

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date of Meeting: 26th September 2011

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: BOTCHERGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN (Draft)

Report of: Assistant Director (Economic Development)

Report reference: ED.30/11

Summary:

This report sets out a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Botchergate. The report examines the quality and character that exists within the Conservation Area, a review of the present boundary, together with its adjacent areas, and measures that could be taken to preserve and enhance its character. The appraisal includes a recommendation to modify the boundary of the Conservation Area and therefore proposes consultation on the proposals.

Recommendations:

That the paper be made available for consideration by Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 20th October, and that subject to any additional information arising from the Scrutiny Panel be reported back to Executive on the 31st October to consider referral to Council for approval for public consultation on 8th November.

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 Conservation Areas are defined as “Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Once a local authority has designated such an area Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 places a statutory duty on that authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas.
- 1.2 Policy LE19 in the local plan notes that the Council will review and designate conservation areas. There are 19 Conservation Areas in the District.
- 1.3 Botchergate Conservation Area was designated in 1994 following work by the Carlisle and District Civic Trust and City Council. The designation sought to protect the special character of Botchergate and to resist threats to it arising from unsympathetic development or neglect. While subsequent years have seen significant investments in parts of the conservation area, much of Botchergate has suffered from continued economic malaise and a decline in the quality of the built environment and the public realm. Even within more recently developed areas, some decline is evident arising from the economic downturn.
- 1.4 Policy DP2 (regeneration) of the Local Plan specifies that proposals will be developed for the regeneration of the economic, social and environmental capital of the district. Botchergate is named under this policy and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is the first step in taking forward the objectives of this policy by providing more detail to guide future development of the area.
- 1.5 The current appearance of Botchergate is an issue of perennial concern for both elected members and the public. It was a recurring theme during the ‘Key Issues’ consultation for the Local Development Framework (LDF), which took place between January and March 2011. Numerous representations referred to Botchergate and generally requested that action should be taken to improve its appearance and to make efforts to improve its function as a gateway to the City.
- 1.6 An adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Botchergate would enable the identification of those elements of significance within the area, and provide a sound basis for development control decisions and for developing initiatives to improve the area. It would give greater confidence to potential investors and help to determine a direction for the area. There is no up-to-date guide character of the conservation area and work carried out in the early 1990s is in need of updating as a result of the many changes in the area.

- 1.7 The appraisal provides the opportunity to consider whether the conservation area should be extended or contract and to consider the appropriateness of measures such as Article 4 Directions which can provide more control over some aspects of permitted development. The Council has only one Article 4 Direction in place for parts of the Stanwix Conservation Area.

2.0 CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to Date -

None

2.2 Consultation Proposed -

A six week public consultation is proposed which will be programmed following approval of the Draft by full Council.

- 2.3 In order to assist with the consultation and to ensure it is specific to the Botchergate area, Placesmatter!, has offered to assist the City Council in a design workshop (nominally in late 2011 to tie in with the proposed consultation period) to explore how Botchergate can be enhanced and its vitality revived. This event would involve officers, members and stakeholders and would look beyond the narrow delineation of the Conservation Area to the hinterland of 'greater Botchergate', encompassing St Nicholas, Lancaster Street and the relationship between these areas and residential populations and users such as the University on nearby sites. The development of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan would provide a basis for these discussions, and feedback from the event would inform the draft Appraisal.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the paper be made available for consideration by Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 20th October, and that subject to any additional information arising from the Scrutiny Panel be reported back to Executive on the 31st October to consider referral to Council for approval for public consultation on 8th November.

4.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to review its conservation areas, together with the existing boundaries and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. An up-to-date appraisal of the character of the Botchergate Conservation Area will provide a stronger framework with which to inform Development Management decisions and with which to direct efforts towards regeneration of the area.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – No additional staffing or resources are required.
- Financial – The consultation work will be done within existing budgets.
- Legal – There is a statutory duty to carry out this work under S.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.
- Corporate – This supports the ‘places’, ‘connections’ and ‘people’ aspects of the Corporate Plan through its contribution supporting improvements to the quality of this key gateway to the City..
- Risk Management – That the City Council will not be fulfilling its statutory obligations to review the Conservation area.
- Equality and Disability – No issues raised.
- Environmental – The report raises issues for the protection and preservation of the historic and architectural heritage of the City and a recognition of its special character.
- Crime and Disorder – None.
- Impact on Customers – The document will clarify for residents, businesses and developers the standards and expectations of the Conservation Area designation, as well as identifying opportunities for improvement and how this will be achieved.
- Equality and Diversity –

Impact assessments

Does the change have an impact on the following?

Equality Impact Screening	Impact Yes/No?	Is the impact positive or negative?
Does the policy/service impact on the following?		
Age	No	
Disability	Yes	Positive
Race	No	
Gender/ Transgender	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	
Religion or belief	No	
Human Rights	No	
Health inequalities	Yes	Positive
Rurality	No	

If you consider there is either no impact or no negative impact, please give reasons:

The nature of the document, addressing largely ‘built form’, could be said to have a number of likely positive impact but only minimal impact regarding the equality categories identified above.

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If an equality Impact is necessary, please contact the P&P team.

