

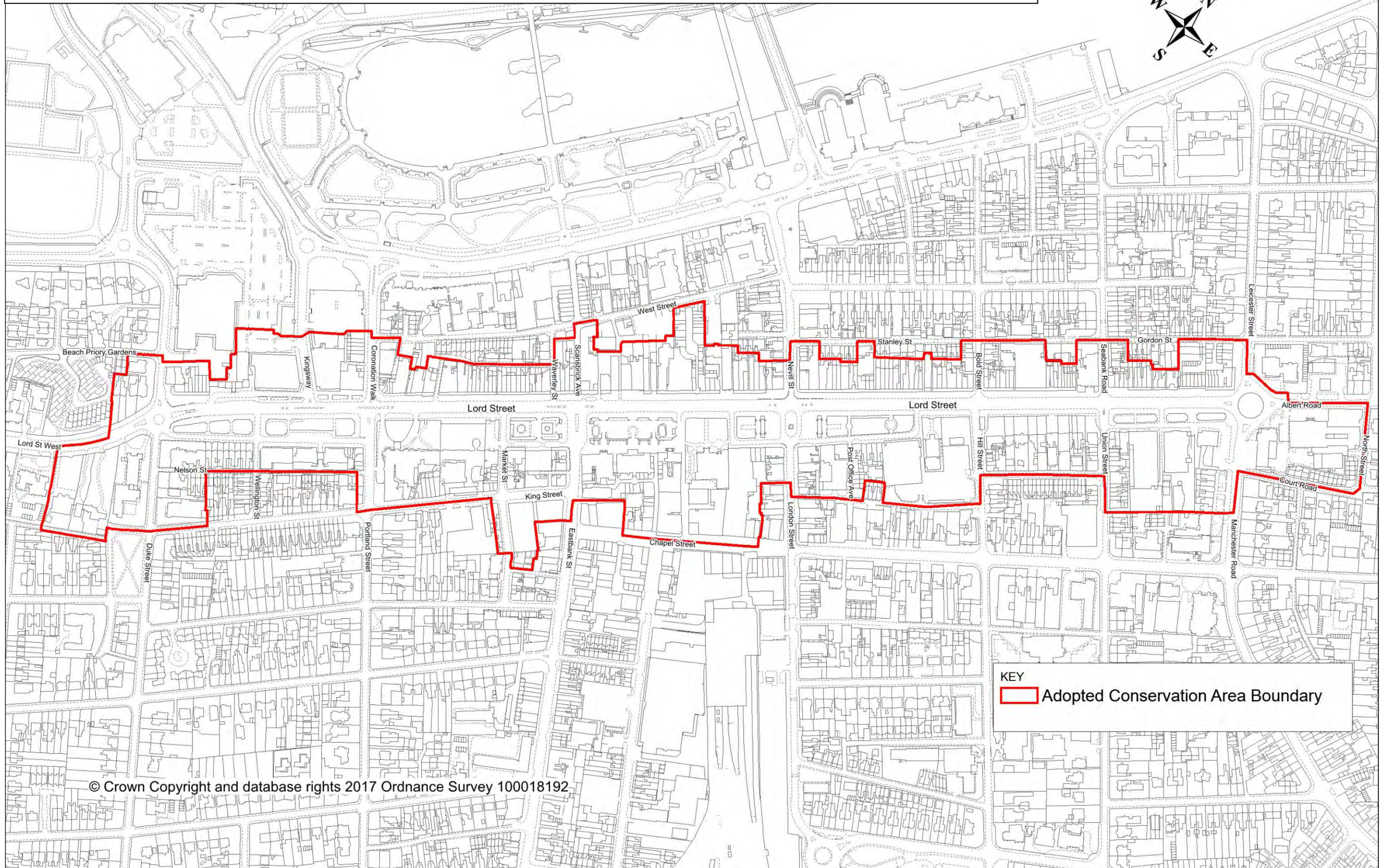
Lord Street

Conservation Area Appraisal
Adopted November 2017



This Conservation Area Appraisal was prepared by Sefton Council in 2016/2017

This Conservation Area appraisal was prepared by Sefton Council in 2017 and amended following public consultation during August 2017 and was fully adopted including the suggested boundary changes shown below by Sefton Council on 16th November 2017. For more information on boundary changes please see Section 11.



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PREFACE

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Since the 1967 Civic Amenities Act local authorities have been empowered to designate Conservation Areas. The current Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 defines Conservation Areas as:-

"areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Such areas are diverse. They may be large or small; residential or commercial; civic or industrial; old or relatively modern. They may represent social ideals or civic pride. They may be specifically designed or speculatively produced; modest or grand. They may contain Listed Buildings of architectural or historic interest or may simply have local historic association. However, common to all will be an identifiable environmental quality which should be protected from unsympathetic redevelopment or alteration.

Sefton Council has declared 25 Conservation Areas throughout the Borough reflecting the variety of building styles and environments within its borders.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The content of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Historic England 'Good Practice Guidance'.

The principles within the NPPF and the 'Good Practice Guidance' are further supported by Sefton Council's Heritage policies contained within its Local Plan.

This legislation and policy framework enables the authority to exercise greater control over development within Conservation Areas and, where appropriate, this may be supplemented by the use of 'Article 4 Directions' to remove permitted development rights. In this way, minor changes, which may be cumulatively detrimental, can be more closely controlled.

Local Authorities have a duty to review, from time to time, their areas to ensure that places of special architectural or historic interest are being protected. The boundaries of existing Conservation Areas may be revised, new areas may be designated and those areas which have been eroded to the extent that their special character has been lost, may be de-designated.

HOW STATUS AFFECTS PLANNING DECISIONS

Whilst the Council recognises that, for Conservation Areas to remain 'live' and responsive to a changing society, changes must and will occur, it nevertheless undertakes to ensure that all changes preserve or enhance the character and appearance of its Conservation Areas and do not result in any serious loss of character or features.

Planning legislation supports the local authority in this by increasing its powers of control over development. It does this in the following ways:

- Buildings and structures may not be demolished without Planning Permission.
- Trees are protected and all work to them requires consent from the Council.
- New development is expected to reflect the quality of design and construction of the surrounding area and should make a positive contribution to the area's character.

Local planning authorities may, if necessary, exercise even greater control by removing the basic permitted development rights of householders.

Under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance" of the area when deciding planning applications.

NEED FOR AN APPRAISAL

The first step to protecting the inherent qualities of a Conservation Area is having a thorough understanding of its character. This should then underpin local policies for the area's protection. Such a definition requires a thorough appraisal of the area to assess the contribution of each element (e.g. buildings, boundaries, trees, surfaces, etc.) to the area's overall character.

Whilst this appraisal aims to identify the essential elements which give this Conservation Area its character, it is not intended as a detailed evaluation of each building and feature. Therefore any buildings, features and details may still have importance even though not specifically referred to in the document and any omissions do not indicate lack of merit or interest.

1. INTRODUCTION

Lord Street is the principal street as well as the civic and commercial focus of Southport, a Victorian seaside resort. It is of fundamental importance in both historic and architectural terms to the character of the town.

Lord Street is noted for its grand layout, impressive architecture, the variety of attractive public gardens and spaces and its high quality range of shops and leisure facilities. It is also widely known for the almost continuous row of glazed iron verandahs, projecting over the pavement in front of the shops. The Conservation Area has a very high concentration of listed buildings and a considerable number of other buildings of architectural or historic interest.

The Lord Street Conservation Area was originally designated in 1973 and extended in 2003. This appraisal is the result of a review and update of the first Lord Street Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted in 2005. This designation provides the Local Planning Authority with additional powers to protect and enhance the area's special characteristics through ensuring that development proposals are considered in light of their impacts on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The content of this Appraisal is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

In 2014 Lord Street Conservation Area was surveyed by the Council and as a result was placed on the 'Heritage at Risk' register, maintained by Historic England. This was in response to the growing number of vacant and deteriorating buildings within the Conservation Area including listed buildings and the condition of cast iron verandahs. The area also lacked an up to date appraisal and management plan.

