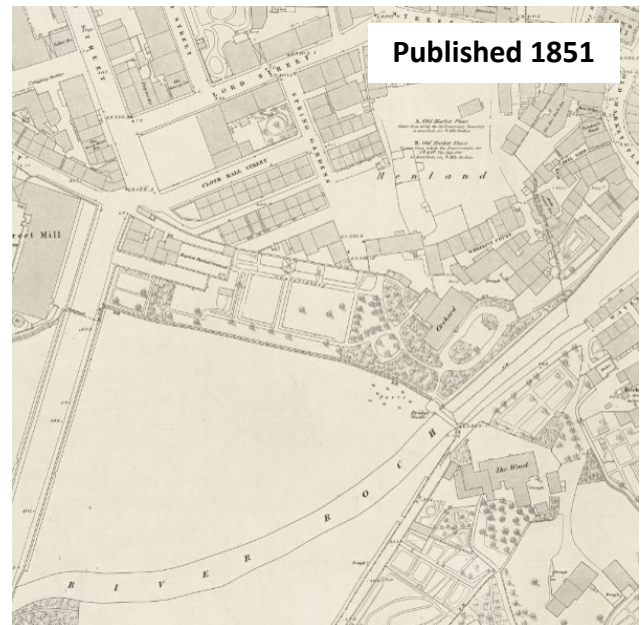
The installation of Newgate saw the demolition of traditional cottages in the town centre, along with the oldest secular building in Rochdale “Amen Corner”. Wheelpit Court (shown in the above photograph dated 1900) and “The Orchard” were demolished to make way for the new war memorial and gardens.

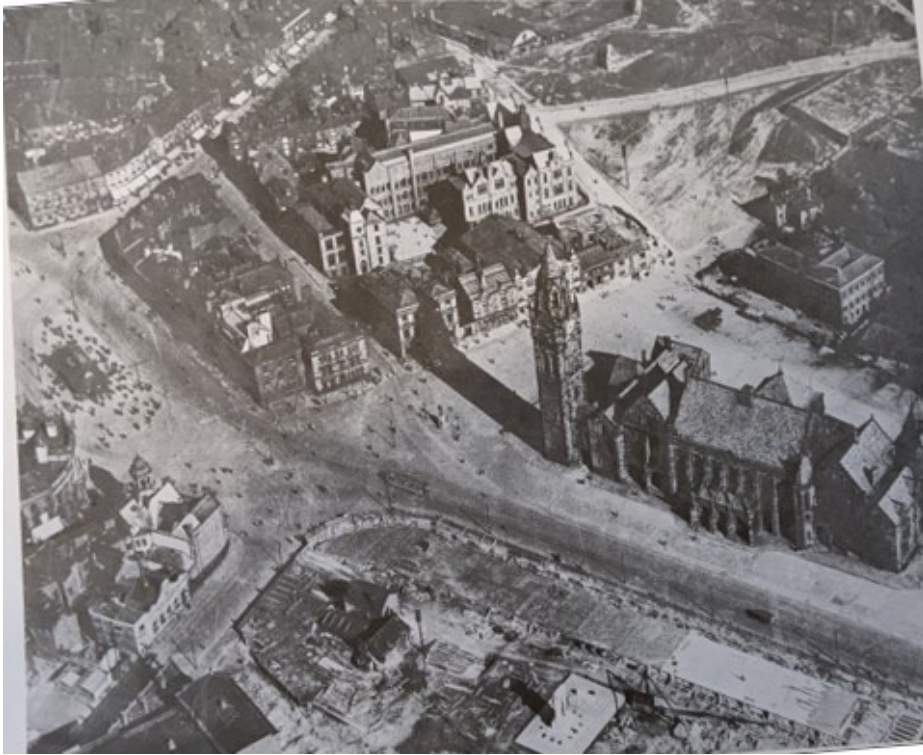
It isn’t until the 1930 map that we are able to understand the reality of these works in this area.

Top: Extract of: *Rochdale Sheet 8*
Surveyed: 1848, Published: 1851. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281049>

Middle: Extract of: *Rochdale - Lancashire LXXXIX.1.16*
Surveyed: 1890, Published: 1892. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281160>

Bottom: Extract of: *Lancashire LXXXIX.1*
Revised: 1928, Published: 1930. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/126520736>





Copy of Aerial Photograph of Rochdale Town Hall and Town Hall Square from *Rochdale As It Was*, 1973.

Sir Edwin Lutyens was appointed to design a memorial to commemorate the war on behalf of the Rochdale Borough.

The Cenotaph occupies a prominent position opposite the Town Hall with a sunken memorial garden to the north. The original design intention for the cenotaph had included two neo-classical buildings either side of the memorial to frame its position. The Old Post Office, built of Portland Stone, was completed in 1927 and is the only building which was constructed to this design. The above photograph shows the site prior to its construction. A vacant plot remains to the west for the mirroring building.

The Memorial Garden was extended northwards to create Garden of Remembrance after the Second World War.

To the west of the Memorial Gardens and Cenotaph is the Rochdale Police Head Quarters (shown above) and former Magistrates Court. These buildings were constructed during the 1970s. Whilst these are of modern design, the inclusion of limestone helps aid continuity in materiality with the Old Post Office. The impact of these buildings is also reduced in the streetscape by being set back from The Esplanade.

Newgate House, a prominent modernist building, sits to the north of the Old Post Office along Newgate. There is a single storey modern building (currently vacant) at the junction of Newgate and St Mary's Gate. These are partially separated from the war memorial by mature trees.

Listed buildings within this area include:

- Rochdale Cenotaph—Grade I
- The Old Post Office—Grade II
- Lamp posts at each corner of the War Memorial—Grade II

The Rochdale Police Headquarters has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset in response to its 20th century brutalist form.

The Memorial Garden is also considered to be a non-designated heritage asset given its high historical, aesthetic and communal values. It is one of the key areas which provides a key open space in the town centre.

Buildings and spaces in this character area are defined as formal and civic. The area is dominated by the grandeur of the Cenotaph and the peaceful backdrop of the memorial garden.



Key Views

Given that this area is predominantly open gardens, views into, across and out of are readily available.

There is clearly a relationship between the cenotaph and memorial garden with the Town Hall however, this is somewhat downgraded due to the presence of the public highway.

Views from the Cenotaph to the north include modern development such as the Seven Sisters residential apartments and Newgate House. These are partly obscured in summer months when mature trees are in leaf.

Highways and Street Furniture

There are a mixture of lighting columns and designs found within this character area, including some listed lamps set at each corner of the Cenotaph.

There are a number of attractive benches in and around the gardens which invite people to linger and enjoy the space.

There is also a small children's play area set down in a lower section of garden to the west, which would benefit from investment and enhancement as a key placemaking tool.

To the north there is a small car park which includes lighting, signage, bollards and street markings typical of such a use.

Positive Impacts

The Cenotaph and memorial gardens, complete with attractive lighting, clearly make a positive contribution to the significance of this area. They are the key defining assets and demonstrate the Boroughs respect for its honourable residents.

The classical Old Post Office also contributes to the character of the area and provides a high quality contrast to the Gothic Town Hall opposite.

There is an attractive boundary wall to the lower boundary of the childrens play area which includes a castellated balustrade.

Neutral Impacts

The Magistrates Court and Rochdale Police HQ are considered to have a neutral impact on this character area. Whilst their materiality is somewhat complementary to the Lutyens assets, their modern design, scale and massing is overly dominant. This is somewhat masked through separation between the Cenotaph and listed building due to the presence of the undeveloped plot and mature trees.