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APPENDIX 1

Draft Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

August 2011

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i. Introduction

ii. Botchergate Conservation Area was designated in January 1994. The designation was preceded by work by the Carlisle and District Civic Trust, the City Council, and others who had pressed for the designation in order to protect the special architectural character of Botchergate and resist threats to it arising from unsympathetic redevelopment or neglect.

iii. One of the primary threats to the conservation area was the neglect, decay and loss of its historic fabric through the weak and declining economic position that Botchergate then occupied. While subsequent years have seen significant investments in parts of the conservation area, much of Botchergate still lacks the economic robustness that would provide a solid foundation for improvement and protection of those elements of quality within the area which remain.

iv. This document is in two parts. The first part is a character appraisal of the Botchergate Conservation Area. The second part is a management plan which puts forward proposals that will enhance and preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. It identifies those sites and buildings that may be the subject of development proposals and it expands on how Carlisle District Local Plan Policy LE19 should be interpreted in this conservation area.

v. Planning Policy Context

vi. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on Local Authorities to designate as conservation areas any "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". The Act emphasises that the appraisal and designation of conservation areas are not to be considered ends in themselves. It places a duty on local authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts, and to consult the local community about these proposals.

vii. Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (2003) has as one of its Core Development Principles Policy DP2 'Enhancing the Quality of Life'. This includes the need to identify important elements of environmental, social and economic 'capital' so that Development Plans can introduce policies which set out clearly those elements of 'capital' where there is a presumption against any harm arising from development. Where possible these policies should enhance the quality of life.

viii. At County level the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan (2005) Policy E34 states that "measures will be taken to identify, record, protect, conserve or enhance areas, sites, buildings and settings or archeological, historic and architectural importance. Proposals which fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation areas... will not be permitted unless the harm caused to their importance and intrinsic interest is clearly outweighed by the need for the development". Policy E35 supports development which "includes measures to regenerate and upgrade rural, urban and urban fringe environments, both built and natural".

ix. The Carlisle District Local Plan (September 2008) has several policies relating to Conservation Areas, the most important being LE19 -

“LE19 Conservation Areas

The City Council will continue to review existing and designate new conservation areas.

Development proposals within and adjoining conservation areas will be granted planning permission provided they preserve or enhance their character and appearance. Any new development or alterations to existing buildings should harmonise with their surroundings and be in sympathy with the setting, scale, density and physical characteristics of conservation areas, and protect important views into or out of such areas. Applications for outline planning permission will not be accepted for proposals in conservation areas. Proposals for new development and/or alterations to buildings in conservation areas will be judged against the following criteria:

1. the development should preserve or enhance all features which contribute positively to the area's character or appearance, in particular the design, massing and height of the building should closely relate to adjacent buildings and should not have an unacceptable impact on the townscape or landscape;
2. the development should not have an unacceptable impact on the historic street patterns and morphology, roofscape, skyline and setting of the conservation area, important open spaces or significant views into, out of and within the area;
3. development proposals should not result in the amalgamation or redrawing of boundaries between traditional buildings and plots, or demolition and redevelopment behind retained facades;
4. wherever practicable traditional local materials such as brick, stone and slate should be used and incongruous materials should be avoided;
5. individual features both on buildings and contributing to their setting, should be retained e.g. doorways, windows, shopfronts, garden walls, railings, cobbled or flagged forecourts, sandstone kerbs, trees and hedges, etc. Where features have deteriorated to the extent to which they have to be replaced, the replacement should match the original;
6. proposals which would generate a significant increase in traffic movements and heavy vehicles or excessive parking demands will not be permitted since these would be prejudicial to amenity;
7. proposals which would require substantial car parking and servicing areas which can not be provided without an adverse effect on the site and its surroundings will not be permitted”.
- x. The direction given by this policy forms the core of development guidance for the Botchergate Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal, the Management Plan and detailed development briefs, where appropriate, will give more specific guidance as to matters of detail.
- xi. Policy LE16 Historic Structures and Local Listings is significant in an area with a high proportion of nineteenth century buildings that retain considerable architectural, historical or townscape character.

xii. Policy LE17 Development Involving the Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas provides a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

xiii. POLICY LE18 Buildings at Risk During the Plan period the Council will actively seek to reduce the number of Buildings at Risk on the national or local registers by assisting with proposals for their re-use which are sympathetic to their historic character and setting. In addition the Council will prepare a local list of buildings which are important for their historic, architectural design or location. Proposals for the demolition of locally listed buildings will be resisted in order to maintain the contribution they make to the local environment.

xiii. POLICY LE21 Townscape Improvement Areas Within Carlisle's the City Centre, Botchergate, Brampton and Longtown Conservation Areas, the City Council will encourage the redevelopment or improvement of buildings identified as frontage improvement areas.

PART 1 - Character Appraisal

1.1 Summary of Special Interest

Definition of Botchergate's Special Interest

1.1.2 Botchergate Conservation Area is focused on the linear strip of Botchergate but expands to encompass the triangular Woodrouffe Terrace development and also includes St Nicholas Street as it ascends towards Currock. It is bounded by Collier Lane to the northwest, and encompasses Tait Street and South View Terrace, but more generally it follows the line of the backs of plots of development fronting Botchergate (see plan).

1.1.3 It is characterised by a transition from mixed residential and modest retail provision in the southern portion (Area 3), via an area of currently weak retail in its central portion (Area 2), through to a more buoyant northern portion (Area 1). The northern portion of the Botchergate Conservation Area abuts the City Centre Conservation Area and it has historically aspired to the vibrancy and status of its northern neighbour.

1.1.4 The special interest of the conservation area arises from its historic role as a key approach to the City centre. This is seen physically in its linearity, and also in the intensity of its uses - with intensity increasing the closer one progresses northwards. Its historic role was as a linear route between the gates of the walled City and the south - the most intensive development was closest to the City gates (The Citadel), with a further historic nucleus at the medieval St Nicholas hospital site to the south of the current designation.

1.1.5 The physical attributes of the Conservation Area, which should be preserved and enhanced, range from the higher status 19th and early 20thC buildings which emulate and extend the urban character of the City centre; through the smaller retail offer of the central section (which now struggles to find its economic function); and lastly the areas of residential and mixed use, marking the transition to the more conventional suburbs and terraced streets which have gradually encompassed Botchergate.

1.2 Assessment of Special Interest

1.2.1 Location and Setting

1.2.2 Historically a suburb outside of the gates of Carlisle, Botchergate has been swallowed by the southerly expansion of the city. Until the opening of the M6 motorway in the 1970s it formed the main route between Glasgow and London and it maintains its historic function as the primary route into the city from the south. It remains a key route into the city and a gateway point at which residential suburbs can be said to give rise to the urban core of Carlisle.