1.1 SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

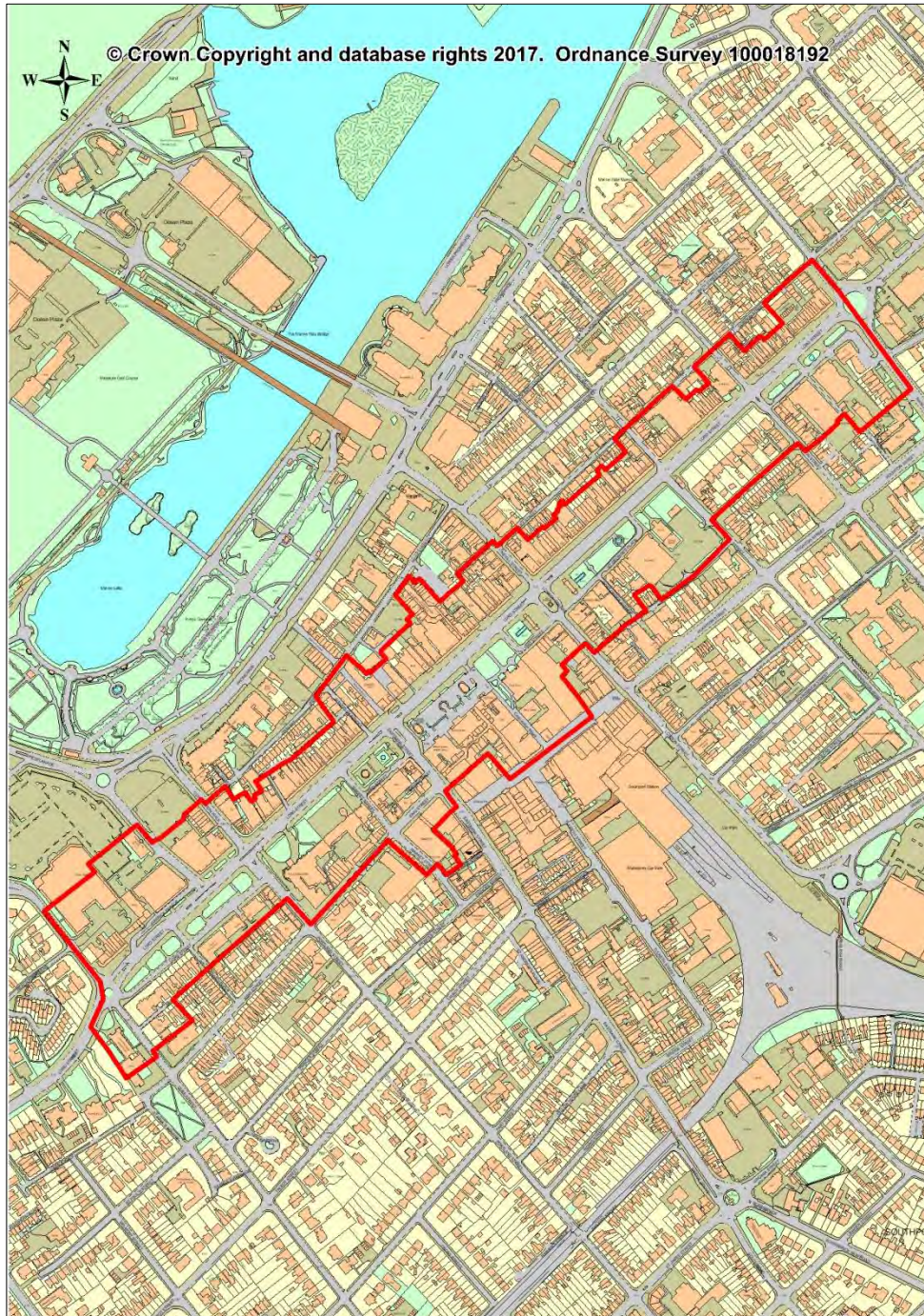
The review is based on the advice and guidance published by Historic England "Understanding Place, Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management"

The appraisal reviews:

- Location and Context
- Historic Development
- Townscape and Spatial Relationships
- Green Spaces and Trees
- Building Groups
- Architecture, Details and Materials
- Summary of Special Interest
- Negative Factors
- Opportunities for Enhancement
- Recommended changes to Conservation Area Boundary

The purpose of this document is to clarify the factors that individually and collectively contribute to the particular character and appearance of the Lord Street Conservation Area.

1.2 EXTENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA



Plan 1 Conservation Area Boundary (prior to adoption of boundary amendments approved 16th November 2017)

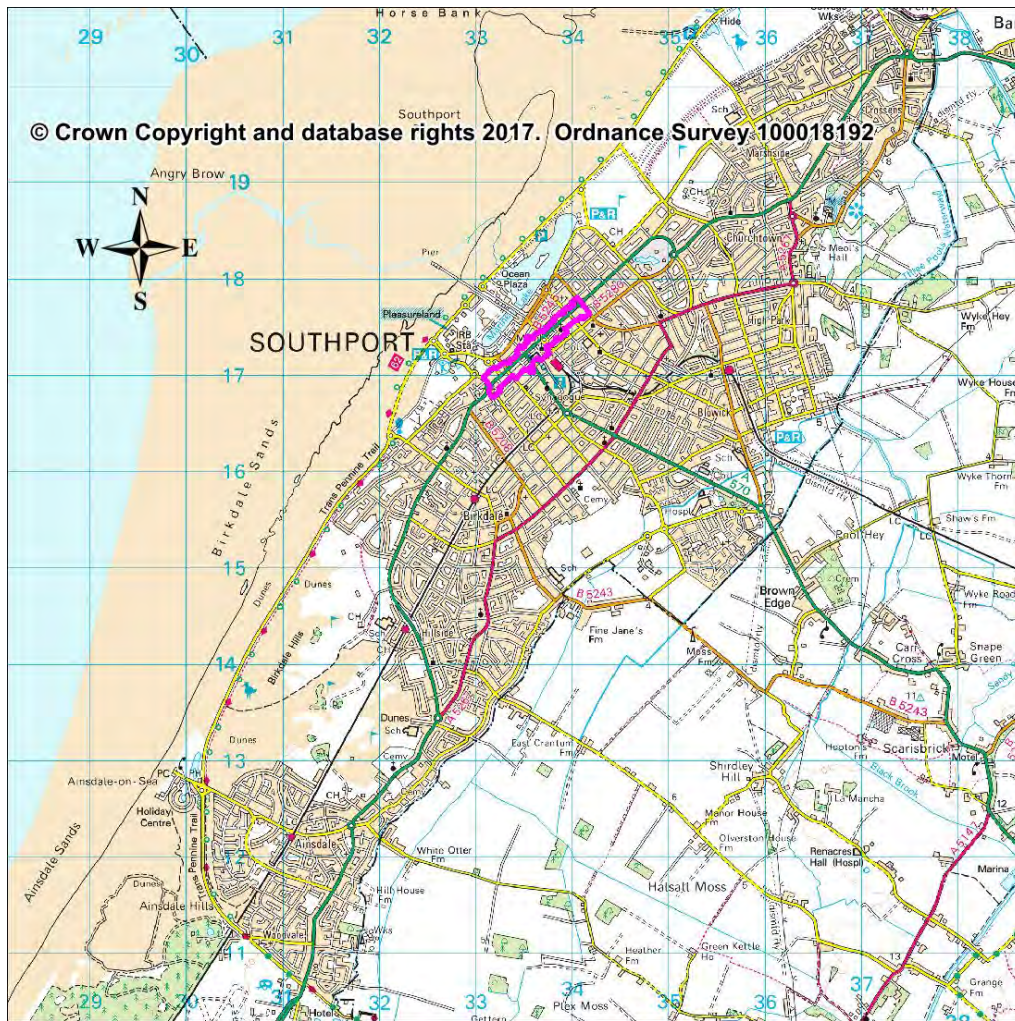
1.3 STUDY AREA BOUNDARY & SURVEY

The study area encompassed the whole of the Conservation Area and consideration was given to the interrelationship with the Promenade Conservation Area, and the streets leading towards Lord Street in all directions. The survey was undertaken over several days between July-August 2016 and May 2017, with additional information provided by the Southport Civic Society in 2015.

2. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 LOCATION

Lord Street Conservation Area sits on the north-western boundary of Southport town centre, with the coast to the north west as is the boundary of The Promenade Conservation Area. It is 21 miles north of Liverpool with Preston 18 miles north east and Ormskirk 8 miles to the south east.



Plan 2: Location of Conservation Area

2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORIC TOPOGRAPHY

The area is coastal, with a strip formed of blown over alluvial silt with rocky deposits 20 metres or more below the surface. Lord Street lies approximately 5 metres above sea level. From Lord Street the land gently rises towards the Promenade, which lies approximately 10m above sea level. The surrounding landscape is fairly flat and low lying. Its approximation to the coast made Lord Street liable to flooding and a small stream nicknamed the 'River Nile,' once flowed towards the beach from near modern day Duke Street.

The coastline has receded considerably over the last 200 years. In the early days of the resort's development the sea is recorded as having occasionally washed down onto Lord Street. Today due to the retreat of the sea, the flat landscape, and developments on the intervening land, the connections between Lord Street and the sea are less tangible.



Early flooding on Lord Street. Image Courtesy of Sefton Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries

Historically, Southport is a relatively modern town, having its origins as an 18th century bathing resort, with development gathering pace through the 19th Century. Many of its Victorian visitors and residents hailed from industrial towns in Lancashire.

Lord Street was one of Southport's first streets, being built piecemeal from the early 1800s. Subsequent development radiated from this point. The unusually broad and

linear layout of the street owes much to the nature of the landscape at the time it was laid out, having been built either side of the dune slack. The street boasts a high concentration of listed buildings which are a mixture of vernacular and fine 19th and 20th Century architecture which illustrate the various phases of its development.

The Lord Street Conservation Area sits adjacent to the Promenade Conservation Area which retains a more distinctive seaside character. Birkdale Park Conservation Area lies approximately 1 mile to the south west, with Gloucester Road and Birkdale Village approximately 1.8 and 2 miles south west respectively.

