

# 1) Background

## What is a Conservation Area?

*A conservation area is a distinctive and/or special historic place that people consider to be important, and wish to protect. The official definition of a Conservation Area is:*

*“An area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. This comes from the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which provides the legal framework for the Conservation Area.*

*Conservation areas come in a variety of forms. They are designated to protect and manage different characteristics or issues. It is important that the unique local character is understood, and that future change is positively informed by this knowledge.*



Welles Street

## The existing town centre conservation area

*Sandbach Conservation Area covers much of the town centre and includes areas of different age and character. The plan below indicates its extent.*

*Characteristics of the conservation area include:*

- *The medieval heart of the town focused on the ‘Cobbles’,*
- *Elements of Georgian townscape,*
- *Extensive areas of Victorian townscape,*
- *The civic heart in Hightown,*
- *Residential terraced streets to the north.*

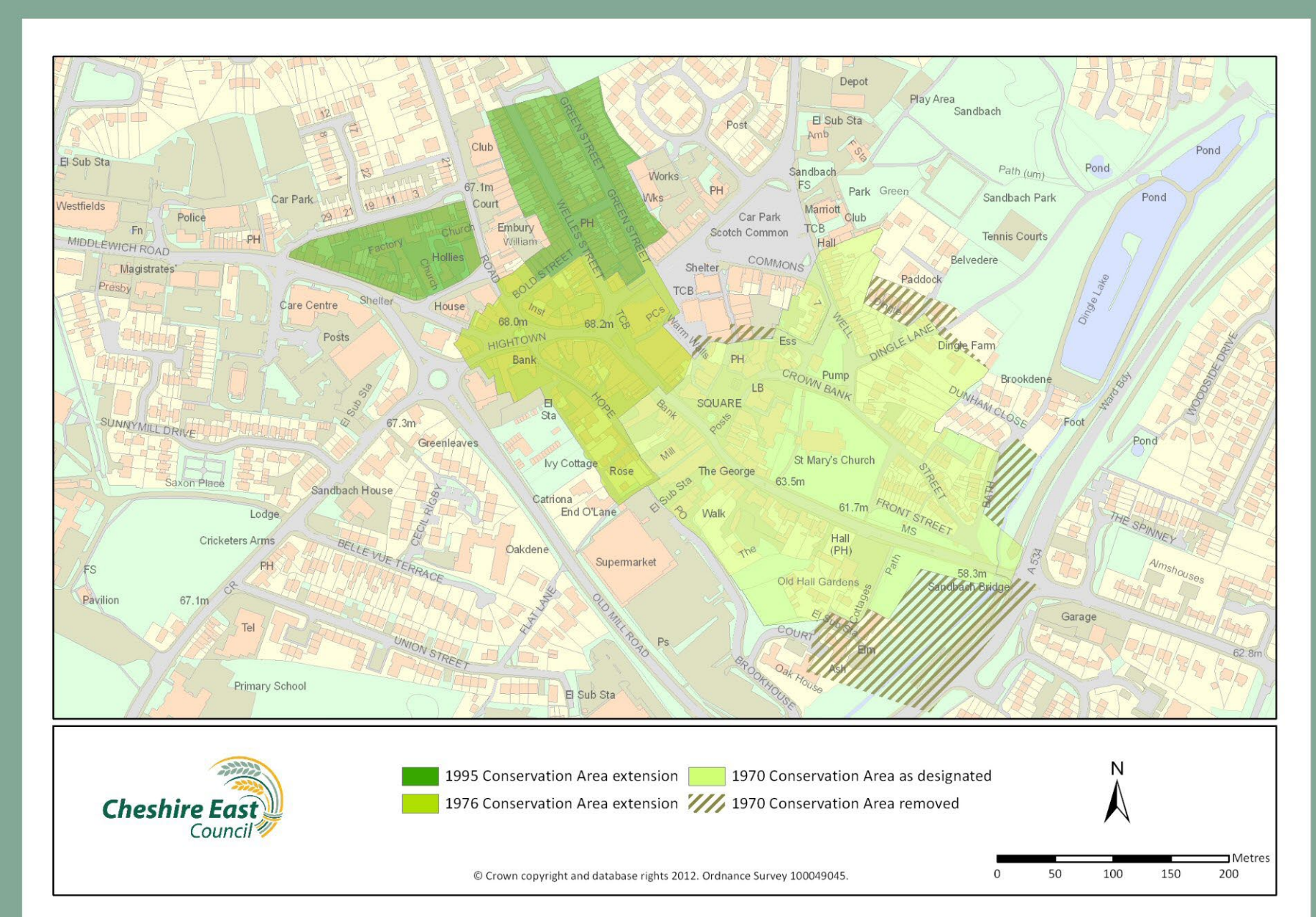
*It is a varied conservation area with a number of ‘layers’. This is defined by architectural and landscape characteristics arising from the town’s evolution, the influence of both past and current uses and also its culture, which continues to shape the area.*