1.2.3 Originally a linear development on the approach to the walled city, Botchergate became increasingly urban and commercial during the nineteenth century. Firstly narrow lanes, and later, spur roads were developed along its length serving new development, until it became fully enmeshed as the heart of the web of streets that survive today. The Conservation Area is urban in character, with few trees and only a single piece of green space within its boundaries. Its topography is largely level and it occupies a plateau in contrast to land to west, which falls away to what were once the floodplains of the River Caldew and its water meadows.

1.3 Character Areas

1.3.1 For the purposes of this appraisal Botchergate can be said to comprise three character areas (illustrated by figures 3, 6 and 7 and named areas 'One', 'Two' and 'Three').

Area 1

1.3.2 Area One comprises the part closest to the Citadel at Botchergate's northern tip. This area is the most urban in character and scale, reflecting its proximity to the railways station and the commercial heart of Carlisle. From the Victorian period it has been characterised by buildings of some scale and grandeur. Though less grand than the architecture which occupies the adjacent Crescent area (City Centre Conservation Area) it has nevertheless aspired to a similar status. Area One has hosted Botchergate's more recent commercial redevelopments, largely focused on the evening economy and entertainment, and while there has been significant clearance and reconstruction, there has also been investment in the maintenance of the building stock.

Area 2

1.3.3 Area Two runs from Tait Street to Rydal Street. It has less grandeur than Area One and the parts fronting Botchergate are commercial in character. This section has suffered significantly from a decline in local shopping and by changing retail patterns and this is evidenced by the neglected state of many of the buildings. The housing that previously abutted the western flank of this section was cleared in the 1960's and this has reduced the population necessary to support buoyant commerce. By contrast Tait Street has survived as a well-preserved residential street of polite terraced housing and is now Grade II listed.

Area 3

1.3.3 Area Three runs from Rydal Street southwards, and encompasses both part of London Road and also St Nicholas Street/St Nicholas Bridges. The area is fragmentary in character and while the Grade II listed workers housing at Woodrouffe Terrace and St Nicholas Street provide a ballast of quality, much of the frontage commercial units are in a poor state.

1.3.4 This is exacerbated by sites such as 12-18 St Nicholas Street whose contribution to the streetscape, vitality and attractiveness of the area is negative, but which lie outside the Conservation Area boundary.

1.4 Historic Development and Archaeology

1.4.1 Botchergate, previously 'Botchard-gate', was originally a township forming the southern approach to Carlisle, and owned around the time of Henry I by one 'Botchard', a native of Flanders (1). G Smith's 1746 map of Carlisle shows Botchergate as the principal route south and framed by linear development (Figure xx). The character of existing development to the northern part of Botchergate reflects and continues a historic quirk, as hostelryes and victuallers sprang up outside the gates of the City, closed after dark by an ordinance of Elizabeth 1st and barring entry to travellers. 400 years on, this function still serves many buildings on the northern part of Botchergate.

1.4.2 Early development appears to have concentrated at its northern end, closest to the entrance to the walled city, and tailed off towards the south. An early occupant of the southern extremity of Botchergate was the medieval St Nicholas leper hospital, indicating the peripheral nature of this area. The hospital occupied the site (just south of South Street) until its sacking during the Civil War. Carlisle's gradual expansion during the 18th and nineteenth centuries saw the linear strip of Botchergate develop adjoining streets of working class housing, interspersed with the industrial enterprises these residents served. The mixed residential and commercial nature of the main street became increasingly commercial, with an eclectic range of public houses, hotels, manufacturing, entertainment and retailers present. The proximity to Carlisle Citadel Station will have stimulated this growth, and in particular that of the grander hotels which developed at the northern extremity.

1.4.3 The 1821 Wood's map shows the linear nature of Botchergate indicating frontage development with occasional backland buildings (Figure xx). At its northern end the mews buildings of what is now Collier Lane can be seen to have been developed, with spurs of buildings perpendicular to the main street in what is now the vicinity of Tait Street and Portland Place.

1.4.4 By the 1860's good quality terraced housing had struck out along the newly formed Tait Street. Union Street (now Rydal Street), had begun to be lined with terraces but South Street, Charles Street and Close Street had just been laid out (Fig xx).

1.4.5 The 1900 map (overleaf) shows the development of Botchergate and its hinterland perhaps at the height of its urbanisation, with each side of the street densely lined with terraces interspersed with business and manufacturers. The narrow 'burgage' plots which characterised ownerships on the 1821 map have influenced the development of later stages. These patterns can be seen to have dictated the shapes of developments such as the Rickerby's agricultural works at the rear of Portland Place (now a surface car park), and also the numerous narrow lanes and courts that stretched back from the frontage, lined with dense housing and workshops of which there is now little trace.

1.4.6 As the twentieth century progressed there has been a tendency for developments which have consolidated and obliterated these traces of early land ownerships, with large swathes of backland now coalesced into areas of car parking or large footprint buildings. The frontages have proved more robust, and while a number of buildings which span numerous original plot widths (e.g. Stanley Hall and Palace Arcade) the ground floor subdivisions broadly reflect the 4-5m footprints of

earlier plots. Towards the southern part of the street unconsolidated smaller frontages are very much still in evidence.

1.4.6 The area is architecturally notable thanks to the legacy of Victorian/Edwardian commercial confidence, evident in surviving buildings such as the Stanley Hall and the Palace Arcade and in some of the ornament and confidence that can be seen in neighbouring buildings. Two notable places of worship arose in this same period of civic confidence - the 1830 Christ Church (Demolished in 1952) and in Area 3, the imposing church of St John's on London Road. The Christ Church site is now occupied by the underutilised Christ Church gardens, providing the sole area of green open space within the Conservation Area.