Surrounding the growing town centre the high class planned suburb of Birkdale developed as a separate administrative entity to the south west, eventually joining together with Southport early in the 20th Century. Similar, high quality residential developments occurred to the north east, while smaller scale housing appeared to the areas further inland. Conservation Areas have been designated to encompass the best and most complete of the suburban Victorian development in the surrounding area.



Plan 3: Conservation Context

2.3 ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL CONDITION

2.3.1 CONDITION OF BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

The condition of some buildings within the Conservation Area has deteriorated since the last appraisal was undertaken. This has generally gone hand in hand with the economic decline experienced in the town.

The majority of the buildings are not in good condition. The historic buildings generally appear not to be subject to regular maintenance. Several buildings exhibit concerning signs of deterioration in several elements such as windows, walls, rainwater goods and masonry, the majority however suffer from some deterioration to at least one or two elements.

Within most buildings painted joinery details particularly show signs of wear. Poor quality repairs are also evident, with lower quality materials such as uPVC, flashing tape and felt being used in place of timber, cast iron and lead. Weeds are growing within guttering, walls and chimney stacks.

A number of verandahs are in visibly poor condition. Conspicuous problems include rusting and cracking to iron columns, cracked glazing, and blocked gutters brimming with weeds along with rainwater goods solid with debris. These problems are caused by lack of regular maintenance such as, and add considerably to the general sense of neglect.

An indication of the general condition of buildings can also be gained by reviewing reports of dangerous structures. During 2001-2014, 67 dangerous structure reports were received by Building Control. All but one of these relates to a problem with a historic structure. Damage and deterioration to canopies account for almost 40% of the complaints - three of which related to damage caused by traffic accidents. The other notable issue is damage and deterioration to roof level features, notably including guttering and chimneys. Whilst periods of high winds result in high numbers of reports, the exact timing of reports may not entirely be indicative of the rate of decline. Nonetheless there is a notable escalation in the number of reports from 2007 onwards, with 18 reports registered between 2001-2007, compared with 49 between 2008-2014.

2.3.2 CONDITION OF PUBLIC REALM

The public spaces are in variable condition. Paving materials differ across the area, the recently laid surfaces such as the paving around the War Memorial are generally faring well. Other surfaces are in poorer condition such as the blue and white tiles in Town Gardens and outside The Atkinson which have cracked and degraded.

The low concrete walls and paths forming the formal public gardens have been replaced like-for-like around several of the public gardens and these are in good condition.

Shrubs form the majority of the planting in the gardens, this is of variable quality. The roundabouts either end of the street and the public gardens incorporate seasonal shows of bedding plants, however outside of the main season they provide limited horticultural interest.

Much of the painted and colour coated street furniture suffers from flaking and fading paint, with various colour schemes used. Some benches are additionally showing signs of vandalism or are in need of re-staining.

Pavements are cluttered with a variety of street furniture, items for sale and signage. Some of this would appear unnecessary and may not benefit from the appropriate consents required.

2.3.3 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Southport has recently dropped in the retail rankings from 44th in 2008 to 81st by 2011; nevertheless it is still placed within the top 4% of UK shopping venues. The recent downward movement is thought to have been partially as a result of the general economic decline experienced in this period but exacerbated by the opening of Liverpool One shopping centre in 2008, less than 20 miles away.

The shops generally have 2-3 additional floors above them. A significant proportion of this upper floorspace is underused or vacant, though some of the upper floors have been beneficially converted to flats, office spaces or café/restaurants. Several shops use this space for staff restrooms and kitchens and a degree of storage space. When used this way the degree of intensity of use diminishes floor by floor, with the uppermost floor sometimes remaining wholly unused.

3. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 EARLY HISTORY AND ORIGINS

Southport is part of the historic area of North Meols which was the northernmost part of the West Derby Hundred, owned by five thegns. The Domesday Book records the area as Otegrimele. This name derives from a Viking term meaning 'sandbanks'. The focus of the early development of North Meols, now known as Churchtown, has been engulfed by Victorian and later expansion, and now forms a part of the much younger town of Southport.

3.2 EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The early settlement of Southport was originally known as South Hawes. The area consisted of scattered farmers' and fishermen's huts set in marshes and grazing land situated behind a sandy beach and a belt of sand dunes. Early development was carried out within the dunes, where the buildings were often engulfed by drifting sand.

Sea bathing became increasingly fashionable during the 18th Century and was recommended by physicians as a cure for a variety of ailments. Curtailment of continental travel for the wealthy as a result of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars also helped to make seaside holidays in England more fashionable and the opening of the Leeds and Liverpool canal in 1774 gave Southport an early advantage over potential rivals. The first sea bathers stayed at inns in Churchtown, travelling to the beach in carts. The local district acquired a reputation for its sea air and its mild and equitable climate and Southport quickly became a fashionable seaside resort.

Mr Sutton, popularly known as the founder of Southport, was the landlord of the Black Bull Inn at Churchtown. He built a wooden bathing house on the dunes around 1792 to provide shelter, changing and refreshment rooms for bathers. In 1798 he built a hotel at the southern end of Lord Street and the name 'South Port Hotel' is believed to have been chosen at the opening celebration. A year earlier in 1797 Sarah Walmesley, a widow from Wigan, had built "Belle Vue", a large cottage to accommodate paying guests. Regardless of who was the first settler, these buildings were soon followed by the construction of a number of other inns and marine villas all around the area of modern day Lord Street West concentrating at most north westerly point.

The second purpose-built hotel, 'The Union', was built in 1805 on the site of the modern-day Prince of Wales Hotel, and Wellington Terrace was built in 1818 in front of fisherman's cottages having been built by a consortium of Wigan businessmen. This created fashionable accommodation for visitors. As the town became established as a resort, the original cottagers smartened up their homes to cater for the "economy class" visitor. By 1809 Southport was being described as a

“fashionable watering place” believed to have around 38 houses. In 1821 the Hesketh Arms, now the site of the Scarisbrick Hotel, became the third hotel in Southport. By 1820 both sides of the road were lined by houses. In 1826 author Thomas K. Glazebrook records in his second ‘Guide to Southport’ that the number of houses had risen to around 215, describing them as brick built and fronted by gardens, accommodating over 600 residents. Over half of the houses at this time were offering accommodation for visitors.



The Union Hotel, built 1805. Image courtesy of Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAYOUT

Lord Street was originally known as “the main street” later “Lords Street” which referred to the two lords of the manor who originally owned the land, then shortened to ‘Lord Street’. It does not seem that the landowners chose to influence the form of the street early on; rather the nature of the landscape defined its layout. The town did not spread south at this stage because that land was owned by the Blundells of Ince, who did not seek to permit development in the early days, thus southern expansion ended at what is now the Birkdale boundary. Instead, the line of development expanded northwards along the trackway towards Churchtown.

Lord Street developed with a gentle curve on its south eastern side, along the line of a series of dune slacks or pools which flooded after heavy rain. These are pools that develop naturally behind a belt of sand dunes, and are typical features of the Sefton

coastline depicted in an 1830 painting by A. Fairfield. A very wide gap was left between the built up frontages, probably both to avoid the frequently water logged ground of the former dune slack and to incorporate the more randomly built early dwellings into the frontage. The original landform is still visible in the gentle rise from Lord Street to the Promenade. Built along the edges of the dune slack the Lord Street frontage provides a sense of protection and enclosure.

The marshy ground in the centre of the street was originally left open, but when the landowner Sir Bold-Houghton, installed a drainage ditch, he insisted that the adjacent owners and occupiers fence off the land in front of their houses to create individual, long gardens. Small bridges were built over the drainage ditch to give access to the properties. On Leigh's plan of 1824 the marshy space in the centre of Lord Street is shown to be enclosed. The buildings at the northern end of the street included this new space within their curtilages, while in the southern portion of the street the space was enclosed as one large space, physically separated from the buildings by a thoroughfare (see Appendix C). On Walker's plan of 1834 evidence of this street has disappeared and the enclosed space has been divided into smaller plots and joined with the properties (see Appendix D). This early 19th century townscape is however still reflected in front of Wellington Terrace.



Watercolour by A. Fairfield showing Lord Street in 1830

The construction of the first sea-wall and Promenade was started in 1835 to protect the outer sandhills from the spring tides, thus allowing property to be built and to provide the resort with an attractive walkway. This was followed by the laying out of a grid of streets between the Promenade and Lord Street, and extending inland. Whilst Lord Street had taken on a form dictated by the local topography, the remainder of the town centre developed on a more planned basis, the form of which resulted from the agreement made between the two land owners as to how to divide up their land.

Charles Scarisbrick of Scarisbrick Hall bought landholdings in the town centre in 1843 meaning he owned all the land from the Birkdale boundary to Seabank Road. His policy was more 'hands on' seeking to develop Southport as a higher class town, while maximising income. 99 year leases were sold on large plots for substantial villas and were regulated by covenants. These dictated the minimum value for a property, imposed specific conditions relating to the use of certain building materials and the formation and maintenance of the grounds. Roads were built once the leases had been sold.