Negative Impacts

On street parking along the Esplanade downgrades the sombre mood of the memorial and severs this area from the Town Hall.

Newgate House is a modernist building of large scale and mass. This makes the building overbearing and dominates the space. The property does not make a positive contribution to the character and significance of the conservation area.

Similarly, the former Madisons restaurant situated in the north west corner of the character area has little architectural merit. This building and the adjacent carparking areas do not contribute to the character and significance of the conservation area.

Recommendations

It is proposed that Newgate House, the Car Park to the north and the former Madisons Restaurant building are removed from the conservation area to help uphold its quality and heritage importance.

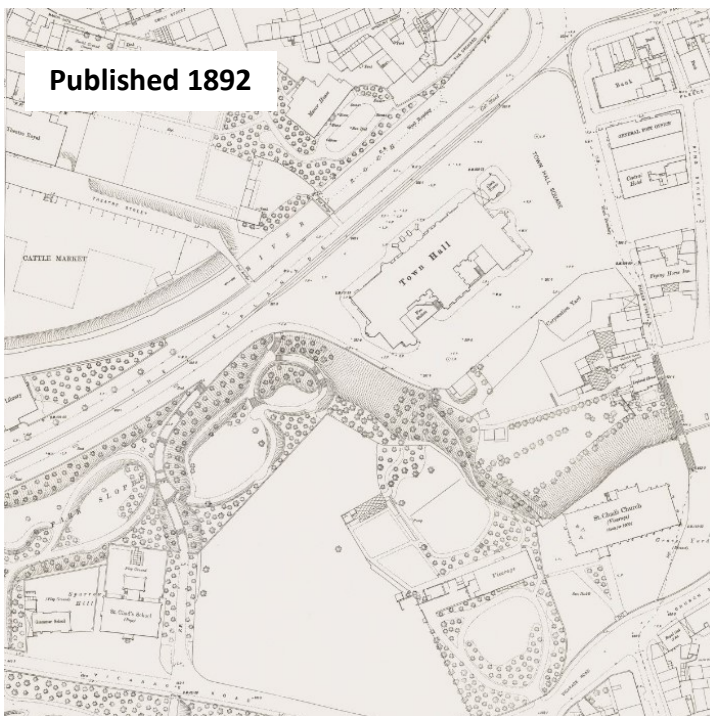


Published 1851

6.2 Town Hall, Square & Esplanade

This area is situated to the south of the river. It occupies a relatively flat parcel of land which slopes upwards steeply in the southernmost part, towards St Chads Church. It is a particularly interesting as the area has been redeveloped a number of times, seen in the historic map progressions.

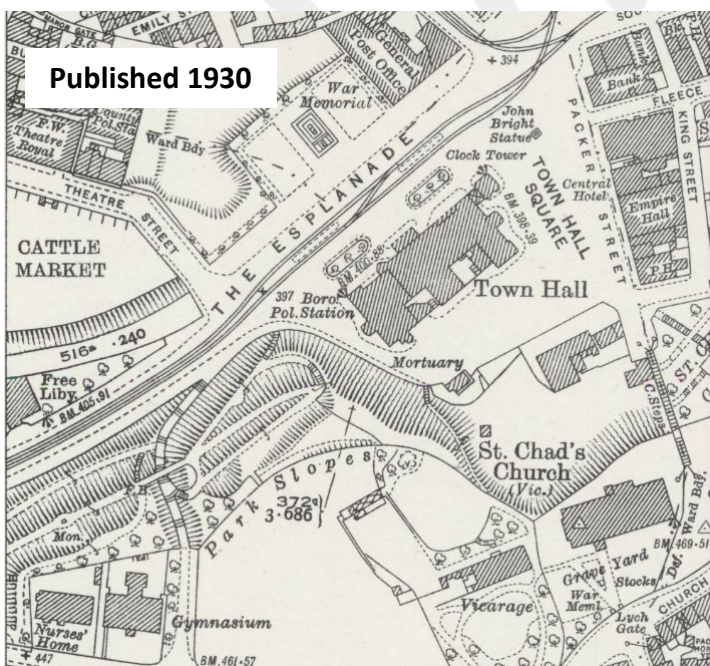
The 1851 map helps us understand this part of the town prior to the erection of the Town Hall. This map shows a foundry present (The Roch Brass and Iron Foundry) along with dense development on the western side of Packer Street. To the west of Packer Street The Wood, a fine villa set in formal gardens, occupied extensive grounds. The property was purchased from Mr Thomas Ferrand by the Rochdale Corporation for the site of the Town Hall.



Published 1892

The 1930 Map shows John Brights Statue retained in the Town Hall Square, prior to its relocation in Broadfield Park.

In 2021 the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, hosted by the University of Salford, completed a desk and field based exercise to better understand the development of the Town Hall Square area. An overview of the history of this area is presented comprehensively within the report *“Community Based Archaeological Investigation— Town Hall Square, Rochdale”*. On site excavations revealed the former footprints of 18th and 19th century structures along with evidence of the formal garden which surrounded “The Wood”.



Published 1930

Top: Extract of: *Rochdale Sheet 8*
 Surveyed: 1848, Published: 1851. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281049>

Middle: Extract of: *Rochdale - Lancashire LXXXIX.1.16*
 Surveyed: 1890, Published: 1892. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281160>

Bottom: Extract of: *Lancashire LXXXIX.1*



Historic photographs, records and the information presented by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service explain that Packer Street became a densely populated and wealthy commercial street, housing trades such as weavers, tailors and shoemakers. The name also suggests association with the pack-horse trade.

The above photograph shows buildings lining the west side of Packer Street, opposite the Town Hall Chambers.

Following the establishment of Rochdale as a Municipal Borough in 1856, a competition was launched to design the new Town Hall. Between 1856 & 1871 the Town Council met in the Old Commissioners Rooms on Smith Street. The Old Town Hall which appears on historic maps off Yorkshire Street was never actually used for municipal purposes.



**PLACEHOLDER
IMAGE OF TOWN HALL**

Rochdale Town Hall is an impressive gothic structure of high decoration, both inside and out. Externally the building is constructed of local millstone beneath a complexity of slate roofs, which helps the building blend in to the surrounding landscape. Within the building elaborate craftsmanship can be found and the artwork celebrates the people, history and industry of the town.

The tower is a replacement of the original by Alfred Waterhouse and was completed in 1883 following a fire.

The setting surrounding the town hall was entirely reworked to create attractive gardens on Sparrow Hill Slopes and extending out to Broadfield Park. The creation of The Esplanade and Town Hall Square was designed as part of the original Crossland masterplan for the Town Hall. It was intended to act as a meeting point for the different areas of the town.

The focus of the square was the statue of John Bright, which was relocated to Broadfield Park during the 1930s. A statue of Dame Gracie Fields, famed actress born and raised in Rochdale, now stands in Town Hall Square.

The buildings on Packer Street were demolished during the redevelopment works. Those now on the east side were reconstructed as grand structures of high status, creating a befitting setting for the Town Hall.

Broadfield Park is partially included within the conservation area. This occupies the slopes to the rear of the Town Hall, extending up beyond Sparrow Hill. It provides a high quality green space in the conservation area, with many mature attractive trees.