1.4.7 The peak of development on Botchergate is illustrated by the 1901 map (fig xx). By the 1970s large areas of terraced housing were cleared under the auspices of slum clearance. It is likely that this resulted in a gradual depopulation of the area which contributed to a decline in the fortunes of Botchergate. This depopulation was coupled with the changes in shopping patterns and the decline of the traditional high street common to the latter half of the 20th Century. Notable survivors of these residential clearances include the Grade II listed Woodrouffe Terrace, St Nicholas Street and Tait Street. These are characterised by modest but well-built domestic architecture, and a rhythm and repetition of building elements such as well-proportioned window openings, architraving, chimney stacks and doorways which their Listing serves to protect (Fig xx and xx).

1.4.8 Archaeological interest may be present throughout the area. Previous studies provide no more than glimpses of the likely archaeological potential. The area was utilised in the Roman period, including for burial. The medieval leper hospital of St Nicholas is also a likely focus of potential interest. Before the approval of any planning consent it is likely that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken (Cumbria county Council 2006).

1.5 **Economic Regeneration**

1.5.1 Efforts to revive the area gained momentum in the 1990's culminating with the creation of the English Gate Plaza scheme. This involved the demolition of almost 150m of existing frontage buildings and their replacement with a mixed use development comprising office, retail, residential and entertainment space. Commercially largely successful, this scheme and associated investment to the northern part of the Conservation area have led to investment in the fabric of those historic buildings which remain. This built on earlier restoration works started in 1994 under the Conservation Area Partnership (CAP) Scheme and City Council grants. Between 1994 and 1997 some £900,000 was invested in the Botchergate area by English Heritage, the City Council, Housing Associations and the private sector (CAP bid 1997). This included a 'Group Repair Scheme' for the listed buildings on St Nicholas Street.

1.5.2 While the achievements made by these investments must be recognised, it is fair to say that a significant portion of the conservation area is currently in a poor state of repair and is suffering the twin perils of neglect and unsympathetic 'improvement'. The parlous state of many of the buildings within the Conservation Area, and their neglect or unsympathetic alteration, is worsened by the general decline in the retail strength of the 'traditional high street' in the face of City Centre or supermarket competition, and by the changed character of its hinterland - the dense population that once abutted western Botchergate has been cleared to make way for low density light industry

which contributes little to the economic vitality of the high street. Opportunities to reinvent Lancaster Street and its environs as a residential-led mixed use area may help to provide the resident population and vibrancy that the Conservation Area needs if it is to regain some of its former vigour.

1.6 Spatial Analysis

1.6.1 There is an evident building hierarchy on approaching the conservation area from the south. Within Area Three, (with the exception of St John's Church - fig xx), buildings are largely two storey and domestic in scale. Few 'statement buildings' are evident within this area, perhaps with the exception of the corner building to South Street/London Road, recently the subject of unsympathetic modifications (fig 19). Building heights and commercial stature rise a little as one enters Area Two, with notable substantial buildings being the Stanley Hall and Palace Arcade. In Area One surviving Victorian buildings have aspired to some architectural sophistication, and the general impression is of a mature urban street. The 4-6m plot dimensions that is typical of the length of Botchergate is largely respected in Area One, despite the amalgamation of plot boundaries - the echoes of earlier plot widths can be seen in the subdivisions at ground level despite coalescence of ownership. As building heights rise in Area One, this pleasant rhythm of narrow plots and vertically emphasised buildings lends a distinctive quality to the street. The rise in building heights relative to street width in Area One generates a greater sense of enclosure that is absent in Area Three and only emerging in Area Two.

1.6.2 Two areas of 'openness' are evident. These are Christ Church gardens in Area Two and the nodal 'open space' generated by the junction of St Nicholas Road and the Botchergate/London Road interface. Although traffic dominated and austere, this junction is a potentially important space within the conservation area and one whose potential is as yet untapped. Christ Church gardens occupy the former Christ Church site. This genuinely green open space is significantly undercapitalised, with no buildings presenting active frontage to it, no through routes and little animation.

1.7 Key Views and Vistas

1.7.1 The linearity of the conservation area means that while there are a series of long distance views towards landmarks including the tower of Carlisle Cathedral, the Citadel and some prominent corner buildings along Botchergate, it is unlikely that development will significantly impede these views. The street itself creates a largely unbroken sense of enclosure and where streets open up off the main thoroughfare, or in the occasional break in the frontage, no critical landmarks or vistas are evident. It may be that the biggest opportunity sites to create new vistas are Christ Church gardens and the St Nicholas St junction referred to above. At present these areas are underwhelming but an appropriate landscape / architectural intervention could create focal points and vistas of note.

1.7.2 A recent example of a missed opportunity to utilise a vista to the mutual benefit of both the streetscape and the development is the interface between the recent 'picture house apartments' and the large carriage arch set within the Palace Arcade. The new building nudges apologetically into view through the arch when it could have been designed as a complimentary element (fig xx).

1.8 Character Analysis (by areas)

1.8.1 Area One (northern portion of conservation area)

1.8.2 Area One contains the conservation areas greatest concentration of good quality commercial Victorian/Edwardian architecture. The entire frontage, except for the recent developments at English Gate, and the unfortunate (c1962) 30-34 Botchergate (fig xx), are locally listed, with Harry Redfern's Cumberland Inn Grade II listed. The 2000-2003 English Gate Plaza and Ibis hotel development attempt to replicate the scale and rhythm of their Victorian neighbours but are markedly more austere and lack visual richness. They benefit the Conservation Area however in that they have helped to inject new uses into what was a series of vacant and increasingly decaying buildings, spurring investment in their retained neighbours. Design failings within the scheme include the blank elevations that frame the new incidental open space of English Gate Plaza, and the barren car parking behind the new scheme. It is testament to the visual strength of the remaining architecture that such a substantial modern development can be accommodated without significant detriment to the character of the street.