## Why review it?

*Sandbach Conservation Area was first designated in 1970. It included the most historic area in the southern part of the town centre around St Mary’s Church and Market Square. The area was further extended in 1976 to take in Hightown, and again in 1995 to include Welles Street, Green Street, Bold Street, Chapel Street and Wesley Avenue. However, we only have a character appraisal for the original conservation area and it is over 40 years old. A lot has happened since, and there is no assessment of character for the rest of the conservation area.*

*Designation as a conservation area does not mean there will be no change. The Sandbach Conservation Area is an unfinished story. How the future is shaped, enabling a more informed and sensitive approach, will secure its long term future. An up to date character appraisal and management plan are important in shaping change in a positive way.*



View from warm walls into square



The Swan & Chequers



The Old Black Bear

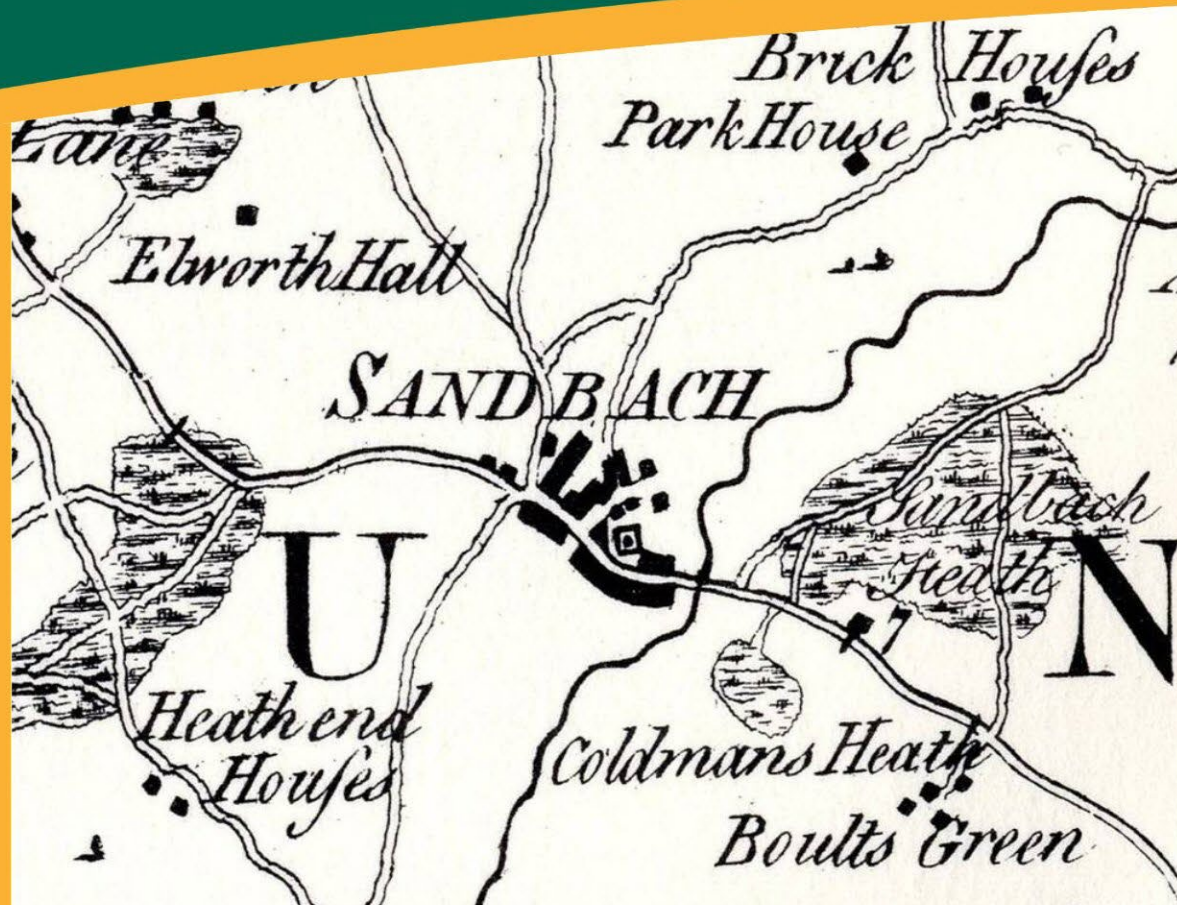
# Sandbach Conservation Area Review Consultation



## 2) History



Fragments of Anglo Saxon cross-shafts and tomb-slabs



Bundett Map. 1777

### Origins and history of Sandbach

Sandbach is derived from 'Sanbec' first recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086. The name refers to a 'sandy valley-stream' presumably a reference to the local Brook.