Rochdale Central Library, Museum and Art Gallery (Touchstones) opened as an Arts and Heritage centre in 2002 and is in the ownership and management of RMBC. It is formed of 3 buildings: the library, museum and art gallery, all of which were built in the early 20th century. Its gothic style resonates the design of the Town Hall.

Listed buildings within this character area are:

- Rochdale Town Hall—Grade I
- Rochdale Central Library, Museum and Art Gallery (Touchstones)—Grade II
- Statue of John Bright—Grade II
- Former Post Office, corner of Packer Street and Fleece Street—Grade II
- Former Union Bank of Manchester, 5 South Parade—Grade II

Broadfield Park is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden.

There are also a number of non-designated heritage assets located within this area. These assets have been categorised as such due to their age, architectural style and the positive contribution they make to the character and significance of the conservation area.

These are:

- Empire Hall, Packer Street
- Flying Horse Public House, Packer Street
- Natwest Bank, Packer Street
- Town Hall Chambers, South Parade
- 1-3 South Parade
- 7 South Parade

The prominent buildings materials within this area include dressed sandstone ashlar and Westmorland green slate roofs.

Key Views

The gateway view to the conservation area from St Mary's Gate is framed by Touchstones on the northern side of The Esplanade and a public sculpture, "*The Spires*", to the south. The partnering sculpture to this being located on the western side of St Mary's Gate, outside of the conservation area boundary. This creates an attractive entrance, enabling visitors to feel like they have arrived at a grand destination.

When travelling eastwards along The Esplanade, the mature trees of Broadfield Park open up to reveal the Town Hall and its tower, with beautiful civic buildings lining the eastern side of Packer Street in the background.

The high quality open spaces, both green and formally landscaped, enrich the experience of this character area and views from within these are all high quality.

From Town Hall Square views to the north, particularly surrounding the rediscovered bridge crossing the river are of particularly high quality.

Highways and Street Furniture

There are some attractive lamp posts set immediately to the front of the Town Hall in the car parking area which is currently being redesigned as a formal landscaped area. The project will also remodel some of the highways and entirely remove an expanse of car parking to the rear of the Town Hall, creating a considerable enhancement to this area.

Modern street lights illuminate the public highway and Town Hall Square. These are a mixture of designs and some include CCTV cameras. A consistent design throughout would enhance this area.

On street parking along the Esplanade downgrades the quality of the setting of the Town Hall and The Cenotaph through the degradation of the formality of the space.

Positive Impact

The buildings designated as listed buildings and identified as non-designated heritage assets, all make a positive contribution to the character and significance of the conservation area. The Town Hall is undoubtedly the jewel in Rochdale's crown and the imposing tower can be seen from many locations in the conservation area.

High quality open spaces such as the Town Hall Square, Broadfield Park and St Chads Slopes clearly add to the quality and experience of place.

Neutral Impact

There is a single building on Packer Street which is a modern replacement. The architectural style of the building does not complement the grandeur of the neighbouring buildings although, its scale and massing is subservient.

Negative Impact

On street parking along the Esplanade downgrades the quality of this character area. Street markings and associated paraphernalia are unattractive and could be easily improved.

A number of banners and modern signs have been erected and these downgrade the quality of this character area. Their removal would be beneficial.

Recommendations

The character of this area is strengthened by the location of the Cenotaph and memorial gardens to the north. Collectively the Town Hall and Cenotaph areas create a Civic Centre for the town and it is proposed that these two character areas are combined. This will help strengthen the sense of place and will make this character area more identifiable.

A reconsideration of the boundary to the south should be made, with the inclusion of a further part of Broadfield Park. This will account for the role this plays as part of the Crossland Masterplan and the impact this has as a clear boundary to the conservation area from Manchester Road.

Signage / advertisements should be reconsidered in this area and highways parking paraphernalia could be reduced, and in some cases removed.

Copy of Aerial photograph from Historic England—Britain From Above Collection—*Town Hall Square, Rochdale, 1926*





The above map demonstrates how the two character areas would be combined to create a single Civic Centre character area.

This area would be characterised as the greenest part of the town centre.

It would also be identified as the municipal heart of the town and demonstrates strength, success and pride of the Borough.

Key:

Green hatching— proposed areas/buildings to be removed

Blue hatching— proposed extension

Red Line—proposed amalgamated character areas

6.3 Rochdale Parish Church of St Chad

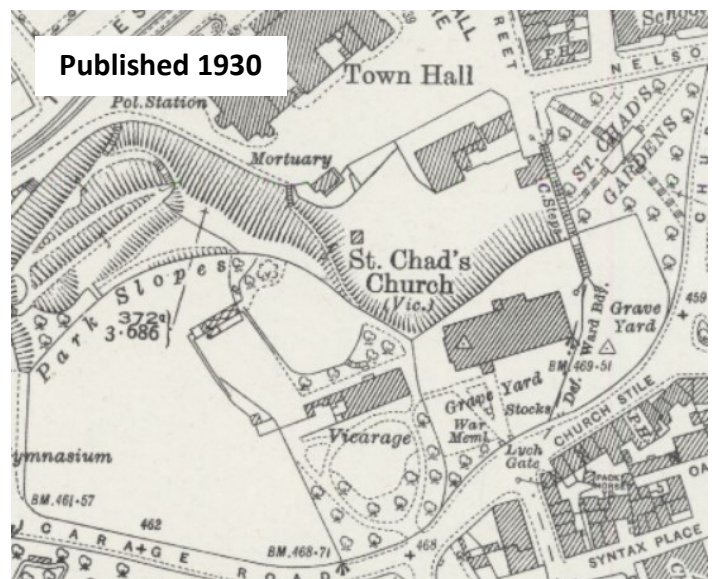
The historic map regression for this character area demonstrates that this is the least altered part of the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

St Chad's Church is little altered since the 1851 map. The Church stands at the top of Sparrow Hill, towering over the town centre below, its grand architectural design exuding dominance over the town below. The landmark building is seen from many locations across the town.

Historical accounts suggest the Church is of 13th century origin and was likely constructed on the site of an earlier religious building. The Church underwent renovations and alterations within the 19th century which were undertaken by Crossland to complement the new Town Hall. Crosslands vision for the Church saw the addition of dozens of figures and rich ornamentations which were completed by Thomas Earp. These elements gave the Church theatrical grandeur.

The residential properties seen to the south of the Church in the 1930s map have been demolished and replaced with modern housing.

A new vicarage has been erected within the grounds of the former Vicarage, which is now known as Partnership House.



Top: Extract of: *Rochdale Sheet 8*
Surveyed: 1848, Published: 1851. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281049>

Middle: Extract of: *Rochdale - Lancashire LXXXIX.1.16*
Surveyed: 1890, Published: 1892. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281160>

Bottom: Extract of: *Lancashire LXXXIX.1*
Revised: 1928, Published: 1930. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/126520736>



Copy of image showing St Chads in the early 1880s from
Top o'th' Steps.

The above image shows St Chads prior to the Crossland and Earp remodelling works. When compared with the present day building (right) we can see that specific improvements included works to the tower and porch.

Long distances views of St Chads can be gained from many locations in the northern part of the conservation area, and these must be retained and enhanced where possible. These removal of the self seeded trees on Town Hall slopes has reinstated the original Crossland design and strengthens the connection between the Church and Town Hall.