1.8.3 The traditional architecture in the area is diverse and in many cases exuberant. It is evident that there was a degree of competition between Botchergate's Victorian developers to outdo their neighbours. A common thread however is a strong vertical emphasis, with windows, mullions, columns, pilasters and chimney stacks contributing to this effect. The vulnerability of these buildings is greatest at ground level, where unsympathetic retail signage and frontages can mar elevations. A further source of more fundamental damage is through the neglect of maintenance of the wider building that can bring about structural damage. Fig xx shows rampant vegetation in the gutters of the Boustead's Building which will almost certainly result in water ingress and costly damage if left unchecked. Cosmetic changes at ground level can at least be remedied - as evidenced by the achievements of the CAP scheme - whereas structural damage arising through neglect may have more insidious impacts.

1.8.4 The building line is almost without exception on Botchergate hard-up to the back of the pavement. This reflects the intensity of the commercial uses here that dictated that each plot and building should work as hard as possible to make its presence known. The narrow plot widths and frequency of doorways onto the street helps to generate vitality.

1.8.5 Area Two (central portion of conservation area)

1.8.6 The central part of the Conservation Area is at present the most vulnerable and economically weak. This places its buildings at risk, as lower quality interventions may be considered by owners to be acceptable options. A notable negative influence on the appearance of this area arises from the unimplemented planning consents for comprehensive redevelopment applying to the buildings between South Henry Street and Rydal Street (fig xx). Notwithstanding this permission the buildings themselves are of some modest architectural interest, in particular the low two storey building at 149/151 Botchergate, (fig xx) - in part as a result of benign neglect its shop front has been retained. This block could be revived sympathetically and allowed once again to contribute to the quality of the street if the currently proposed demolition and comprehensive redevelopment were not to be enacted.

1.8.7 Adjacent to this block is the much grander Stanley Hall (119-147 Botchergate). Subject to a 1990's 'Living Over the Shop' initiative the building was originally built as retail with offices above,

fronting the livestock market. The incremental loss of building elements to this grand (though unlisted) 1905 building can be seen here in the truncated chimney stack to the northern gable. A marked improvement has however been achieved by recent refurbishment work to the central portion, and especially to a unified approach to the colour and design of the ground floor.

1.8.8 Opposite this building is the Palace Arcade. The building shows a broadly successful approach to its shop frontage in the northern portion, (fig xx) where the 'Gary Etherbridge' unit spans three bays but in subtle and attractive manner. The southern 'palace cycles' signage is much more dominant and unnecessarily large. Neither occupier benefits aesthetically from the security shutters which could be located more sensitively behind the glazing. The Palace Arcade shows examples of the incremental loss of architectural detail - in this case the missing pediment from the central gable, which throws the composition of the facade out of balance. With funding this could be reinstated.

1.8.9 The northern portion of the Palace building was improved under the Botchergate Conservation Area Partnership scheme in 1994/1997 but the building is again showing some signs of deterioration. It is unfortunate that the 'Picture House' residential development to the rear did not make more use of the arcade entrance, and indeed the adjacent Christ Church Park.

1.8.10 An exception to the relative decay evident in the central portion of the Conservation Area is the residential umbilical of Tait Street (fig xx). These polite mid-Victorian dwellings are Grade II listed and retain the repeating elements of sash windows, panelled doors, and detailing which lends coherence to terraces. As a main traffic artery (in particular when Botchergate is partially closed on Friday and Saturday nights) the environmental quality of the street is somewhat compromised. The quality of the street is added to however by its avenue tree planting, and where necessary these trees should be sensitively managed and replaced as specimens are lost. Any reduction, or sensitive calming, of traffic would further enhance the quality of the street.

1.8.11 Area Three

1.8.12 This area stretches from Rydal Street and through to St Nicholas Bridge. It encompasses the confluence of 'Botchergate' as it becomes 'London Road', and ends at the twin listed public houses of The Cranemakers and The St Nicholas Arms. The area is varied in quality, though significantly bolstered by the listed pubs and the Grade II listed terraces at St Nicholas Street and Woodroufe Terrace. The quality of these buildings contrasts with the unprepossessing retail fronting the rest of the area. These retail elements (figs xx and xx) are characterised by essentially solid Victorian commercial buildings marred by poor late twentieth century shopfronts, and unsympathetic alterations. For example, the previously fine brick building at 1 London Road has been unsympathetically altered, with its brickwork hidden by cement render, and delicate curved sash windows replaced by PVCu (fig xx).

1.8.13 Nonetheless, even within this area there is potential to retrieve some lost quality. Shop front improvements as achieved by the 1990's CAP scheme could significantly enhance the area. Further substantial potential to elevate the condition of this part of the conservation area comes from the possibility of redevelopment of 12-16 St Nicholas Street (Fig xx) - the unsympathetic 1970's low rise shopping parade which although it lies outside of the conservation area, exerts a strong negative influence within it.

1.8.14 As touched on above, the confluence of open space created at the junction of St Nicholas Street and Botchergate/London Road offers potential for significant improvement. Currently beset by an array of unsympathetic traffic management pedestrian cages, chicanes and general highways clutter (fig xx) the space could be simplified and made more usable by pedestrians seeking to cross the road. The apex of the St Nicholas triangle, currently occupied by WCs, an unsightly telephone kiosk and a blank gable could be put to better use. The council's urban design SPD suggests this as a site for artwork but a device as simple as a single specimen tree would be an equally suitable means to mark this nodal point.

1.9 Public Realm

1.9.1 The public realm in the conservation area is of varied quality. It has few deliberate 'open spaces' and with the exception of Christ Church gardens and consequently the 'public realm' is largely made up of highway and footpaths. In general the impression of the area is of a place dominated by vehicular movement. The northern portion of Botchergate was subject to an improvement scheme arising from the development of English Gate plaza and as such has a relatively consistent palette of paving, lighting and street furniture. Areas Two and Three are more varied and the main thoroughfare is largely paved in poor quality materials which do not contribute to the character of the conservation area. The floorscape is a mixture of clay pavements, concrete flags and tarmac.