It is uncertain when occupation first started in Sandbach. The town's origins are thought to date back over a thousand years to the Anglo Saxon period, as evidenced by the historic Saxon Crosses on the Cobbles.

The following diagrams show how the urban grain of the town has evolved since the mid 19th century



Post Medieval



19th Century



Early 21st Century

The town grew through the medieval and post medieval period, resulting in the pattern of streets and lanes, the formal market place, the arrangement of building plots and several 16th and 17th century timber framed buildings that we see today.

Sandbach was largely untouched by the English Civil War except for the infamous skirmish on 3rd September, 1651. Scottish Royalists were attacked and imprisoned by the townspeople on the area now called Scotch Common.

The 18th and 19th centuries, led to growth arising from industry, the Trent and Mersey canal c 1775 and the Manchester to Crewe railway in 1840. This also led to development of the new Town Hall, the Literary Institute, chapels, Coaching Inns/Public Houses and areas of terraced housing.



### Historic development of the town centre

Whilst the town centre has experienced quite a lot of change, there are also many elements that remain relatively unaltered and which help to define the special character of the area.

- The street pattern and key spaces, with the Cobbles at its heart
- The pedestrian lanes into and within the core of the town centre
- Historic plot patterns originating from the town's medieval origins
- Key buildings/groups of buildings, including several timber framed buildings
- Areas of different historic periods and character
- Areas of mature landscape, particularly in the church yard
- Traditional materials, timber framing, Cheshire brick, cobbles and sand stone

### Archaeology

Aside from the remnants of Saxon crosses, there is little archaeological evidence. The archaeological picture can be summarised as follows:

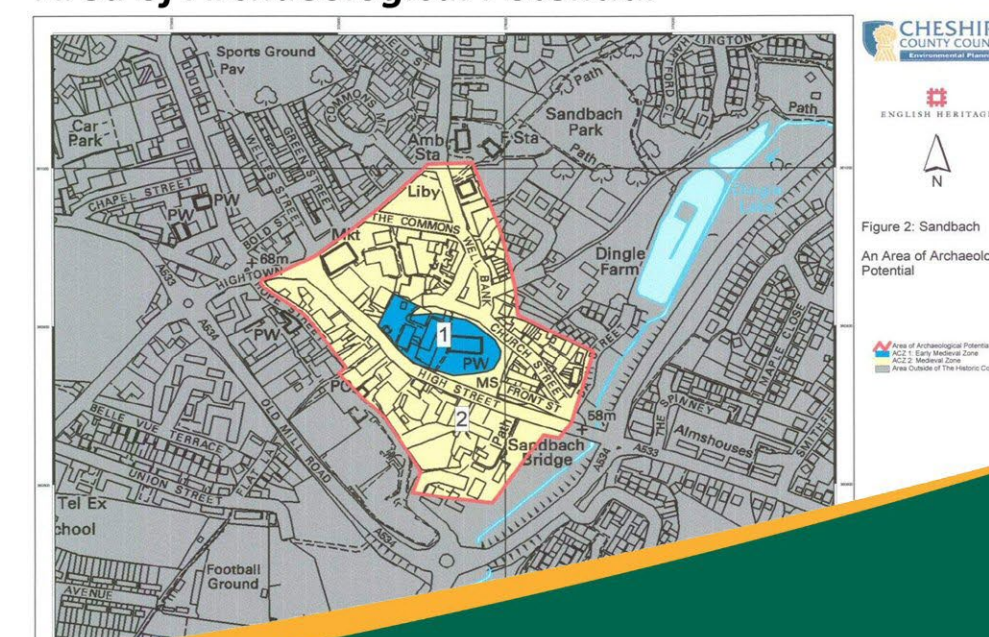
- Little evidence of significant prehistoric or Roman activity at present.
- Pre-conquest - the Crosses suggest a significant early 9th century religious centre
- The medieval settlement remained focussed on the market Square and parish church.
- Digs in 1980s suggested archaeological remains present but ephemeral and liable to disturbance.
- Brook Silk Mill and other industrial sites provide continuing post medieval archaeological interest

Archaeological investigations have taken place at the Old Hall and when the Market Square enhancements took place in 2007. Neither revealed anything particularly significant, except the foundations for the Old Town Hall on the Market Square.