Listed buildings within this character area are:

- Church of Saint Chad—Grade II*
- Wall to northwest of Church of St Chad—Grade II
- Sundial to south of St Chad—Grade II
- Stocks to south of St Chad—Grade II
- Rochdale Museum, The Old Vicarage (now Partnership House) - Grade II

Highways and Street Furniture

Lampposts within and adjacent to the churchyard are modern totems finished in black. Those to the south side of Church Stile are of utilitarian design. On street parking is available to the north of Church Stile which creates some visual clutter in the form of road markings and parking paraphernalia along the boundary of the Church.

There are a number of non-designated heritage assets located within this area in the form of memorial stones and tombs within the Churchyard. These have been re-laid to create paths through the churchyard, resulting in their accelerated degradation. Church Steps are the historical linking route between the Church and town.

Footpaths are flagged which creates a high quality aesthetic.

Cobbles line Church Lane, leading down to the Town Hall Square and town centre. These are an important feature within the local area.

Positive Impact

The buildings designated as listed buildings are all deemed to make a positive contribution to the character and significance of the area.

Church Steps, flagged footpaths and cobbled streets also contribute to this.

Key Views

The key views within this area are largely those within the churchyard. Views down to the Town Hall from St Chads are impressive yet somewhat limited due to buildings and topography.

Negative Impact

Modern development in the form of 20th century bungalows constructed of red brick with modern tiled roofs are found on the south side of Church Stile. Whilst the properties are well kept, their architectural style, materiality and form do not contribute to the character and significance of this area.

Recommendations

This location centres around one of the most impressive buildings in Rochdale, St Chads. It is therefore imperative that the special character of the conservation area is not downgraded by less sympathetic developments. Subsequently, it is proposed that the modern housing and development to the south side of Church Stile is removed from the conservation area.

It also is proposed that the divorced graveyard (shown right) opposite St Chads is included within the conservation area boundary, in recognition of the historical and communal values associated with this area.

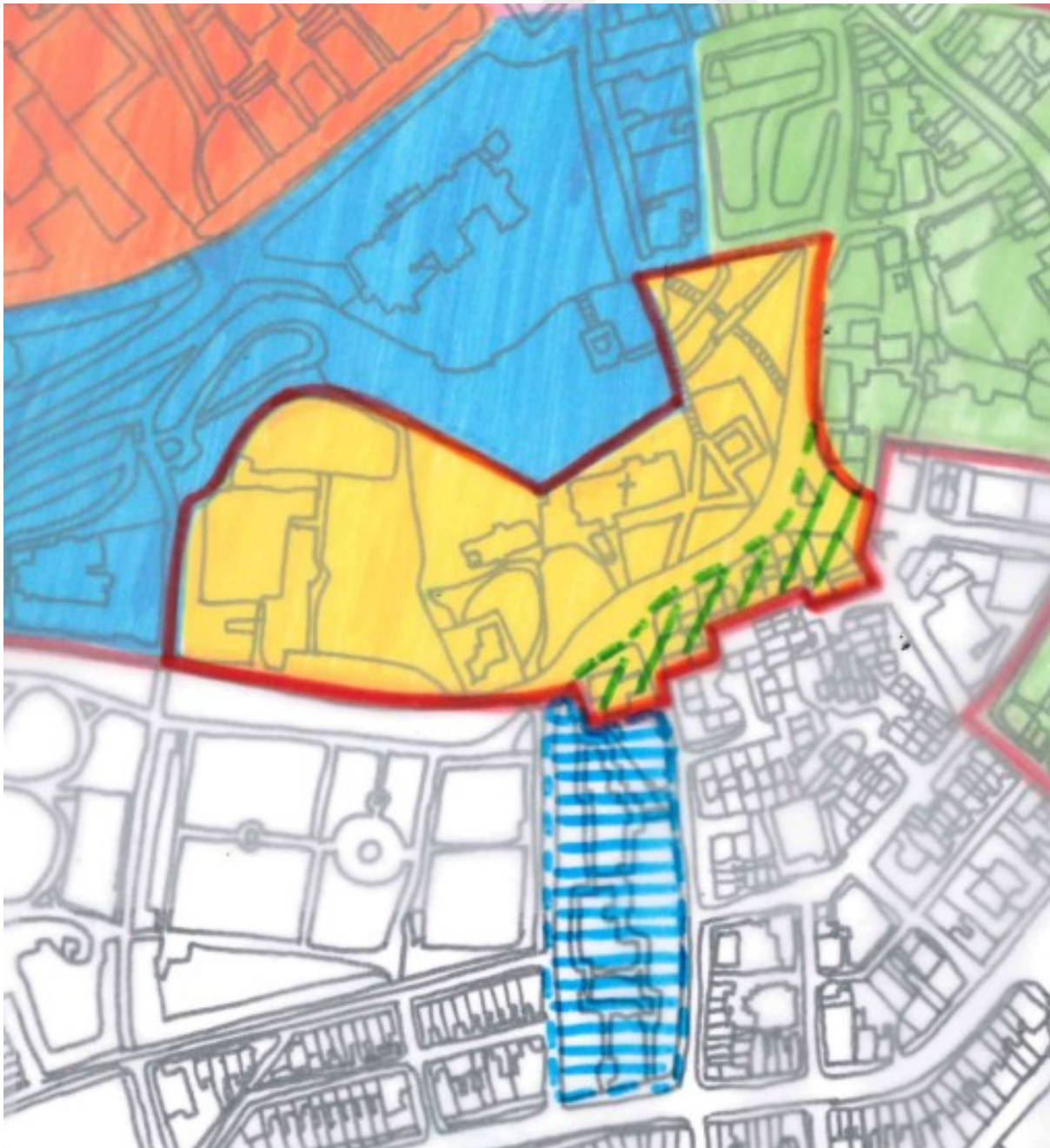


Map Key:

Yellow—existing St Chads Character Area.

Green hatching —Proposed area to be removed.

Blue hatching —proposed area to be added.





A copy of a painting of The Butts from the southern side of the River Roch c1780 from Oxford Archaeology Rochdale Bridge

6.4 Old Town

The Old Town character area covers the most northerly section of the conservation area from The Butts and up along Yorkshire Street.

This character area includes a considerable section of the River Roch, some of which remains covered. The Rochdale Bridge, originating from the 13th century, was recently uncovered and this provides a key focus point for this part of the conservation area.

Crossing the bridge, Yorkshire Street is framed by two classical buildings of fine ashlar sandstone, both of which are occupied by banks. Beyond these buildings further banks are situated, creating the financial centre for the town. The presence of these historic banks demonstrates the wealth of the town the late 19th century.

Yorkshire Street sweeps northwards up the hill through the commercial centre of the town.

Whilst the timber framed structures of the past have been lost, their stone and brick replacements retain the historic plan of the town. This creates an eclectic mix of buildings types and designs which gives this area diversity. The majority of the buildings are 2 or 3 bays wide and extend upwards for 3 storeys.

Small medieval ginnels remain which connect Yorkshire Street to Newgate, The Butts and Baillie Street. These vary in size and width but act as a key reminder to the dense development and character of medieval Rochdale.

A medieval ford crossing was located to the east of the Rochdale Bridge, connecting The Butts with the Glebe land to the south side of the river.

The Butts is an open triangular section of land which is used as the market place. It is surrounded by an interesting collection of buildings to the north and provides an attractive market space.

The former Royds Bank occupies the prime position on The Butts. This neo-classical building of fine Portland stone is the result of remodelling works completed in the early 20th century. The building was originally constructed as a residence with the adjoining Greek revival building providing the bank premises.