1.9.2 There is more interest however in side streets where there are a number of survivals from the Victorian and early twentieth century. This is a result more of accidental survival rather than a deliberate policy of conservation. High quality basalt setts (fig xx) can be seen on several side streets, in particular on the western side of the Conservation Area which has suffered most from a benign neglect. Princess Street and Albion Street have retained their setted carriageways and despite the loss of their original buildings, this floorscape offers an element of quality around which a new streetscape can begin to develop. In Area One, Collier Lane and Mary Street are similarly paved, although Collier Lane requires extensive restoration due to inappropriate reinstatement following utility works. It is likely that setts may exist under the tarmac on other streets within or adjacent to the conservation area.

1.9.3 The greatest concentration of utilitarian lighting and intrusive highways items is in Area Three, in particular around the St Nicholas junction. Impromptu bollards (Fig 40) and extensive guardrailing create an atmosphere of lack of care and severely weaken the integrity of the conservation area. It is likely that a great number of these items could be reduced or removed if the area were thoroughly audited and pedestrians given the primacy which the movement hierarchy affords them.

1.10 Green Infrastructure

1.10.1 With the exception of Christ Church gardens, whose potential as a focal point for new development has been identified above, there is no other public green space within the conservation area.

1.10.2 With the exception of the avenue tree planting that survives and benefits Tait Street, there are only a handful of trees in the area. Two of these are located to the front of St John's Church and

the third is within the front yard of the St Nicholas Arms. Alongside the potential to enhance the St Nicholas junction with structural planting there is the opportunity to soften the rest of Botchergate through appropriate planting of columnar street trees. This is identified as a goal in the Urban Design SPD for Carlisle and potential locations for this are identified in the appendix.

2 PART 2 – Management Plan

2.1 Despite its issues, Botchergate is still a dynamic place where people live, work and visit. The conservation area designation is not designed to preserve what is there at present in aspic, but is intended to guide change and to enable development which makes the best use of the areas attributes for the benefit of all. There are a number of measures which can be taken to actively preserve the qualities of the area and to promote improvement.

2.2 Conservation Area Boundary Review

2.2.1 The Conservation Area boundary was drawn in 1994. Since that time there has been substantial redevelopment on the English Gate Plaza site and the emergence of development opportunities at other points in the area. The current boundary in the vicinity of English Gate Plaza reflects former plot boundaries which are now obliterated. It is recommended that this portion of boundary should be redrawn to reflect the building footprints of the new development. This is shown in figure x. It is suggested that the large entertainment unit at no x Botchergate is excluded from the boundary, but that the open space at English Gate Plaza and the incidental open space adjacent should be included.

2.2.2 It could be argued that there are several sites adjacent to the Conservation Area whose development might adversely impact upon it and that the boundary should be modified to include these. Such sites include the garage complex at 27-29 London Road (Fig xx), the 1960s development at 12-18 St Nicholas Street and the area abutting Christ Church Gardens.

2.2.3 The site at 27-29 London Road, though the subject of developer interest, is mainly visually separated from the Conservation Area by the terraced frontage to London Road. It is likely that development on this site will not be visible from the Conservation Area. For this reason it is not recommended that the site is brought within the conservation area boundary.

2.2.4 The units at 12-16 St Nicholas Street have a marked detrimental impact on the appearance and vitality of the conservation area. It is likely that the buildings are approaching the end of their design-life, and it is possible that they will be brought forward for redevelopment. It is therefore suggested that the conservation area is redrawn to include these buildings so as to ensure that their replacements contribute positively to their context. This is especially important given the need for future redevelopment to respond sensitively to the listed residential properties directly opposite on St Nicholas Street.

2.2.5 The sole significant open space in the area is Christ church gardens. While it has been improved moderately by the construction of new apartments immediately adjacent, these have failed to capitalise on their neighbour and there is no active connection between the two. The remaining boundaries to the park are currently a small surface car park and two warehouses. The redevelopment of any of these uses offers the opportunity to significantly enhance the park. The risk

of development adversely affecting the park is also high, and as such it is suggested that portions of the adjacent building plots are brought within the revised conservation area boundary.

2.3 Public Realm

2.3.1 The primary challenges to the public realm in the conservation area are the need to improve the animation of the handful of public spaces that currently exist - Christ Church Gardens and the St Nicholas/London Road intersection. The former space requires active uses to front onto it. This is expanded on in detail under 'development opportunities' below. The latter 'highways' space suffers from a high degree of 'street clutter' - opportunities should be taken to review audit existing provision and to identify opportunities for simplification or removal.

2.3.2 Other elements of note exist in the retained historic surfaces to Collier Lane, Mary Street and other side streets which retain their setted surfaces. These high quality basalt setts are an integral part of the character of the conservation area. Wherever possible they should be retained and reinstated where they have sustained damage (e.g. in sections of Collier Lane damaged by utility trenching). The protection of these surfaces should extend along the length of those streets which adjoin the Conservation area e.g. King Street and Princess Street - in these cases they offer an element of public realm quality which can be used to enhance future built-development.

2.3.3 Historic street nameplates are present throughout the area and could be inexpensively refurbished or reinstated where lost (fig xx).

2.4 Protection of Historic Fabric

2.4.1 The bulk of residential properties within the conservation area are Grade II listed (Appendix 1). This affords them significant levels of protection against changes which could erode their group value or architectural integrity. They are however vulnerable to the usual impacts of neglect as the unoccupied units to the eastern end of Woodruffe Terrace indicate (fig xx).

2.4.2 In non-residential areas of the Conservation Area, many of the incremental changes that have been made required planning permission. This includes the replacement of timber windows with PVCu windows and the replacement of shop frontages. Where there has been a breach of planning control consisting of the carrying out without planning permission of relevant works, no enforcement action may be taken after the end of the period of four years beginning with the date on which the operations were substantially completed (T&CP Act 1990 - as amended). Those works that required permission but where none was sought may therefore be enforced against within this time period.