3.4 GROWTH AS A RESORT AND RESIDENTIAL TOWN

The seaside resort of Southport grew rapidly in popularity, and so its importance as a resort and a residential area increased. The landowners' aspirations for Southport were shared by the early residents, who were largely merchants and industrialists from industrial Lancashire. Together they formed a ruling elite, which closely controlled its development. Emphasis was placed on the provision of high quality, family accommodation and related amenities, such as churches, whilst restricting the granting of liquor licenses.

Robert Hesketh gave the site for Christ Church in 1821 and both landowners contributed towards the cost of its construction. In 1823 an independent chapel was constructed on the corner of Eastbank Road and Chapel Street on another plot donated by Robert Hesketh. An 1824 map of the town centre shows that several amenities including a post office, billiard room, hot and cold baths, theatre and a repository had been founded (see Appendix C for the 1824 map)

Linear development continued northwards along Lord Street and the Bold Hotel, constructed towards the northern end of Lord Street, opened in 1832. The easily accessible houses on the seaward side of Lord Street were progressively converted into shops, while those set further back on the opposite side of the road remained dwellings.

In 1854 the Southport Hotel which closed off the southern end of Lord Street was demolished in order to link new development at Birkdale Park with the town centre. The new section of roadway was named Lord Street West.

Southport's prospects were transformed by improved communications brought about by railway building. The first section of the Liverpool to Southport line opened in 1848 followed in 1855 by the link with Manchester and inland Lancashire. Railway

transport allowed middle class residents to commute to their businesses by early morning First Class express services.

The most dramatic impact of the railways was their capacity to transport large numbers of day trippers from the manufacturing districts of Lancashire. Enterprising local residents provided boat trips, donkey rides, stalls and side shows, particularly along the route from the station to the seafront. Despite Southport's increased accessibility, middle class residents were against the development of the town as a popular down-market holiday resort. Sir Charles Hesketh opposed Sunday train travel and Samuel Boothroyd one of the Improvement Commissioners led an Association to Promote the Improvement and Prosperity of Southport and urged the town to promote itself as a permanent residence and resort for convalescent visitors.

Entrepreneurs invested in the provision of refined entertainment facilities, including the pier in 1860, which has since been considerably altered and rebuilt, and also the remodelling of the Victoria Baths on The Promenade in 1871. A Glacarium, now also demolished, was constructed at the north end of Lord Street in 1879 to provide all year skating and curling - this venture only continued for ten years. A large first class hotel the Prince of Wales replaced the old Union hotel in 1877. Philanthropists living in the town provided other facilities. These included William Atkinson, a retired cotton manufacturer who donated the Cambridge Hall clock and built the Free Public Library and Art Gallery.

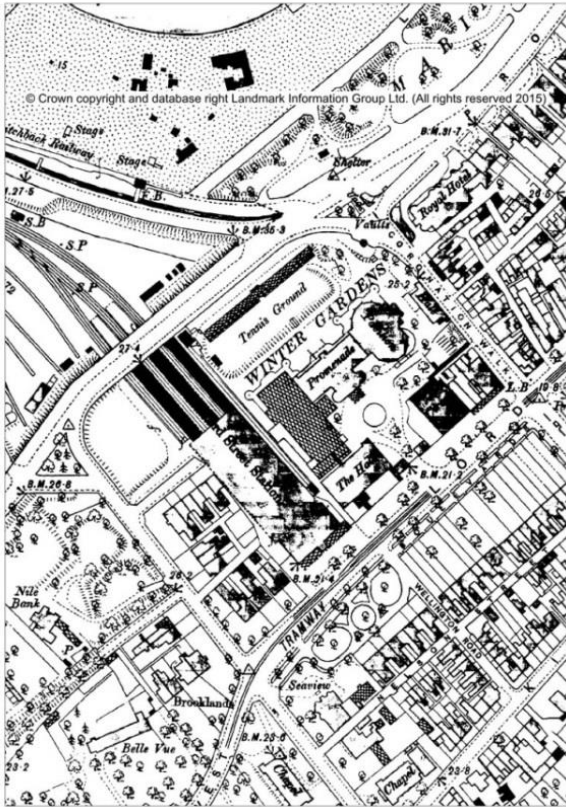
On the southern end of Lord Street the Southport Pavilion, Winter Gardens and Aquarium, were built in 1874. It occupied a nine acre site which spanned between



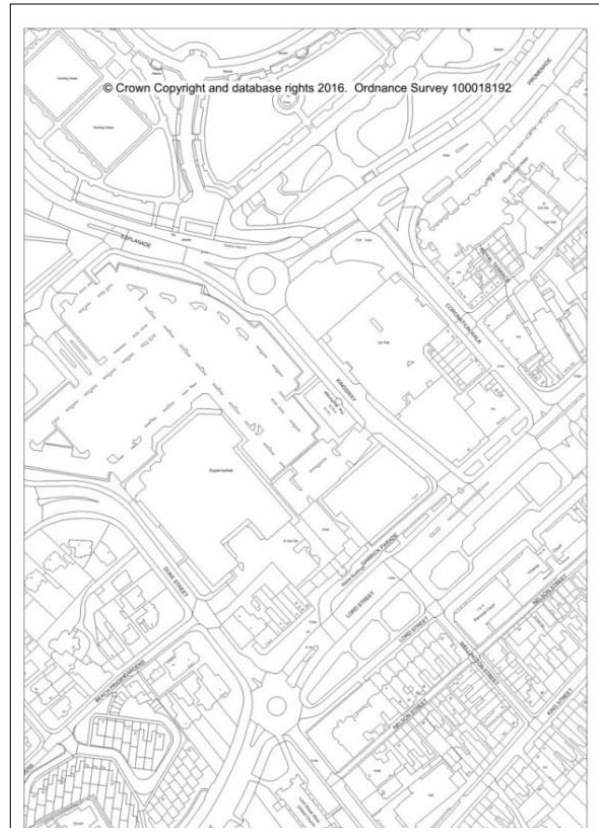
Lord Street and the Promenade, described at the time as “undoubtedly one of the finest buildings of its type in the world”. This was an impressive complex built on an astonishing scale. Surrounding the buildings were landscaped gardens with a terrace and croquet lawn. The buildings which collectively formed the Winter Gardens were demolished piecemeal into the 1930s.

Southport Winter Gardens, Image courtesy of Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries

The Lord Street station for the Southport and Cheshire Lines Extension Railway was constructed adjacent to the Winter Gardens in 1884. This closed in the 1950s, and later became the Ribble Bus Station. The train sheds were demolished in the 1990s after the closure of the bus station.



1890s OS map showing Winter Gardens site and Ribble Buildings train station



Modern OS map showing Winter Gardens site and Ribble Buildings

The verandahs which still characterise Lord Street are reputed to have been begun in the early 1860s by Charles Barrow, a merchant in Lord Street. It is not thought that any particular effort was made by the town to encourage such development, yet competition between shop owners and the fashionable ideas of the time led to the shop owners engaging in the piecemeal development of verandahs. These structures allowed browsing even in inclement weather and those which characterise the street today are overall of consistent appearance but differ slightly in styles, sizes and motifs.



Early shops with simple verandahs in Lord Street. Image courtesy of Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries

North of Bold Street there remained residential properties set within gardens on the seaward side of Lord Street, however these finally gave way to shops sometime between 1890 and 1910.

The popularity of the town led to the development of many entertainment enterprises. These included theatres, an ice rink, dance halls and picture houses. These uses mostly occupied the southern side of Lord Street. Some buildings started out as theatres and dance halls and were subsequently converted to cinemas such as at the Winter Gardens. Through the latter half of the 20th century these uses have waned and many of these buildings have been replaced with most modern leisure facilities now sited at Ocean Plaza on the seafront. This change coincided with the development of high rise flat accommodation on Lord Street, such as Viceroy Court and Regent Court, and also within the town centre more generally.

3.5 CIVIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

In its early days the resort lacked effective local government, which had remained the responsibility of the North Meols Parish Vestry in Churchtown. The inadequacy of street lighting triggered agitation, which resulted in the establishment of Improvement Commissioners by an Act of Parliament in 1846. The Town Hall was built by the Commissioners and also provided accommodation for the Magistrates, Police and

Post Office. Street lighting was introduced almost immediately, followed by the resurfacing of the pavements in the distinctive clay 'Southport' pavements and the repaving of the cobbled carriageways in granite sets. The Commissioners also formed a gravel walk or invalid's carriage drive on the landward side of Lord Street.

Following the town's incorporation as a Borough in 1868, architects Maxwell and Tuke designed the Cambridge Hall (now The Atkinson) alongside the Town Hall to provide a first class venue for meetings and entertainment. It was opened by Princess Mary of Cambridge in 1874. The construction of the civic buildings and much of the commercial development involved the demolition of a considerable number of the houses which had originally fronted the landward side of Lord Street.