2007 archaeological works, the Cobbles



Area of Archaeological Potential



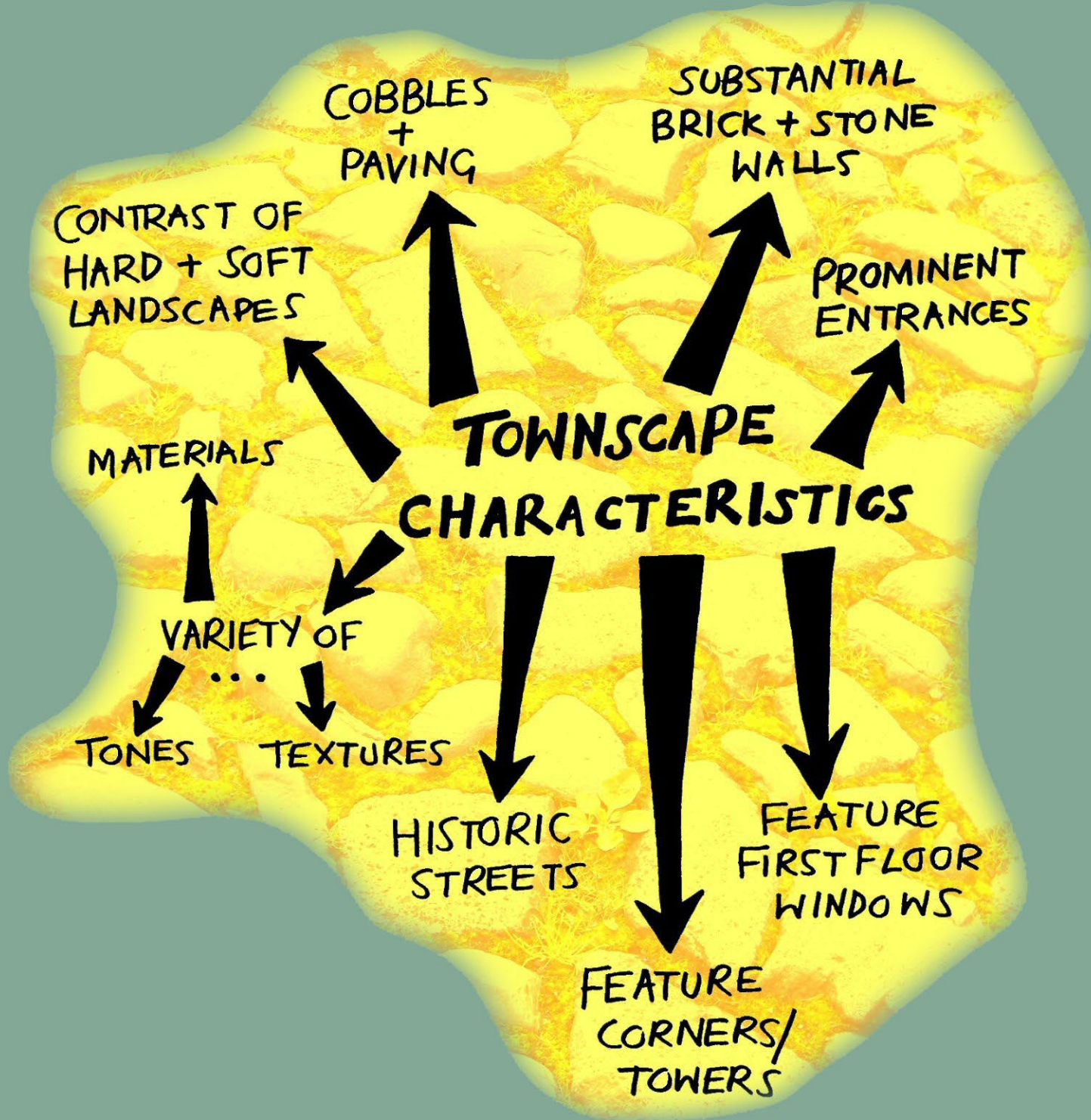


# 3) What makes the Conservation Area special?

## Summary of Heritage significance

There are a number of features and characteristics that combine to create the special character of the conservation area. The landscape, historic buildings, architectural character, locally important materials, historic associations /events, plus the arrangement of buildings and spaces all combine to make the centre of Sandbach unique and worthy of designation as a conservation area.