2.4.3 Unfortunately, many of the losses to historic fabric in Botchergate have occurred outside of this four year enforcement opportunity, or were indeed carried out prior to the designation of the Conservation Area in 1994. Remediation of lost elements can be encouraged as building owners bring their properties forward for redevelopment, or via grant incentives such as the CAPS scheme should funding become available.

2.5 Article 4 Directives

2.5.1 Article 4 directives offer the opportunity to restrict 'permitted development rights' and retain historic elements (e.g. timber windows), which can be removed where Article 4 directives do not exist. Such directives commonly apply to dwellinghouses, the main beneficiaries of permitted development rights. However, the bulk of residential properties within the Botchergate Conservation Area are already Grade II listed, which offers enhanced levels of protection above and beyond that of an Article 4. This applies to Tait Street, Woodruffe Terrace and St Nicholas Street. Remaining residential areas such as South View terrace have largely already lost the historic detailing which an Article 4 would protect.

2.5.2 The remaining areas within the conservation area are largely retail or other uses which do not enjoy permitted development rights. Much of the incremental loss of architectural elements in these buildings will require planning permission. It is therefore not likely that an Article 4 direction would be of benefit to the Botchergate Conservation Area, unless it is to address the handful of remaining residential properties which retain historic architectural detail such as the sash windows at No 1 Blake Street (fig xx).

2.6 Development Opportunities

2.6.1 A development brief for Botchergate was adopted in 1994. Arising from this came proposals to develop the sites in Area One now occupied by English Gate Plaza and the Ibis hotel development. The former Co-Op site on the west side of the street was redeveloped as the Warner (Now 'Vue') cinema, with the cinema disguising its large bulk very effectively behind the retained facade of the fire-damaged building.

2.6.2 Remaining opportunities include the unimplemented permission for the block between South Henry Street and Rydal Street, although as noted above these buildings could be reinvigorated without demolition.

Christ Church Gardens

2.6.3 The area bounding Christ Church gardens is a further key site. It offers the opportunity to frame the open space with development and active frontage. A residential or mixed use development wrapping around this open space would give new life and purpose to the gardens. While the open space is not within the actual ownership of the City Council, negotiation of frontage access from surrounding plots would significantly raise the attractiveness of the space and make it a safer and more useful space.

2.6.4 An indication of the potential of the site is illustrated below. An increase in residential uses would be a significant boost to the remaining retail on Botchergate, but would call for the rationalisation or relocation of a number of 'bad neighbour' industrial uses in the Lancaster Street area.

12-18 St Nicholas Street

2.6.4 The 1960s block at 12-18 St Nicholas offers a further opportunity site, which if combined with surface parking to the rear and adjacent sites, offers a significant development opportunity. Development here should have regard to neighbouring residential properties, but the width and depth of the site allows for a substantial development footprint that could revive the fortunes of this

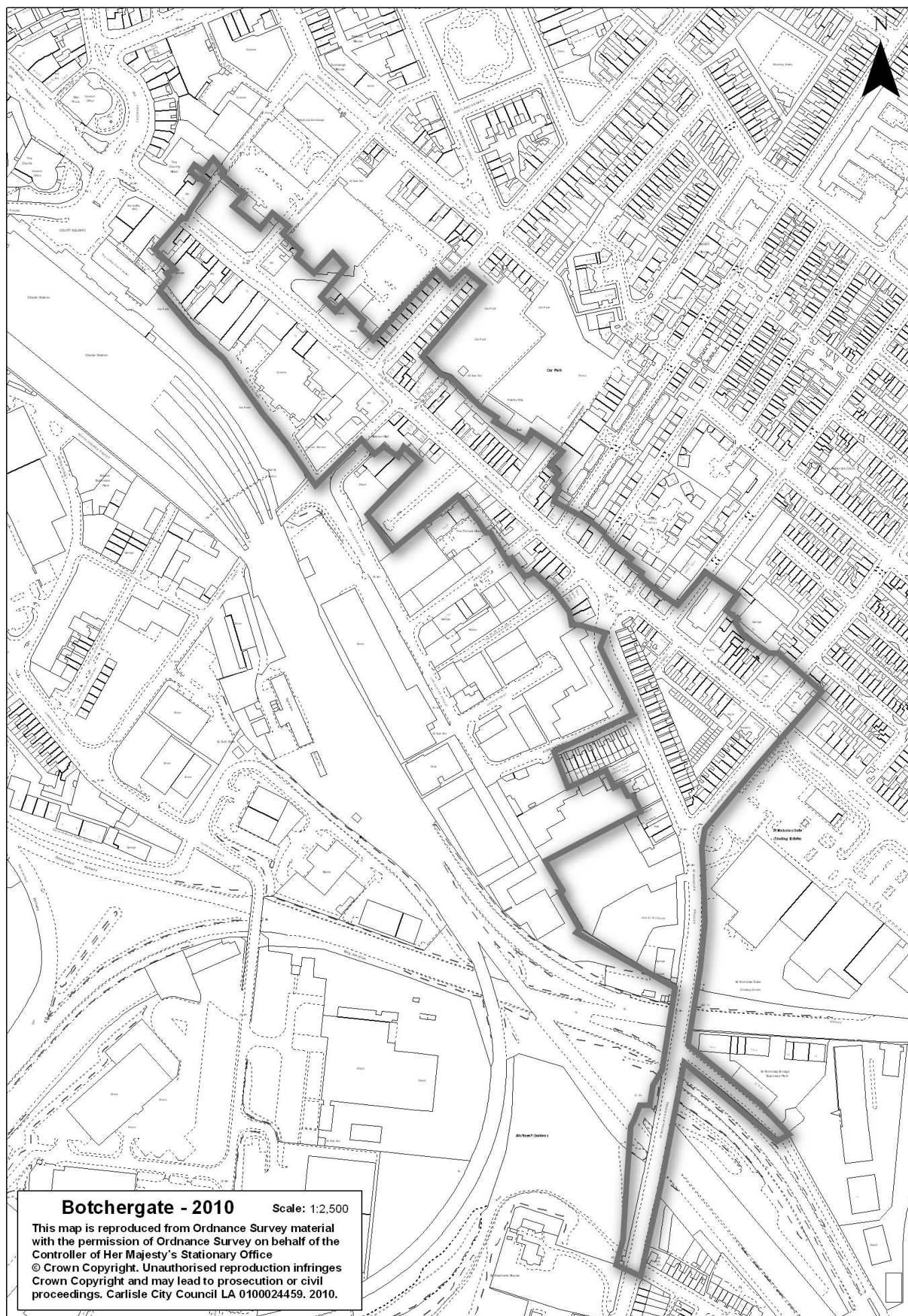
part of the conservation area. A suitable anchor development at this point could serve to draw users southwards and invigorate the currently parlous states of areas two and three.