Changes were also made to the layout of roads. Scarisbrick Avenue was inserted through the townscape c1890. Between 1893-1908 'Todd Street' which ran between Lord Street and King Street through the site of the Vincent Hotel was removed, and a new road "Market Street" created slightly further west. Blundell Street was moved slightly further North (now Waverley Street). (See historic OS maps within Appendices G and H)

3.6 DEVELOPMENT OF THE GARDENS

Although the landowners were reluctant to finance amenities they were willing to provide sites for grand developments to attract middle class residents and visitors. The Commissioners took advantage of the great width of Lord Street to create a boulevard with public gardens on the east side. A Boulevard Committee was set up in 1864 and obtained powers under a second improvement act of 1865 to create gardens on the landward side from Duke Street to London Street on what had previously been garden extensions. The new public gardens were laid out in a typically Victorian formal style using bedding plants and including pools and fountains. In 1877 the gardens in front of the Municipal Buildings were remodelled to include a three part terracotta fountain adorned with electric lights and a simple octagonal bandstand. Soon afterwards, trees were planted within all the pavements.

The elaborate fountain was demolished in 1911, however not to be wasteful, the four stone urn pedestals were salvaged and re-used in the King's Gardens which was being laid out at that time on the seafront.

Electricity was installed to Lord Street in 1895 to supply street lighting. Lighting the trees along Lord Street with coloured lamps or fairy lights was introduced soon after as part of the Coronation festivities of 1902; this tradition is still carried on today, the lighting having been renewed most recently in 2014; they are no longer multi-coloured.



Late Victorian design of Municipal Gardens, Image dating from c1911 courtesy of Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries



Electric lighting used decoratively on trees and features. Note the extent of planting. Image courtesy of Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries

The public spaces were co-ordinated into a more homogenous style in the early 20th Century following the designs of Thomas Mawson, the well-known landscape architect who was employed in 1906 as a consultant to the former Southport County Borough Council. His proposals are described in his book “Civic Art” published in 1911. These plans were interpreted and implemented by the Borough Engineer A. E. Jackson, between 1919 and 1930.

This neo-classical scheme included a bandstand and the provision of a consistent boundary treatment along with columns, pavilions, balustrades, urns and fountains as unifying elements throughout the gardens. These were of pre-cast concrete with a finish and patina similar to that of Portland Stone. Lighting was provided as part of the scheme with dark painted, probably green, cast iron columns topped with globe lanterns along the balustrade walls. The planting appears to have comprised a backdrop of spaced out shrubs surrounded by herbaceous planting, with a strip of bedding plants at the front of the borders. The urns were also planted.



Early image of replacement Classically styled copper-domed Bandstand built 1913. Image courtesy of Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries



Lord Street Gardens c1913-1927. Note the juxtaposition of formal boundaries and informal positions of trees. Image courtesy of Information Services Department, Sefton Libraries



Early planting scheme within Classical Mawson-style gardens c.1925

The War Memorial at The Monument was erected in 1923 to a design by local Grayson and Barnish. It comprises a tall, central obelisk, flanked by two colonnades each supported by Doric columns, all of which are constructed of Portland stone. Before the war memorial was built, the space around The Monument was a tram stop with a shelter positioned where the obelisk is now. Following its construction, the War Memorial became the central focus of Lord Street was designated Grade II in 1972, and redesignated grade II* in 2010. It is a highly striking, powerful and reverential war memorial assemblage providing a sense of dignity and atmosphere within the town centre.



The War Memorial with its tall obelisk is a particularly dominant feature within the Conservation Area.

The Garrick Theatre (now Mecca Bingo) opened in 1932. It is possible that the gardens in front of it were laid out at the same time. Originally Art-deco style lighting was erected within the frontage garden, which matches that remaining near the Floral Hall Theatre.



Promotional Poster, artwork by Fortunino Matania showing complementary relationship between Art Deco Garrick Theatre and Garrick Gardens, showing a representation of the original lighting. Image courtesy of the Atkinson, Lord Street

In 1998 Town Gardens which front the Civic Buildings and the Vincent respectively were completely refurbished with grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This work included repaving, reinstatement of reconstituted stone balustrades, plinth walls, urns and columns, additional street furniture, new tree planting and the provision of a café, a water feature, new creative lighting and servicing for exhibitions and performance.

Further works including the refurbishment of the War Memorial, creation of a new classical garden at the northern end of Lord Street, the like-for-like replacement of the balustrades, repair of the mermaid fountain, development of the 'Nautilus' water feature, resurfacing of paths and changes to the layouts of the gardens were

undertaken in 2007-8. Some of the new paths have a curvilinear layout, and new public art features have a modern rather than classical flavour.



Refurbished mermaid fountain



The 'Nautilus' water feature

3.7 ARCHAEOLOGY

There are no archaeological sites recorded within the Historic Environment Record, and no relevant grey literature is currently available. There may be some potential for finds from the Mesolithic to post-Mediaeval period, however the area is believed to have been largely uninhabited prior to the 19th Century and any potential for finds is likely to have been undermined by Victorian and 20th Century development. The archaeological potential of the area is consequently very low.

Plan 4 Approximate Age of Buildings



4. TOWNSCAPE AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 SETTING AND RELATIONSHIP WITH SURROUNDING AREA

The Conservation Area is quite tightly centred on the historic civic and commercial buildings which line either side of Lord Street. The ends of the cross streets are included within the Conservation Area, to greater or lesser degrees depending on whether they form part of Lord Street's commercial character.

Outside of the Conservation Area, the cross streets leading towards the seafront are lined with a variety of traditional buildings of varied character. The northern ends of Bold and Seabank Road are largely occupied by residential uses while the Nevill Street, Scarisbrick Avenue and Coronation Walk house commercial uses that project a seaside ambience.

The cross streets leading inland contain a mix of commercial and residential properties typical of a town centre, with shops and other commercial buildings generally occupying the plots near corners.

At either end of Lord Street are single roundabouts, both have central lanterns that commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. When floral or other seasonal displays are not in place this leaves only the metal framework visible, meaning the roundabouts particularly lack distinction as major gateways.



Lord Street features two large roundabouts at either end, greeting visitors on approach

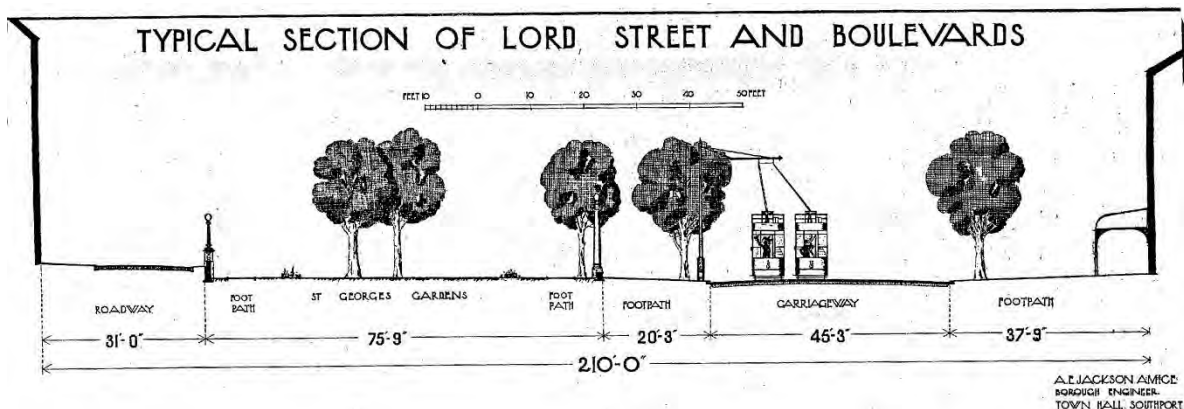
4.2 CHARACTER AND RELATIONSHIP OF SPACES

Lord Street has an unusual asymmetrical layout, with the main carriageway located towards its seaward side. It is enclosed but spacious in character, owing to its unusually generous width. Louis Napoleon, later Napoleon III of France, is believed

to have spent some time in Lord Street while in exile. It is locally believed that the width of Lord Street was the inspiration for the broad boulevards he introduced during his reconstruction of Paris in the mid-19th Century.

The buildings which front on to Lord Street are densely developed on strong established building lines. Most properties directly front the back of the footway and face onto the linear series of gardens and public spaces with a road in the intervening space. Behind the main buildings various workshops and manufacturing premises were developed which supported the main frontage businesses, for example the jewellery workshop behind 175-177 Lord Street which still remains.

The public gardens are developed in a formal classical style which reinforce and complement the grandeur and formality of the architecture. Within the gardens and wide pavements the broadleaf trees contribute significantly to softening the otherwise very hard and urban setting of the commercial buildings and provide a maturity to the street scene.



Cross Section of Lord Street by A. E Jackson

The decorative cast iron verandahs form an almost unbroken canopy along the frontage of the shops on the seaward side of the street. Overall the verandahs have a general consistency of appearance and scale, but varying in architectural details. These visually connect the buildings, creating greater coherence in the street scene. They also serve to blur the distinction between the public and private realm and encourage people to walk next to the shops, especially in inclement weather. The placing of goods, A-boards and seating under the verandahs in places detracts from this function.