To the north of The Butts is Bulls Brow. Apty named due to its history with bull-baiting, a regular attraction in the early 19th century.

The map regressions demonstrate that little change occurred between 1851 and 1930. This being said, when compared to modern day OS maps, we are able to understand the area has been subject to considerable change, particularly in the immediate setting of the conservation area by the erection of the Wheatsheaf and The Exchange shopping centres.

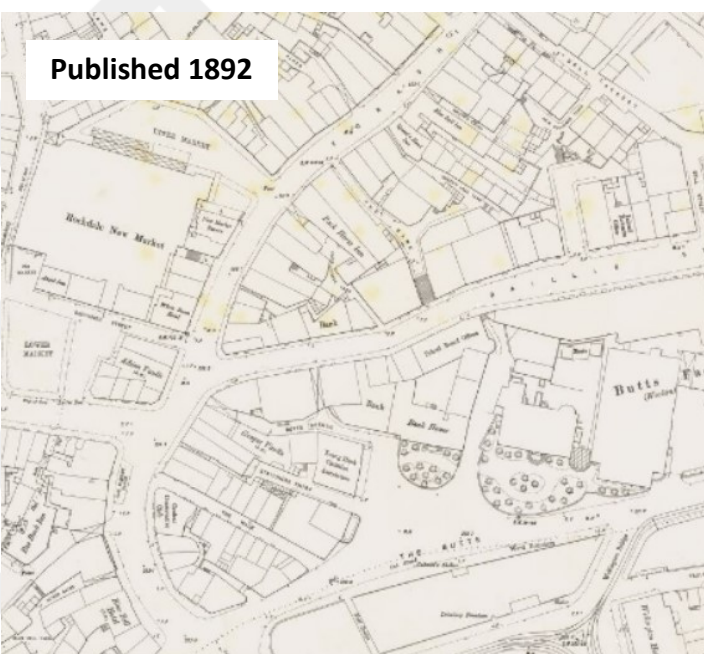
These large scale developments have had a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area. This is caused through the removal of historic buildings, including the Old Town Hall and indoor market surrounding the former Lord Street. As these modern buildings are excessively large in terms of scale and massing, they are dominant features in the local streetscape and wider views of the town, detracting from the modest heritage assets.

Such development has continued to present day with the new Riverside shopping centre, located on the former site of Butts Mill and Duncan Street Mill.

The 1926 aerial photograph on the following page focuses on Yorkshire Street, seen as the spine running up the centre of the image.

Great mill buildings can be easily identified across the landscape. In the foreground we can also see the glasshouses which occupied the land where the Regal Cinema (now the Regal Moon) was built in the 1930s.

The impact of modern development can be seen on the following page which shows a 1926 aerial image against current Google satellite imagery.



Top: Extract of: *Rochdale Sheet 8*
 Surveyed: 1848, Published: 1851. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281049>

Middle: Extract of: *Rochdale - Lancashire LXXXIX.1.16*
 Surveyed: 1890, Published: 1892. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281160>

Bottom: Extract of: *Lancashire LXXXIX.1*
 Revised: 1928, Published: 1930. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/126520736>



Above—Historic England Aerial Photograph—EPW016788 ENGLAND (1926). Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, 1926—<https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/en/image/EPW016788>

Below—Google Earth Aerial 3D Image of Yorkshire Street —[Google Earth](#)



The Walk is little altered and continues to be the home of a number of smaller, independent businesses.



Copy of photograph showing Lord Street from Yesterday's Rochdale

The removal of Lord Street from the town centre is one of the most obvious alterations for this area. The above image shows the former street, with Lloyds Bank in the foreground and Cooperative Warehouse immediately behind. This road has been infilled by the Exchange Centre.

The Butts is also much changed, as captured by the below photograph which shows the former Butts House in the foreground with Kelsall and Kemps Mill behind. This grand residence was redeveloped, complete with the addition of a



Copy of image showing Butts House and Kelsall & Kemps Mill from Yesterday's Rochdale

Portland stone neo-classical façade, by Cecil Jackson in 1913-14, creating the former Royds Bank we see today.

The mill was replaced by the Art Deco cinema, now the Regal Moon, which opened its doors in 1938.

The Georgian former Cloth Warehouse was altered during the Victorian period to infill the three storey loading bays. The property operates as a number of units.

13-17 The Butts is a fine Art Deco building which was constructed as Burtons Menswear. The ground floor shop has been altered in the late 20th century.



Copy of photograph showing Burtons Menswear circa 1940s from Rochdale Living Memories Facebook Group.

The Butts were connected with South Parade and Drake Street following the culverting of the river in the 20th century.

Key Buildings

This character area has a particularly diverse building stock. It has the highest density of listed and non-designated heritage assets, all of which contribute to its character and significance.

Listed buildings in this character area include:

- The Former Oldham Joint Stock Bank, now HSBC - Grade II
- Esplanade, Yorkshire Street, The Butts, South Parade, Rochdale - Grade II
- Former Blue Bell Inn - Grade II
- 17 Yorkshire Street (Lloyds Bank) - Grade II
- 5 Baillie Street - Grade II
- 10, 12, 14 and 16, Baillie Street - Grade II
- 17A and 19 Baillie Street - Grade II
- The former Royds Bank - Grade II

Non-designated heritage assets in this area include:

- 1 Yorkshire Street
- Halifax House 6/14 Yorkshire Street
- 9-11 Yorkshire Street
- 16-24 Yorkshire Street
- 36 Yorkshire Street
- Pioneers House
- The Roebuck
- 2 Baillie Street
- 8 Baillie Street
- 21 Baillie Street
- 13-17 The Butts
- Regal Moon, The Butts

The richness and diversity of the buildings gives the streetscape visual interest at first floor and above. The individuality of the buildings also creates an interesting skyline although consistency is achieved through the dominance of 3 storey buildings.



Key Views

Fantastic views are boasted from the Butts in all directions. The most prestigious is the view looking eastwards to the Town Hall which include the recently rediscovered bridge over the River Roch.

Views south towards Drake Street and South Parade are also attractive, although somewhat blighted by highways paraphernalia.

Views along the lower southern part of Yorkshire Street are somewhat limited due to the curving nature of the street. This does however enable views when travelling southwards to be focussed on some of the key listed buildings in this area, which occupy prime positions.



The entrance gateway to Yorkshire Street is particularly attractive, being flanked by the curved facades of the grand sandstone banks.



Positive Impact

The listed buildings within this area make a considerable contribution to its character and significance. They are varied in material, form and scale which adds a layer of richness to the town centre.

There are many instances where the non-designated heritage assets in the town are of architectural merit above the ground floor modern shopfront. There is a considerable opportunity for enhancement to these.



The openness of the Butts, contrasting against the narrow weaving nature of Bulls Brow creates a series of high quality spaces with aesthetic and historical interest. The inclusion of seating and planting helps uplift these areas as public spaces and encourages use. The below photograph shows the meeting place between Bulls Brow and the Butts with recently added seating.



Negative Impact

Signage within this part of the conservation area is mixed and could be considerably improved. The use of internally illuminated signage in particular has harmed the quality of this character area.

Similarly, modern shopfront replacements and interventions predominantly include overly large fascia's and uncharacteristically large windows and doors. These could be improved.

The inclusion of services and plant to the front and side elevations of buildings has created clutter in the street-scene. Where opportunities present themselves, these should be relocated to less conspicuous elevations or removed if redundant.