It is not possible to list everything here, but the key elements are identified in the text and photograph that follow. The diagrams seek to summarise the key attributes.



## Other key qualities that define the conservation area

### 1 Character - areas with their own distinct characteristics



Medieval Core



Green/Welles Street



High Town/High Street



Hope Street

### 2 Blocks, street patterns and spaces - an historic arrangement of streets and spaces



The Cobbles - Sandbach Market Square



Scotch Common

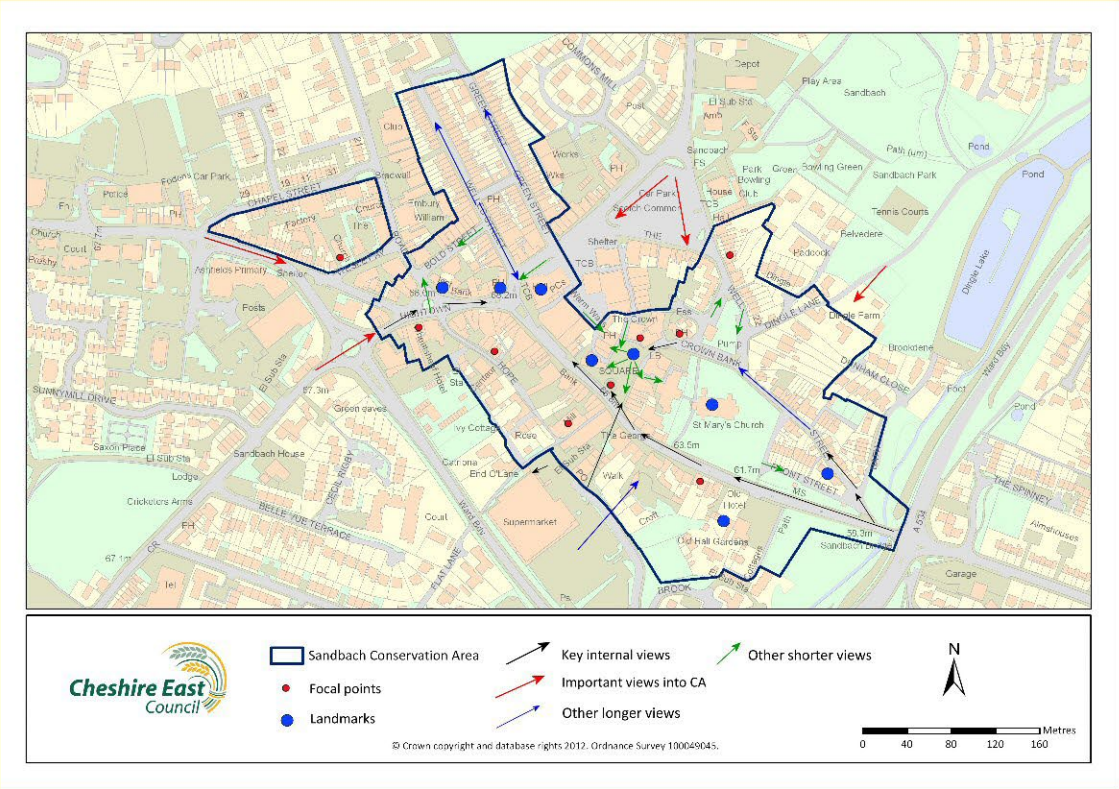


High Town



Aerial View of Conservation Area

### 3 Views and landmarks - a number vistas and views toward key buildings and spaces



Views and landmark buildings



Gateway Views



Key Internal Views



Other Views

### 4 Landscape and greenness - a contrast in landscape coverage within the area



Front Street



High Street



St. Marys Churchyard

### 5 Materials - A variety of materials, textures and tones create a multi-layered character



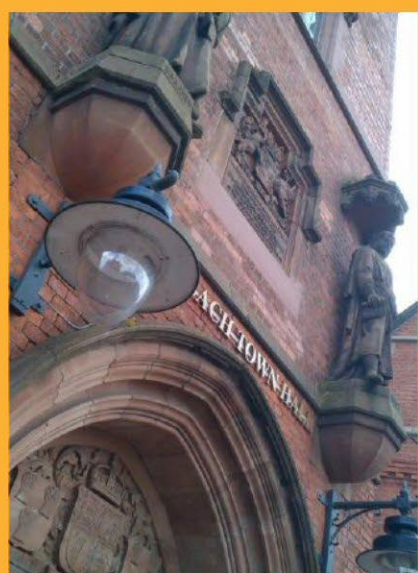
Brickwork Green Street



Cobbled Path, Well Street



Swan and Chequers



Town Hall



# 4) Elements that detract

*Whilst the conservation area has many positive aspects, it also has elements or areas that presently detract from its special interest and character. These issues help inform the management proposals to secure enhancement of the area, which are discussed on the next board.*