On the landward side of the carriageway a boulevard borders the front gardens of residential or formerly residential properties and there is also a series of public gardens and open spaces. The boulevard lined with a double row of mature trees complements the gardens in front of the former houses and the remainder of the street trees. Where the planted character of the gardens has been lost to hard standings, the mature street trees lining the boulevard help to mitigate the loss.

“A practically continuous verandah in front of the elegant shops along one side of the street enables promenading to be enjoyed even in inclement weather” – Fortunino Matania, ‘*Southport for a wintertime holiday*’ promotional leaflet

On the landward side of the street, the majority of the properties front onto a secondary carriageway. One block between 96 Lord Street and Street and 18 King Street boasts traditional cast iron verandahs. Outside the Vincent Hotel and at Sainsbury’s supermarket modern interpretations of the verandahs have been incorporated, though in general verandahs are not a strong feature of the landward side of the street.

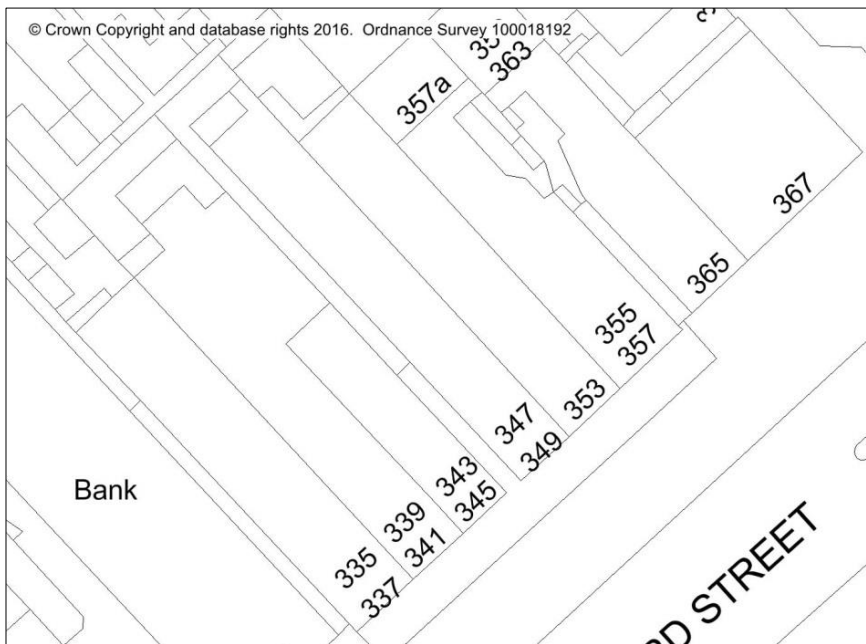
The surviving older residential or former residential properties on the landward side of the street have retained private enclosed front garden areas, many of which have been surfaced to provide hard standings. By comparison later commercial and civic buildings directly front onto the footway. Streets leading off the landward side of Lord Street are also tightly developed with properties directly fronting the back of the footway.

The side streets leading off Lord Street vary in character, from spacious commercial thoroughfares such as Nevill Street and Coronation Walk, to very narrow and enclosed streets such as Post Office Avenue and Waverley Street, pedestrian walkways including Scarisbrick Avenue, very confined alleyways such as Bank Passage and totally enclosed shopping arcades including the Cambridge and Wayfarers. The side streets contain a mix of buildings of different ages, heights and styles. The arcades are particularly fine elements of the townscape, their construction forming a link with the verandahs.

There are several narrow and enclosed paths which run under and between buildings leading to back streets and properties set behind the shops. These illustrate the somewhat piecemeal nature of development in the Conservation Area, with the townscape seeming to have evolved around earlier development or plots having been created in a less controlled manner away from the main frontage.

4.3 GRAIN

Most of the higher status Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings have narrow but deep plots. There is a greater consistency in the width of shop frontages most being approximately 4.5-5.5m wide. Plot depths vary more, being usually between 5-8 times deeper than the width of the units.



Section of townscape showing narrow deep plots

Where larger units facing the street are found, this is usually the result of an amalgamation of smaller units, such as at Debenhams (535-563 Lord Street) and Viceroy Court, which was previously the site of several smaller houses. An exception to this rule is the southern portion of the seaward side of the street, where the demolished Winter Gardens and the train station were formerly located. The loss of these resulted in large sites being available, the later date of these changes meant that these were replaced with larger scale development rather than with shops of small narrow plots that characterise the street elsewhere. (see photograph below)



The verandahs all have very similar dimensions which enhance the divisions between units and also increase the appearance of consistency between units. Groups of buildings built as one development have an even greater degree of consistency of layout and plot sizes which contributes to their coherence.

The high density developed character runs all the way along the seaward side of the street and stands in contrast to the wide pavements, carriageways and public gardens they front on to.

Some units which were built to convey a greater sense of status occupy more substantial plots, for example the former Railway Station at Ribble Buildings, former main Post Office, Mecca Bingo and the Bold and Scarisbrick Hotels.

The landward side of the street is much more mixed though overall displays a coarser grain than the seaward side of the street. The modern apartment blocks have sizeable plots that rival those of the civic buildings; the supermarket and former cinema at 182 Lord Street also have substantial plots. These sites contrast strongly with the last remaining sections of the earlier residential developments which have much smaller plots located at 6-20 Lord Street and 152-172 Lord Street. These properties are all set back within their plots with enclosed frontages. Where frontages are set to gardens, which tend to be in front of domestic properties, the effect is a positive one enhancing their spacious and domestic character. The remaining gaps between the properties at 152-172 Lord Street also help to offer a more open and spacious domestic character.

Smaller grained commercial development is found along the side streets, due to these lacking the same depth as the units that front Lord Street.



The early domestic character of Lord Street clearly remains in certain sections of the Conservation Area

4.4 SCALE

Scale varies considerably within the Conservation Area.

There is some relationship between the scale of properties and their position within the Conservation Area. Though there is great variation, most buildings towards the centre of the street are 3-4 storeys. Storey heights are of impressive proportions

particularly on prominent junctions. Buildings display a hierarchical approach to storey heights with the ground floor, being of the largest proportions and the upper floors being less sizeable, sometimes diminishing progressively towards the top floors. Comparatively, towards the north of the street buildings tend to be 2-3 storey and less ambitiously proportioned.

The architectural features of the civic and ecclesiastical buildings such as doors and windows are on a larger scale than is generally found within the commercial or residential buildings



Architectural features on churches and civic structures are of a notable stature

There is also a correlation between the age of the property and its scale. The oldest properties tend to be of two storeys, of smaller proportions and lower overall height, with shallow pitched roofs.

Properties from the later Victorian period to the early 20th Century are of generally 3-4 storeys, with grand proportions, with ground floors having the greatest floor-to-ceiling heights. Two of the banks (253 Lord Street and 331 Lord Street) are of a height that almost rivals the grander three storey buildings of the same era yet are both single storey. Their great scale gives them a particular prominence.

The later Victorian hotels are of notably larger proportions, Scarisbrick Hotel being five storeys plus a tower and the Prince of Wales Hotel being of four large storeys.



The Scarisbrick Hotel at the corner of Scarisbrick Avenue is one of the most substantial buildings to be found in Lord Street.

Properties from the mid-20th century on the landward side of the street tend to have greater massing than the traditional development which characterises the area. 20th and 21st Century apartment blocks range from four to eleven storeys in height and have large footprints. Regent Court and the adjacent flats at no 188 Lord Street are significantly taller than their neighbours and particularly jar with the surrounding townscape which largely comprises two storey buildings.

While the 20th and 21st century modern flat blocks have a greater number of storeys than traditional development, they have lower storey heights comparable to neighbouring historic buildings. This meaning that the scale of the features of the development appears out of character with their surroundings.

4.5 RHYTHM, REPETITION AND DIVERSITY

There are a number of rhythms discernible in the buildings that characterise the Conservation Area which arise as a result of the layout of the street and public spaces, architectural decoration, roofscapes, building sizes and types. Given the varied nature of the Lord Street Conservation Area, the majority of the strongest rhythms are limited to short sections.

The similar dimensions of the verandahs and regularity of spacing of columns together with the consistent breadth of the pavement, regular plot widths and similar sizes of the shopfronts along the seaward side of Lord Street provide the most consistent and regular rhythms.

The rhythm created by the evenly spaced plots of the shops is enhanced by architectural devices. Vertical divisions between the units are externally expressed

through the repetitive decorative use of architectural elements such as downpipes, windows and pilasters.

Many of the shops form units within larger 'buildings' built as one development with a coherent overall architectural design. These include 'Burlington Buildings' and 'Albany Buildings'. Within these 'buildings', a high degree of consistency is achieved through symmetry of form, and repetition of footprint, layout, form and architectural elements. Therefore there are several repeated features, particularly on upper floors. Where changes to units within the same 'building' are evident, such where bay windows are lost, or changes have been made to window designs, the rhythm of the facades and consistency of repeated architectural forms are broken down to some degree undermining their character and appearance. Among the shops, outside of each individual 'building' there is no exact repetition of architectural designs.