There are a number of properties which require urgent attention in relation to their maintenance and upkeep. These buildings include vacant properties and some disused upper floor areas.



The use of the Butts as a taxi rank in front of some of the key buildings within the town is considered to have a negative impact on the quality of the space.

Recommendations

The reinstatement of "Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society Limited Est 1844" painted sign on the gable of 15 Yorkshire Street (warehouse building to the rear of Leeds House) could create a significant heritage benefit for the conservation area. This would be achieved by strengthening links to the Cooperative movement in this area.

Enforcement action for unauthorised signage and shopfronts should also be undertaken to effectively manage the quality of this area.



Published 1851

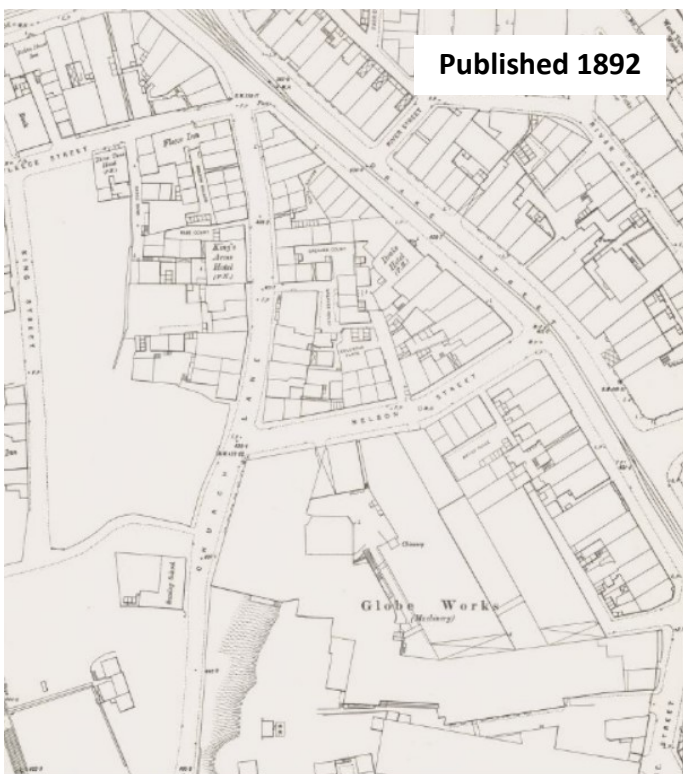
6.5 Regency Drake Street

Regency Drake Street covers the most eastern section of the conservation area.

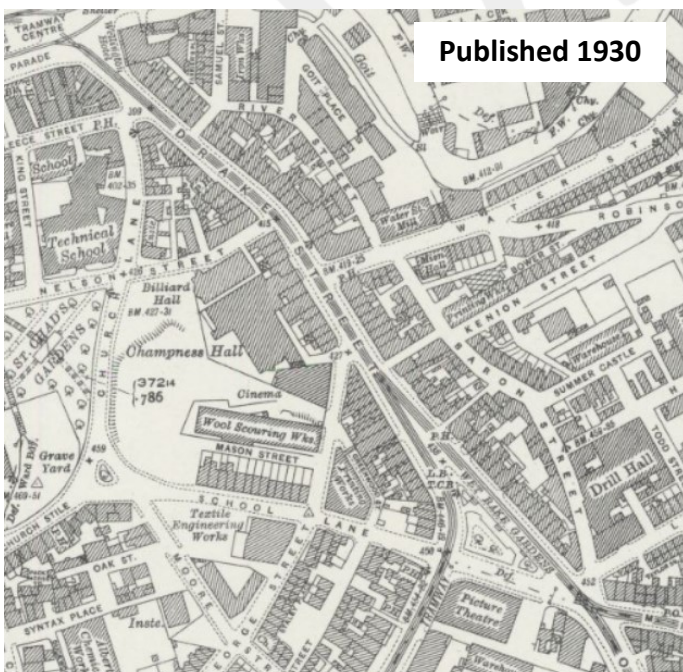
The Regency period saw the rapid expansion of Rochdale thanks to the continued success of the woollen industry. The need for improved transportation links saw the development of Drake Street, named after Reverend Drake, which connected the town centre to the Rochdale Canal and later the railway station.

The creation of the road opened up opportunities for new development in Rochdale to the south of the river. The buildings saw the creation of more shops and merchant premises and soon the street became well known as a specialised shopping area. The area remained as such until the 1990s when the focus moved to modern shopping developments on Yorkshire Street.

The historic maps show us little development in this area between 1851 & 1930 however, we are able to see the historic tram route (also shown in the historic photograph below) which was installed during the 19th century. This was a significant progression for Rochdale.



Published 1892



Published 1930



Copy of photograph from 1908 showing Drake Street from Yesterday's Rochdale

Top: Extract of: *Rochdale Sheet 8*
 Surveyed: 1848, Published: 1851. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281049>

Middle: Extract of: *Rochdale - Lancashire LXXXIX.1.16*
 Surveyed: 1890, Published: 1892. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/231281160>

Bottom: Extract of: *Lancashire LXXXIX.1*
 Revised: 1928, Published: 1930. Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/126520736>

Key Buildings

This character area also boasts a diverse building stock, similar to The Old Town. This stems from high density development for the provision of shops, warehouses and merchants houses in a relatively short period of time.

This area includes some of the remaining industrial buildings in the town centre, which was once filled with mills and foundries.

17 Milnrow Road, shown below, is particularly important as this building represents one of the few buildings which includes an early 19th century shop at ground floor level and domestic workshop on the upper storey. This building is representative of the cottage industry which predates the industrial revolution.



24 Baron Street is a late-Georgian house with workshop to the rear and is considered to be an important and rare survival of small-scale industries in Rochdale.

This area also contains Waterside House (Water Street Mill) which represents the only remaining mill in the Rochdale town centre. Importantly, this building was also one of the earliest steam-powered textile mills and the engine house remains as part of this complex.

Modern industry can also be found in this area the Observer building, complete with print works to the rear off School Lane. The complex was previously home to the Rochdale Observer newspaper. The former printworks is an unusual triangular shaped building of red brick and sandstone details.

The Duke of Wellington Hotel (formerly a town house for the Smith family) sits at the northern end of Drake Street. This hotel was once the busiest coach house in the town, which lead people to believe it was also a political hot spot.

Opposite sits South Parade. This sweeping terrace marks the junction of Drake Street with the former limit to development on the southern bank of the river. These buildings are modest 3 storey shops which have undergone recent refurbishment works as part of the Heritage Action Zone scheme.

The Deaf Institute (below) sits on Church Lane. The building is a fine example of Edwardian Art Nouveau architecture. It is also a rare survival of a purpose built institute for the deaf.



Travelling away from the town centre, more domestic properties can be found, particularly on the back streets behind Drake Street.

Listed buildings in this character area include:

- Wellington Hotel - Grade II
- Institute for the Deaf, 23 Church Lane - Grade II
- 24 Baron Street—Grade II
- Waterside House—Grade II
- Newbold Buildings, 33-37 Oldham Road—Grade II
- 17 Milnrow Road—Grade II
- 132 Drake Street—Grade II
- Congregational Church—Grade II

Non-designated heritage assets in this area include (but are not limited to):

- Champness Hall
- The Observer Building
- Former Co-operative Branch Store
- Fashion Corner
- 34 Drake Street
- 74 Drake Street
- South Parade
- Butterworths, 14 Drake Street
- 19-21 Church Lane
- Craig Lee House, 25 Church Lane
- 24A & 28 Baron Street
- Former Music Studio, Kenion Street

Butterworths Bros (14 Drake Street) was established in 1903 by one of the longest established families in Rochdale. The jewellers attractive shopfront and prominent position demonstrates luxury and wealth.