2.6.5 The area at the junction of St Nicholas Street and the junction of London Road/ Botchergate has the potential for significant public realm improvements while retaining its role as a main traffic artery. Rationalisation of street clutter, expression of pedestrian desire lines and possible pavement expansion and tree planting offer opportunities to improve the area. A potentially inexpensive set of improvements are illustrated below.

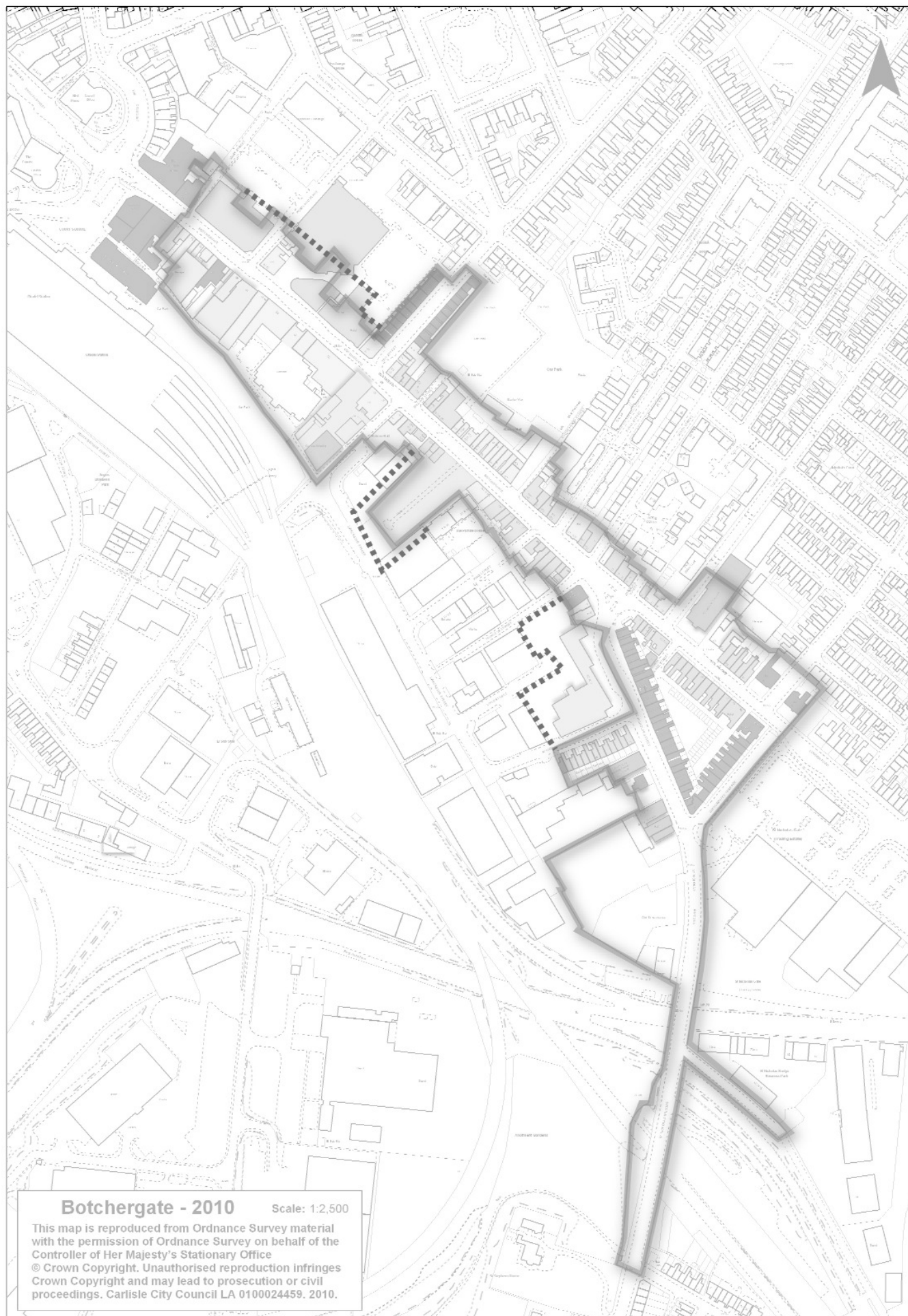
2.6.5 Regarding the conservation areas immediate hinterland, there is further opportunity throughout the Lancaster Street area and its connecting roads. The mixed commercial designation allocated to this area has tended to result in a low intensity landuse dominated by single storey workshops and a large amount of surface parking. This low intensity is far below the critical mass of activity and footfall which a viable Botchergate requires of its hinterland.

2.6.6 It is recommended that an increase in residential-led mixed use development can create this. An Area Action Plan, Development Brief or similar should be drafted for this area in order to direct the changes that are needed to revive the economic strength of Botchergate, and to generate a level of land use intensity appropriate to an inner-urban site.

APPENDIX 2



Existing Boundary



Botchergate - 2010

Scale: 1:2,500

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Proposed alteration (dotted line)