Albany Buildings. Note how the removal of the oriel window and rendering to the first floor, and the cutting back of the covered balcony on the third floor unbalances the symmetry of the building

Wellington Terrace has strong rhythms as the form of the terrace with paired doors and paired bays is consistent, however the slightly different windows which are installed means that the rhythm is slightly weakened. A similar rhythm is found at 6-18 Manchester Road.

Within the public gardens, there are features such as low walls, balustrades, lighting columns, urns and shapes within the layouts which give a unified appearance. Cast iron lighting columns set on the low concrete walls offer a rhythm and consistency which enhances the formal character of these spaces.

Trees are laid out in lines along the pavement edges of Lord Street. While originally these were evenly spaced, due to removals both historic and recent this is no longer the case except in shorter sections. The straight lines of trees emphasize the straight lines of the street and complement the linear nature of the walls of the public gardens.

The diversity of architecture from the Victorian and Edwardian periods is a key feature of the Conservation Area. The diversity of designs including Arts and Crafts, Flemish and Classical is an essential element that contributes to the interest and attractiveness of the streetscape. Although the buildings are all different, the fact that buildings were constructed on similar plots, at a similar time, using similar materials and to similar grand proportions means that, the relationships between them are strong.

4.6 VIEWS AND LANDMARKS

While travelling along Lord Street in either direction, its linear but wide and treed nature allows for a succession of interesting views of the various spaces and groups of buildings, which make up this complex townscape. Glimpses and views of fine and varied architecture between mature trees fronted by the elements of the gardens leave a strong positive impression.



The historic boulevard-style layout of Southport remains and allows for impressive, tree-lined views along Lord Street.

Shoppers tend to walk beneath the verandahs and as a result many visitors do not experience the impressive architecture of the buildings on the seaward side of the street to the fullest extent. Broader dynamic views of the commercial properties and verandahs within the broad tree-lined pavements can be particularly enjoyed from the landward side of the carriageway along much of Lord Street's length; these views are probably appreciated in greatest number across the junctions and from pathways within the gardens.

There are distant views along the streets leading from Lord Street to the landscaped areas and leisure uses along the Promenade however, the Promenade is higher than Lord Street thus preventing views of the seafront. The view along Nevill Street to the entrance to the pier is particularly important as it forms the principal link between the Railway Station on Chapel Street, the commercial centre and the Promenade. It is also the only clear indication to visitors on Lord Street of the existence of leisure facilities along the former shoreline. Glimpses of the impressive

frontages to Lord Street can be seen from the opposite direction along the side streets.



The tower of Ribble Buildings is a notable landmark on the roofscape

The skyline itself is dominated by the clock towers of the Cambridge Hall and Ribble Buildings (the former Southport, Crosby and Liverpool Railway Station) the spire of St Georges Church and the turrets, gables, finials, dormers and chimney stacks of a variety of commercial properties. The Midland Bank at 331 Lord Street has a sculpture of Neptune holding a trident sitting atop the pediment which adds a further dimension to the streetscape. The two clock towers, St Georges spire and the War Memorial Obelisk are major landmarks.



The impressive view of the bank seen from near The Monument

The impressive architecture of the commercial and former bank buildings around The Monument frame and form the backdrop to a range of attractive and important views of the striking war memorial. The obelisk is situated on an island in the centre of the road junction, flanked by Colonnades, which provide an important means of enclosure to the junction. The hard landscaped space has a high degree of formality

which is softened to a degree by the War Memorial Gardens that contains rectangular ponds surrounded by lawns. Service installations within these gardens are highly unsightly and detract significantly from the quality and formality of the spaces.



Wiring for service installations are highly unattractive and creates an untidy appearance

Due to their disproportionate height Regent Court and Sandown Court unfortunately dominate the skyline and harm wider views leading northwards out of the Conservation Area.

4.7 MOVEMENT/ROUTES

Being part of the Town Centre of Southport, the Conservation Area is well connected to the surrounding area by car, rail and bus.

Lord Street and the principal commercial side streets leading from it, including Coronation Walk, Nevill, Eastbank and London Streets, carry a heavy amount of vehicular traffic. They are also well frequented by pedestrians all year round but particularly in the summer season and at weekends. Scarisbrick Avenue is an essential pedestrian link between Lord Street and the seafront. At night however, its link across the bridge to Ocean Plaza is currently underlit and uninviting, with vacant structures within the vicinity of Princes Park.

The predominantly residential side streets including Seabank Road and Bold Street are much less busy.

London Street, Corporation Street, Cambridge Walks, Eastbank Street and Chapel Street provide key pedestrian links between Lord Street and the railway station.

For the majority of Lord Street's length, a narrower secondary road runs between the public gardens and the properties on the landward side of the street. There is a much shorter section of secondary carriageway on the opposite side, at the south west of end of the street, between Corporation Walk and Ribble Buildings.

See plan 5 to show the main vehicular and pedestrian routes through the Lord Street and Promenade conservation areas.

4.8 LAYOUT OF ROADS AND PAVEMENTS

The main roadway runs in a straight line along the length of the street. It is positioned off-centre and is a busy and wide thoroughfare. Its width and limited safe crossing points create a barrier to pedestrian movement across it.

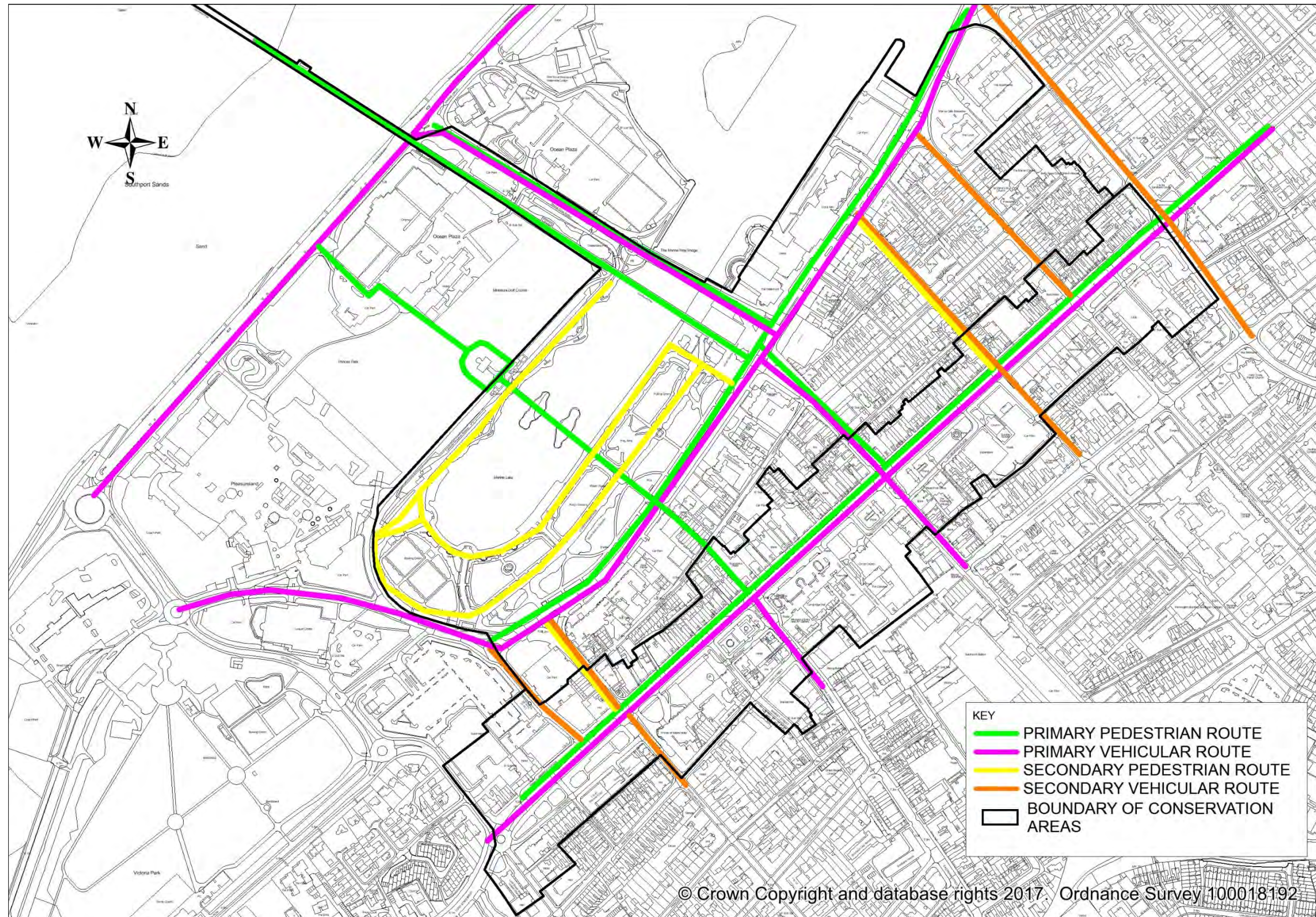
The broad width of the pavements on the shop side of Lord Street provides a spacious and proportionate immediate setting for the buildings. It also is in proportion to the high numbers of shoppers past and present, who visit the street. The quantum of street furniture, pavement cafes, goods on the highway and 'A' board type signage and other street clutter reduces the sense of spaciousness which is detrimental to the appearance of the street and the overall visitor experience.