The area includes a number of Co-operative buildings.



The Co-operative Branch Store (above) was part of the expansion of the Pioneers branch of shops across the town. It originally included butchers and grocers shops in the ground floor area, with a newsroom and library for members above. The below sketch helps us understand the historic shopfronts previously at ground floor level. The alterations to be the building are apparent when compared to the sketch image seen opposite.



Copy of sketch showing Co-operative Branch in 1865 from Fifty Rochdale Records

The Co-operatives presence on Drake Street was further strengthened with the opening of the Department Store "Fashion Corner", now occupied as offices.



The former Rochdale Conservative Industrial Co-operative Society creates a prominent landmark on the corner of Oldham Road and Milnrow Road, at the southern extent of the conservation area boundary. The impressive curved façade of the building includes fine sandstone ashlar shopfronts at the ground floor and rich red brick above.

Highways and Street Furniture

Drake Street is filled with highways signs, road markings and signals due to the conflicts of motor vehicles and trams in this area.

Lighting and furniture are not of note and could be improved to be more aesthetically pleasing.

Key Views

The gateway view from the northern extent of this character area looking south along Drake Street provides a welcoming, yet imposing view of 3 storey terraces lining either side of the street. The strong continuation of these buildings helps draw people along the street and guides people towards the southern part of the town.

Positive Impact

The listed buildings and Non-Designated Heritage Assets make a positive contribution to the quality of this area. The former Butterworths premises at 14 Drake Street makes a significant contribution to the character and grandeur of this area. The curved façade of the 3 storey, brick building with attractive shopfront occupies a prime position and exudes quality.

Neutral Impact

There are a series of replacement buildings which have been erected within the terraces, that are of modern design. Architecturally these have little merit however, their scale and materiality is largely in keeping with the character of the area.

The inclusion of the Metrolink along Drake Street somewhat downgrades the quality of this space given the need for gantry's. This being said, it is recognised that Drake was developed in order to aid transportation in the area and this tramline is a replacement of an earlier one. Therefore it is considered that on balance, the tramline has a neutral impact on this character area.

Negative Impact

132 Drake Street, whilst a listed building of architectural merit, is currently vacant with the ground floor windows boarded. This creates a detrimental impact on the area and downgrades its quality.

The rear yards that have been subjected to unsympathetic alterations, modern signage and shopfronts all have a negative impact on the overall quality of the conservation area. Back Drake Street is an example of this (right).

The disused plot at the top of Drake Street, combined with a heavily trafficked crossroad creates a visual and physical barrier. This makes wayfinding from the intersection with Oldham Road / Drake Street / School Lane to the railway station incredibly difficult.

The conservation area boundary extends in to an industrial area of Rochdale. A number of buildings are considerably altered or of modern construction. These do not contribute to the character and significance of the area.

Recommendations

Like other commercial pockets of the town, this area has been victim to the inclusion of modern shopfronts, signage and roller shutters which have downgraded the quality of the area. Guidance to shop owners and additional enforcement action against new development which does not benefit from planning permission would be useful.

The uptake of Enforcement Action to bolster this position would also be beneficial.

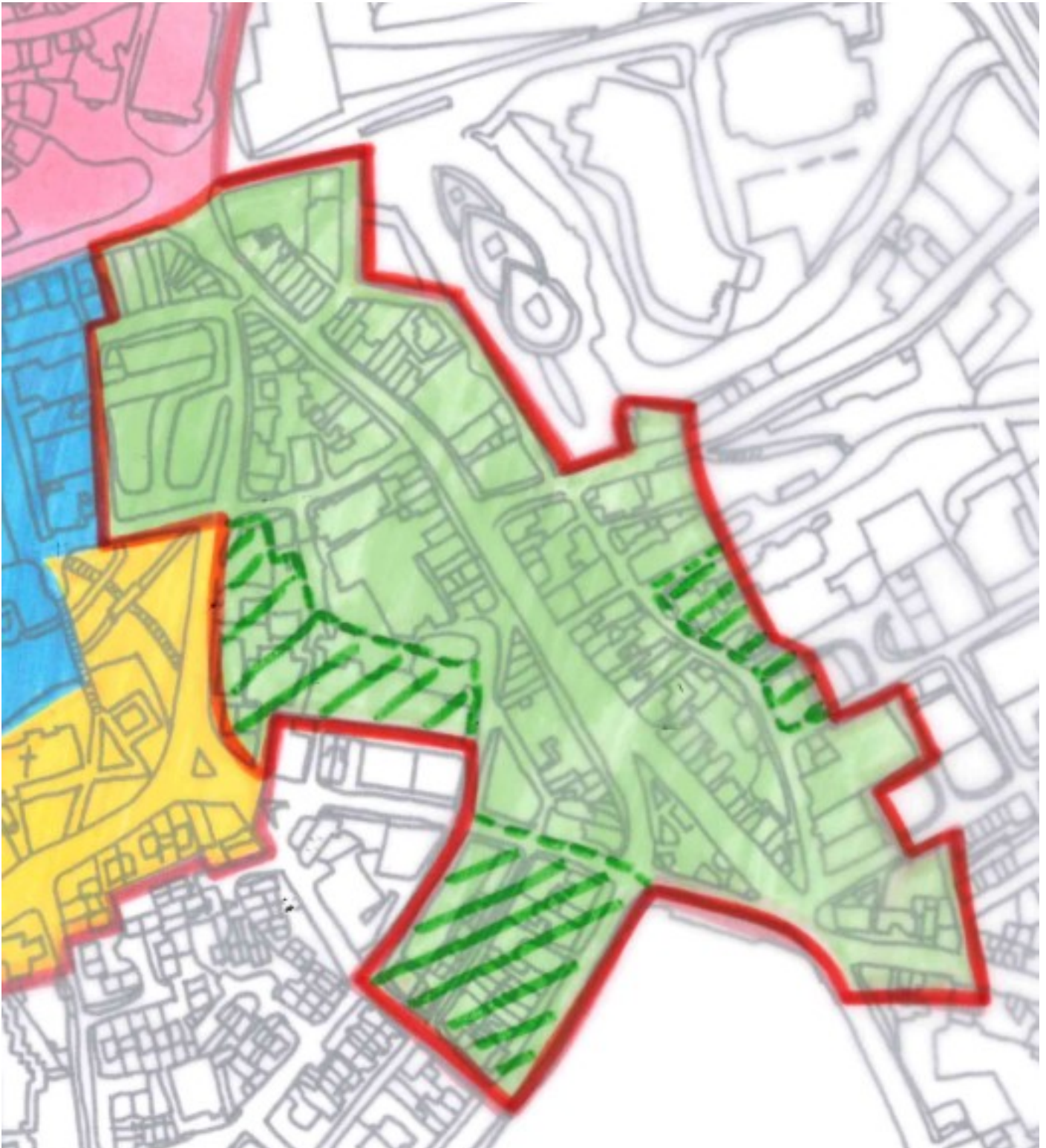
Removal of areas which include dense modern development that does not contribute to the character and significance of the conservation area is critical to ensure that the integrity of the designation is not diluted. This is proposed to include parts of the industrial area to the east, and northern sections of Drake Street / Back Drake Street.