*Key things that currently detract from the character of the conservation area include:*

- *Vehicle dominated and overly engineered*
- *Mostly devoid of townscape quality*
- *Detract from setting of the Conservation Area*
- *Clutter created by street furniture*
- *Low quality public realm associated with the spaces*
- *Poor first impressions on arrival into the Conservation Area*

- *Lanes characteristic of the Conservation Area but mostly of low quality*
- *Pedestrian gateways mostly give poor first impression*
- *Low quality public realm, often poorly maintained*
- *Generally poorly lit and lack surveillance*
- *Seen as service routes not pedestrian spaces*
- *Prone to antisocial/criminal behaviour*

- *Hope Street has several detractor sites*
- *Area around Wesley Street creates poor link between areas in the Conservation Area*
- *The post office/Ladbroke's and the area around Iceland relate less positively to the Cobbles*
- *The Warm Walls area relates poorly to the historic core*
- *The shopping precincts (Sanbec Way & St. George's Walk) create a poor foreground to the Conservation Area*
- *High Street has several low quality buildings*

- *Some areas are poorly maintained*
- *Some areas use materials that are inappropriate to an historic setting*
- *Informal spaces could add to townscape quality*
- *Some clutter in terms of signage and furniture*
- *Traffic tends to override pedestrian movement, particularly in the Hightown area*
- *Spaces in front of the Town Hall and Literary Institution could be more formal and better quality*

- *Poor quality shop fronts inappropriate to buildings and townscape*
- *Inappropriate signage (scale, materials, positioning, style and lighting)*
- *External security shutters on limited number of buildings*
- *Some buildings/frontages in generally poor condition*
- *Upper floors poorly utilised*

## Quality of key gateways



## Quality of key pedestrian routes/approaches



## Detractor areas and buildings



## Public realm quality



## Frontages and shop fronts





# 5) Proposed boundary changes

The assessment of the conservation area and its surroundings has identified a number of potential opportunities to preserve or enhance the conservation area. However, there is also the need to assess whether all of the area still justifies being included and also whether other areas should be protected.

Consequently, in addition to reviewing the existing conservation area, a number of sites on the periphery of the conservation area have also been looked at. These are shown on the indicative plan opposite.



Areas that are proposed to be included



Further to this assessment a proposals plan has been developed which suggests a revised boundary for the conservation area to include:

- 45-67 Middlewich Road (including Foden Terrace and the Drill Hall),
- South side of Wesley Avenue, 4-12 Bradwell Road and part of Old Middlewich Road
- Part of the curtilage of Dingle Farm
- 9-15 the Commons
- 4-12 Bradwell Road

The reasoning for including these areas is set out in the appraisal and management plan.