A-board signage is a problematic issue with many placed in front of shops with little regard for public safety

The similarly broad width of the pavement on the opposite side of the road provides some symmetry to the layout. The generous width also provides a greater physical

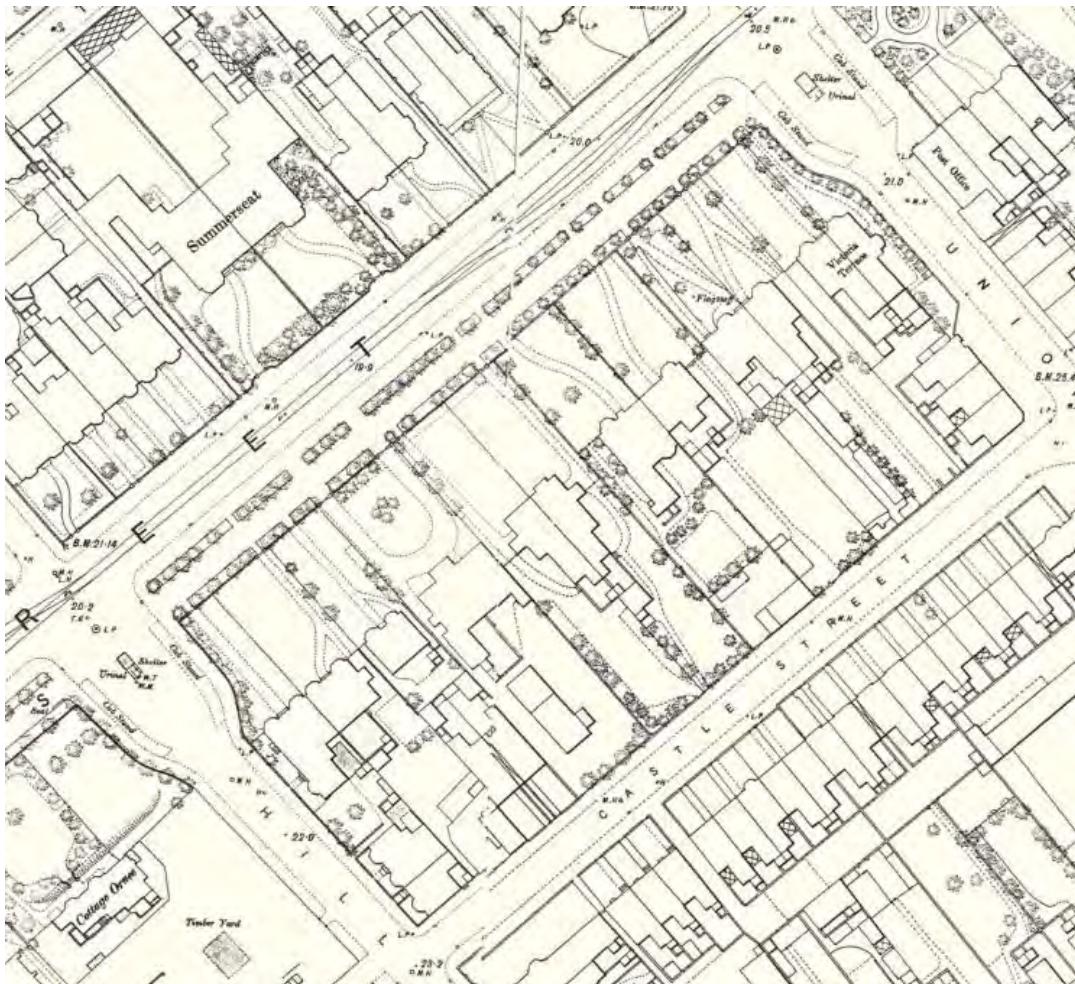
Plan 5 To show the main pedestrian and vehicular routes through the Lord Street and Promenade conservation areas



separation between the formal gardens and the roadway, aiding the perception of the gardens as a quieter space.

Narrower pavements and roads run in front of the buildings on the landward side of the street; their smaller proportions emphasise the secondary nature of these routes. There is no secondary road in front of the civic buildings which beneficially results in the public space being more intimately linked with the buildings.

On the pavement in front of 152-172 Lord Street there is a shrub bed. The trees and shrubs in these beds contribute positively to 'greening' and softening the street scene. Where the beds are devoid of shrubbery, their benefits in this regard are however much more limited. This arrangement is a remnant from a Victorian scheme which ran between London Square (now The Monument) and Union Street which involved a narrow boulevard flanked by hedges and trees.



Large scale 1893 plan showing 152-172 Lord Street
OS Mapping reproduced from Sefton Council's Archives



Hardstanding devoid of planting creates a distinctively separate urban character, such as 164 Lord Street

Eastbank Street Square is a busy road junction and the lack of pedestrian friendly crossings poses an obstacle to pedestrians. Set on a plinth within the central reserve is a tall concrete post topped with a coronation light, erected in celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Despite providing the setting for one of the coronation lights the space is not well defined and lacks identity.

4.9 PATTERNS OF USE

See Plan 6 “Visual survey of uses undertaken July-August 2016”

The Conservation Area contains a very wide variety of building types and uses, reflective of its town centre situation. The arrangement of uses has evolved organically since the late 18th century and reflects the historical geography of the landscape with the dune slack running along the line of the street. The sites closest to the carriageway were more commercially attractive and became shops, whereas the sites where houses were set back from the street because of the boggy ground did not face the same early pressures for redevelopment.



Domestic buildings set back far from the highway

The fact that the distribution of uses and built form continues to reflect this early historical arrangement is a locally distinctive feature which contributes to the area's character and historic interest. Many of the original properties have been replaced by later Victorian replacements, or significantly reconstructed, though some earlier buildings, such as the converted cottages on Nevill Street remain.



A mixture of varied shops and department stores occupy the seaward side of the street

Shops continue to beneficially dominate the seaward side of Lord Street. There are concentrations of café and restaurant uses towards the northern and southern ends of the street, though other food and drink uses such as coffee and sandwich bars are located throughout the street. Above the shops are instances of residential, restaurant and offices.

Commercial buildings and small residential cottages are found tucked in the roads and alleys behind the Lord Street shops, such as 491 Lord Street. Some may represent earlier development which has been engulfed in the townscape.

In comparison, residential or former residential, office and civic/cultural buildings are located to the landward side of the street. Civic and cultural buildings are collected together centrally, fronted by formal gardens. A cluster of solicitors, architects and estate agents are located towards the northern half within a mixture of purpose built premises and converted former cottages. Housing remains the dominant use towards the south end of the street on its landward side. Shops have been developed at road junctions such as 58-62 Lord Street.

In the northern section of Lord Street, a concentration of bars have recently opened in adding to the offerings of The Bold Hotel which has long been established at 583 Lord Street.



Civic buildings such as the Town Hall and the Atkinson can be found on the landward side of Lord Street

Banks and purpose built former banks on Lord Street are clustered towards the centre of the street, generally on the seaward side, but three are on the landward side positioned prominently on junctions. Only three banks remain within buildings originally designed for that use, these being Natwest at 130 Lord Street, the Royal Bank of Scotland at 269 Lord Street and the HSBC bank at 331 Lord Street. Other purpose built bank buildings have survived but are now converted to other uses.



Pubs and bars are often located in side streets, but some have recently appeared in the northern area of Lord Street

The location of different types of uses is an important factor that defines the character of the Conservation Area. Use is also an important factor in maintaining the differences between the Lord Street Conservation Area, which has a high status commercial character, and the Promenade Conservation Area, which maintains a seaside resort character.

There are some pubs, bars and clubs within the area. Buildings that house night time only uses are all located away from the Lord Street frontage on side streets or back streets. This is essential to maintaining a vibrant daytime commercial atmosphere on Lord Street. There are two amusement arcades operating in the Conservation

Area. That on Nevill Street fits in with the more seaside resort character of that street, whereas that within the central section of Lord Street as part of the Scarisbrick Hotel is poor in appearance and the use jars with the neighbouring shopping environment.

Vacancy is a significant problem affecting the appearance of the Conservation Area, with a number of units on the shopping side of Lord Street being vacant at the time of the survey. The vacancies within the shopping side of the street are dispersed throughout the length. On the landward side of the street vacancies are generally less of an issue however there are pockets where vacancy rates are high. Notably, the former Grand Cinema is the largest vacant unit on Lord Street and several nearby units are also vacant.

There is a higher rate of vacancies within Cambridge Arcade, Cambridge Walks and Wayfarers Arcade. The reasons for this are not wholly clear.



Pop-up shops and use of vacant units for displays are helping to limit the visual and perceptual impact within Wayfarers Arcade.



Where vacancy is obvious, the shopfront can appear lacking vibrancy and interest.

Plan 6 Ground Floor uses assessed by Visual Survey July-August 2016