The below maps shows the proposed removals for buildings and spaces within this character area.

These spaces and buildings have a negative impact on the character and significance of the conservation area.

Where such a proposal will see the removal of 2 listed buildings from the conservation area, it is considered that the surrounding buildings do not justify extending the boundaries for their inclusion. Furthermore, their designation will protect them as national heritage assets.



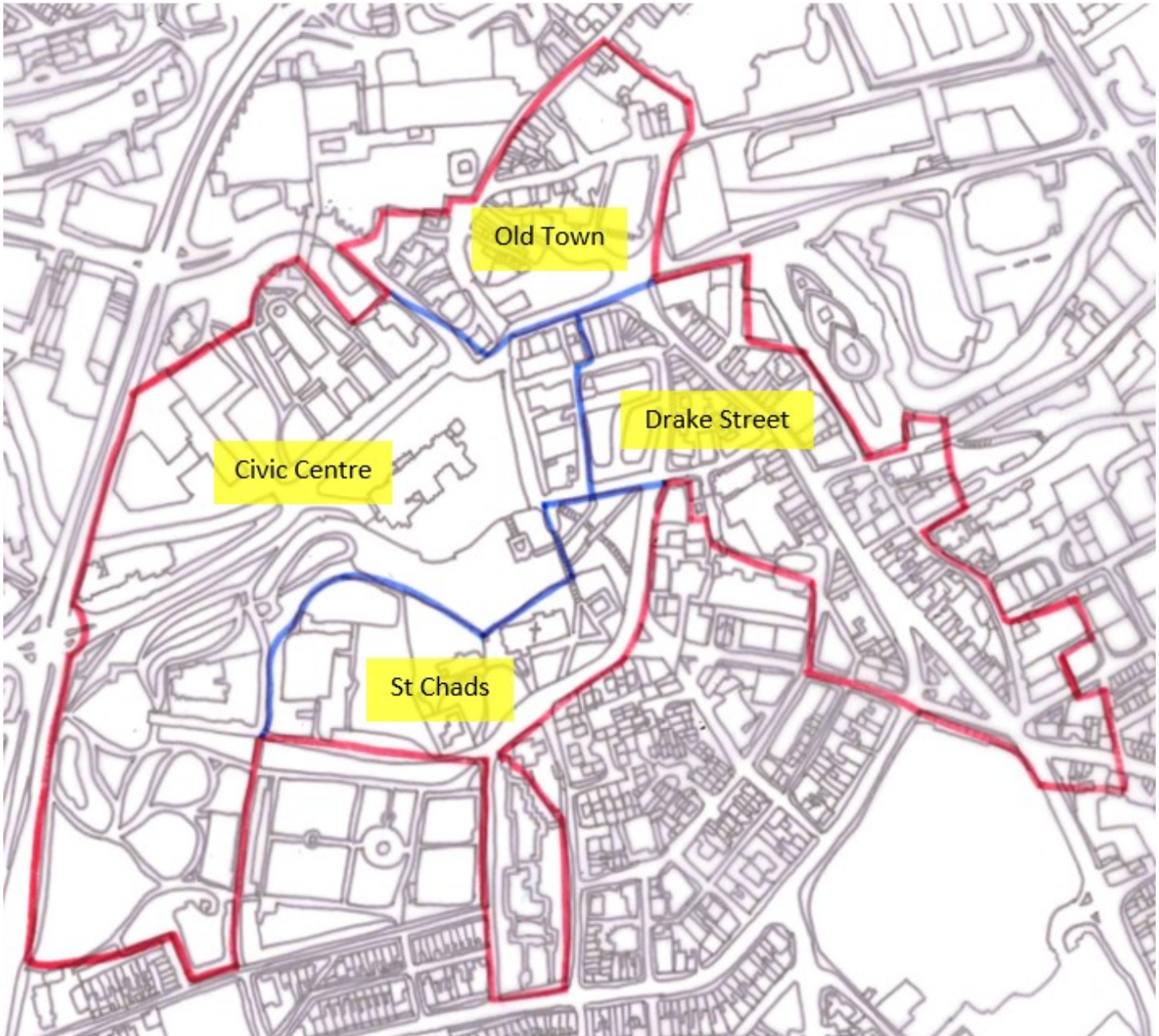
7.0 Proposed Boundary

The proposed boundary takes account of all the recommendations made.

The buildings and spaces within the new boundary make a contribution to the character and significance of the town and their protection and enhancement is desirable.

The proposed character areas are:

- Civic Centre
- Drake Street
- Old Town
- St Chads



8.0 Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the conservation area

Through examining the conservation area and by gaining a detailed understanding of its history and development, we are able to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the area.

It is important to capture this information to enable a management strategy to be developed which reacts positively to each of these elements.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An architecturally diverse range of buildings, which are predominantly of 3 storeys. • Consistent use of a limited material palette, which includes red brick and sandstone ashlar. • Curved facades are found spread throughout the area. • Views and architectural designs promote visitors to explore and easily navigate around the town centre. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On street parking has downgraded the quality of the streetscape. • A number of commercial premises have installed modern shopfronts and signage. • Poor gateway views in to and out of the conservation area at the south end of Drake Street could be improved through uplifting the quality of the buildings in these areas.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrades to shopfronts and signage. • Sensitive redevelopment of vacant plots. • Improvements to street furniture using consistent, high quality designs. • Rochdale’s declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 has helped the general public understand the need to reduce carbon consumption for the benefit of all. The publication of a design guide in conjunction with this would help promote occupancy and reuse of redundant buildings. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued desire to install modern signage and replace shopfronts. • Additional highway / Metrolink control measures could be introduced creating more clutter in the street-scene. • Continued degradation of some dilapidated buildings could lead to the irreplaceable loss of heritage assets.

9.0 Change, Management and Protection

The analysis of the conservation area and its immediate setting has identified the need for additional measures to be taken to ensure the special character of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

This should be completed in the form of a Conservation Area Management Plan which includes some high level design guidance, to complement this appraisal.

Additional Enforcement Action within the Conservation Area would be beneficial to tackle the incremental inclusion of unsympathetic signage and shopfront alterations.

Management

The Management Plan should be a working and evolving tool for use by property owners and occupiers along with developers, designers, decision makers and the Highway Authority.

It should be drawn together in collaboration with local stakeholders, particularly property owners and occupiers. The engagement process will help enrich the understanding of the special character of the conservation area and will help ensure that the management plan is usable and relevant.

The Management Plan should be informed by the gazetteer which has been compiled to aid the production of this appraisal. This baseline of information should be reviewed periodically to monitor the success of the Management Plan in the preservation and enhancement of the significance of the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

The Management Plan must include design guidance to help set out the Council's expectation for development. Where possible it should include example images and photographs to help communicate and explain this.

The Management Plan should also advocate regular maintenance and upkeep of buildings and spaces.

Protection

The special character of the conservation is easily identifiable at present however, the examination of the conservation area has demonstrated that incremental changes (a number of which do not benefit from the relevant permissions) have begun to erode and downgrade this.

The Council, as Local Planning Authority, have the ability to control development under the mechanisms provided by the Town & Country Planning Act. It would be beneficial for the property gazetteer collated as part of this project to be utilised to begin tackling unauthorised works. This should be done in a collaborative manner with building owners and users to strengthen relationships.

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