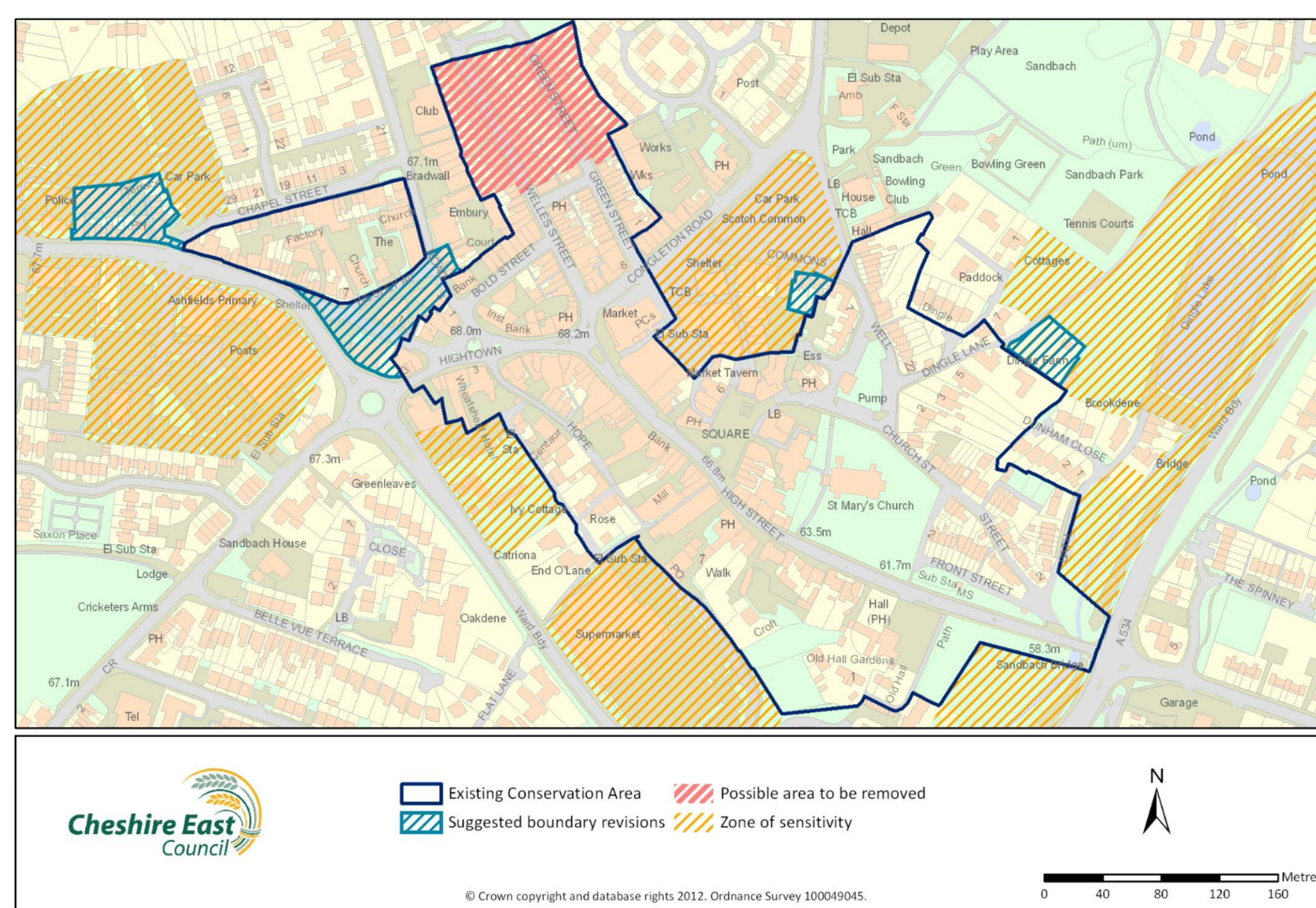
Areas that were considered but not included

It is also proposed to omit part of the conservation area, the northern part of Welles and Green Street, because of the impact of householder alterations upon their historic character



Photographs of Green and Welles Street, proposed to be removed from the conservation area

Whilst some areas that were looked at do not warrant being included in the conservation area, it is recognised that many do have the potential to impact on the area's setting and therefore a zone of sensitivity, where setting should be taken into consideration has been identified (see proposals plan opposite)



The proposals plan



# 6) Management Proposals

As a consequence of the appraisal, management themes and a draft management plan have been developed, for the Conservation Area. In addition the plan identifies other potential actions that would be positive for the Conservation area if they were undertaken sensitively.

## Management themes

Some management themes have been identified to help structure the other management proposals for the area. These are:

- 1 Active heritage management
- 2 Design/quality management
- 3 Projects

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN					
short 1-5 yrs, medium 5-10 yrs, long 10+ yrs					
No.	Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead body	Key partners	Notes
Theme 1: Active heritage management					
1	Serve Article 4 direction: remove rights to alter residential properties without planning permission	short	CEC	-	For residential properties within the CA boundary to restrict alterations without planning permission, including changes to windows and doors, satellite dishes, changes to boundaries
2	Promote/raise awareness of the conservation area to residents/businesses: leaflets, website etc.	short	STC	CEC	To ensure that residents and business are fully aware of the conservation area and the implications of being located within it
3	Identify local assets at risk: compile a list of buildings that are vulnerable to change or are in poor condition	short then ongoing	CEC	STC	Identify candidates and feed into relevant Borough wide lists
4	Investigate unauthorised works and assess the need for enforcement action	short then ongoing	CEC	STC	Planning enforcement investigations for issues identified during survey or brought to attention of CEC and then ongoing
5	Establish a Heritage Watch group including assessing the risk of heritage crime to heritage buildings and features and respond to incidents	short then ongoing	STC	CEC, police, local community	Promote heritage crime awareness in town – establish heritage watch group, undertake HC risk audits for key assets/areas and prompt reporting of incidents
6	Ensure that highways and streetscape works protect/reinstate areas of historic streetscape	ongoing	CEC	STC	Liaison with highways, streetscape and utilities to protect areas and features of historic streetscape and to reinstate where practicable as part of day to day management of the highway
7	Consider serving discontinuance notices and designating an area of special advertisement control to remove rights for certain adverts that normally do not require advertisement consent	short	CEC	-	Remove advertising rights for cases of inappropriate signage and ensure more forms of advertising require advertisement consent where the quality can be managed in accordance with the design guidelines
Theme 2: design/quality management					
8	Improve design quality in planning process: preparation of design guidance for key sites and ensure planning decisions take account of management plan for the conservation area	ongoing	CEC	STC	CEC: prepare development briefs on key sites and in processing applications, TC in commenting on applications
9	Ensure protection and enhancement of historic street pattern/views/assets	ongoing	CEC	STC	Ensuring development guidance reflects this objective, consideration in planning decisions
10	Prepare public realm guidelines: principles to manage and improve the quality of streets and spaces in the conservation area	short - medium	STC	CEC	Preparation of principles for street design and management within the conservation area
11	Prepare urban design framework: regeneration principles for town centre and key development sites in the conservation area	short - medium	STC	CEC	Preparation of a framework to inform regeneration within or on the edge of the conservation area
Theme 3: Projects					
12	Promote a High Street/Hightown public realm enhancement scheme (new paving, seating, street lighting etc.)	Medium - long	STC	CEC	Potentially 2 or 3 phases. Phase 1 likely to be High Street between the Cobbles and Sandbach Town Hall, with further phases in Hightown and High Street (eastern end)
13	Promote a shop front/building frontage improvement scheme (signage, shop fronts and building condition)	Short-long	STC	CEC	Long term programme for frontage improvement on key frontages as part of wider public realm uplift in conservation area, focused primarily on High Street/Hightown
14	Promote a landmark buildings project: lighting and fabric improvements to key buildings	Medium	STC	CEC	Heritage led programme for key buildings, including fabric, setting and lighting
15	Undertake heritage interpretation projects: heritage trails, local plaque scheme, website, interpretation of crosses etc.	Short-medium	SHG	STC CEC	To promote the heritage credentials of Sandbach as part of an enhanced tourist offer and to promote 'dwell time' with its economic spin offs in the town centre
16	Promote improvement to lanes/alleyways including Hope Street and Warm Walls: improvements to lighting, surveillance etc.	Medium-long	STC	CEC	Townscape enhancements to improve image/usability of key alleyways/pedestrian routes
17	Promote gateway enhancements: improvements to vehicle and pedestrian routes into and within the conservation area	Medium-long	STC	CEC	Enhancement to vehicular and pedestrian gateways into the conservation area to improve image and sense of arrival into the area
18	Promote a detractor sites/buildings project: Identify sites that are in poor condition and undertake remedial works	Short - medium	Local Comm unity	STC, CEC, land owners	Improvement of condition of detractor sites through temporary interventions in advance of longer term solutions
19	Protection/enhancement of green spaces: ensure trees and landscape are well managed and secure future planting	ongoing	STC	CEC, land owners	Positive management of green spaces and promotion of an urban greening project/succession planting

STC - Sandbach Town Council, CEC – Cheshire East Council, SCHG – Sandbach Conservation and Heritage Group

NB: The actions identified above are all subject to the availability of resources and funding

Please choose your top 5 priorities from the list of possible actions identified in the table above, we would like you to tell us which are the most important when you fill in the feedback form either here or online.



Illustrations showing possible enhancement in High Street

## Please give us your comments

Thank you for taking the time to visit the exhibition. A copy of the Draft Appraisal and Management Plan is here at the exhibition, but an electronic version of the exhibition, but an electronic version of the exhibition and the review documents are also available online at:

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## Feeding back to us

You can either, complete a hard copy of the feedback form and leave it here in the box provided, or, alternatively you can complete the electronic feedback form provided at the above web address

If you wish to send more detailed comments or have any queries then please contact us by email at: [sandbachcareview.consultation@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:sandbachcareview.consultation@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Please note that the closing date for receiving comments is 10th October 2013. Comments received after that date may not be taken into account in finalising the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.