

3. Area-wide Summary

- 3.1 The information in this report is presented in detail for each Character Area. These Character Area Assessments are also available as separate reports.
- 3.2 The way that the information has been recorded and mapped also allows summary information to be provided at a Study Area wide basis. This provides a useful summary of the whole area.
- 3.3 Any of the information recorded can be presented at this level. This section includes plans illustrating some of the key characteristics: predominant land-uses, building eras, building heights and the Character Assessment (critical, positive, neutral or negative). This last characteristic is the most important as Character Assessment summarises the analysis of each sub-area.
- 3.4 Please see the accompanying Figures: 3.1 to 3.4. These display clear geographical patterns relating to the above information in a simple form. One can see, on Figure 3.1 for instance, how town centre land-uses are surrounded by a circle of residential land and how there is a corridor of leisure use following the River. Figure 3.2 reveals how the dominant eras of development are Georgian and Victorian, with noticeable Victorian redevelopment in the retail centre and Georgian development dominating on the riverside.
- 3.5 Figure 3.3 describes predominant building heights. This is a mixed picture with generally domestic scale properties on the edge, rising to 3 and 4 storey in the retail core. The tallest development is in the Station Gateway area and at the new HQ building. Although, there are many finer grain exceptions to this pattern.
- 3.6 The most significant result of the study is the **Character Assessment** classification, as this summarises the assessment for each sub-area. The Character Area Assessment plan (Figure 3.4) shows a fine grain mix of assessment. Higher value areas can be seen, not surprisingly within the City Walls, especially around the Cross, and at the riverside. However, there are critical and positive sub-areas throughout the Study Area and also negative areas dotted throughout, including within and alongside the City Walls. This reveals that there are areas of positive value throughout the study area that are in need of continuing protection.
- 3.7 Although, as expected, character is largely positive within the walled City the study reveals that there are significant areas of negative character here which may indicate a capacity to accommodate change. There are also larger areas of negative character outside of the walled city, particularly within the Gorse Stacks, Station Gateway and Boughton character areas.
- 3.8 The study has also focused on the key approaches to the City Centre. These are important as they present important first impressions alongside well used routes. The study has revealed a mix in quality in the character of the main approaches. Grosvenor Road and Handbridge are the strongest approaches to the City, extending as far as the Grosvenor Bridge and Old Dee Bridge which mark positive arrival points to the walled City. Hoole Road and Liverpool Road both represent historic routes that are lined with fine townscape buildings but their quality is diminished by development and environments around the inner ring road before their arrival at the City Centre and there is room for improvement here. Boughton is the poorest approach to the City Centre and requires the most enhancement, although this area is not without quality buildings.

3.9 The identification of nearly 300 **Buildings and Structures of Townscape Merit** indicates a wealth of locally important buildings that, while not being of national (and therefore 'listable' significance), contribute significantly to townscape character and which should therefore be specifically protected. These buildings represent a pleasing range of ages, styles and types of structure and exist right across the study area.

3.10 The identification of '**key detractors**' will allow targeted efforts to improve the character of sub-areas. These exist throughout the study area, including within the walled City. There is not a large extent of these sites and buildings but there are a number of significant sites and prominent buildings that could represent good opportunities to accommodate change and improve character within the City.

Summary in numbers

3.11 In total the Characterisation study has surveyed **140** Sub-areas and assessed

- **42** as being of **Critical** character;
- **58** are considered **Positive**;
- **29** are considered **Neutral**; and
- **11** are considered **Negative**.
- **296** Buildings or Structures of Townscape Merit have been identified.

3.12 Full details of each sub-area are provided within the following Character Area Assessments.

Key recommendations

3.13 Conservation, policy-making and development management within the City should consider both buildings (and structures) and areas. Efforts to conserve and enhance **buildings and structures**, and manage development within their settings, should focus on the following hierarchy of quality and significance:

- Grade I listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments and their settings (listed below) and key Grade II* buildings (i.e. the Town Hall and railway station).
- Grade II* listed buildings and their settings
- Grade II listed buildings and their settings
- Buildings and Structures of Townscape Merit identified here
- Other buildings with Article 4 Directions

3.14 These efforts should be informed by the listings for these buildings and by the information on Buildings and Structures of Merit compiled for this study.

Priority Buildings and Structures

3.15 The priority Grade I and II* listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments within the study area comprise the following:

- **The City Walls** and all associated gates and towers, including Northgate, Eastgate, Bridgegate, Watergate, Newgate, Water Tower (Grade I and Schedule Monument)
- **Leche House**, Watergate Street (Grade I)

- **37 and 45 Watergate Street** (Grade I)
- **The Old Crypt**, Watergate Street (Grade I)
- **St. Nicholas' Chapel**, St Werburgh Street (Scheduled Monument and Grade II listed)
- **Booth Mansion and 28-34 Watergate Street** (Grade I)
- **41 Watergate Street and Bishop Lloyds Palace** (Grade I)
- **Three Old Arches**, Bridge Street (Grade I)
- **39 Bridge Street** (Grade I) – remains of 2nd century Roman bath house within the medieval undercroft.
- **Cowper House, Bridge Street** (Grade I)
- **Chester Cathedral**, Northgate Street (Grade I)
- **The Bluebell PH**, Northgate Street (Grade I)
- **The Abbey Gateway**, Northgate Street (Grade I)
- **Little Abbey Gateway**, Northgate Street (Scheduled Monument)
- **Church of St. Peter's, The Cross** (Grade I)
- **The Bear and Billet public house**, Lower Bridge Street (Grade I)
- **The Castle** complex (mostly Grade I and a Scheduled Monument in part)
- **St Mary's Church**, Grade I
- **The Falcon Inn**, Lower Bridge Street (Grade I)
- **St John's Church** (Grade I and medieval ruins are a Scheduled Monument)
- **The Amphitheatre** excavated remains (Grade I) and including the un-excavated half (Scheduled Monument).
- The 2nd century **Roman shrine to Minerva** and Roman quarry, Edgar's Field (both a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I listed structure)
- **The Old Dee Bridge** and adjacent **weir and causeway** (Grade I and Scheduled Monument)
- **Grosvenor Bridge** (Grade I)
- **Chester Town Hall**, Northgate Street (Grade II*)
- **Chester Station**, Station Road (Grade II*)
- **St Mary's Without-the-Walls Church**, Overleigh Road (Grade II*)
- **St Paul's Church**, Boughton (Grade II*)

Priority Areas

- 3.16 The character of **areas** should be protected in the following order of significance:
- 'Critical' rated sub-areas (below)
 - 'Positive' rated sub-areas
 - 'Neutral' rated sub-areas
 - Other sub-areas that fall within conservation areas

3.17 Policy making and development management within these areas should be informed by the information presented in this study, in terms of both the definition of assessment for sub-areas and the description of character for the character areas of which they form part.

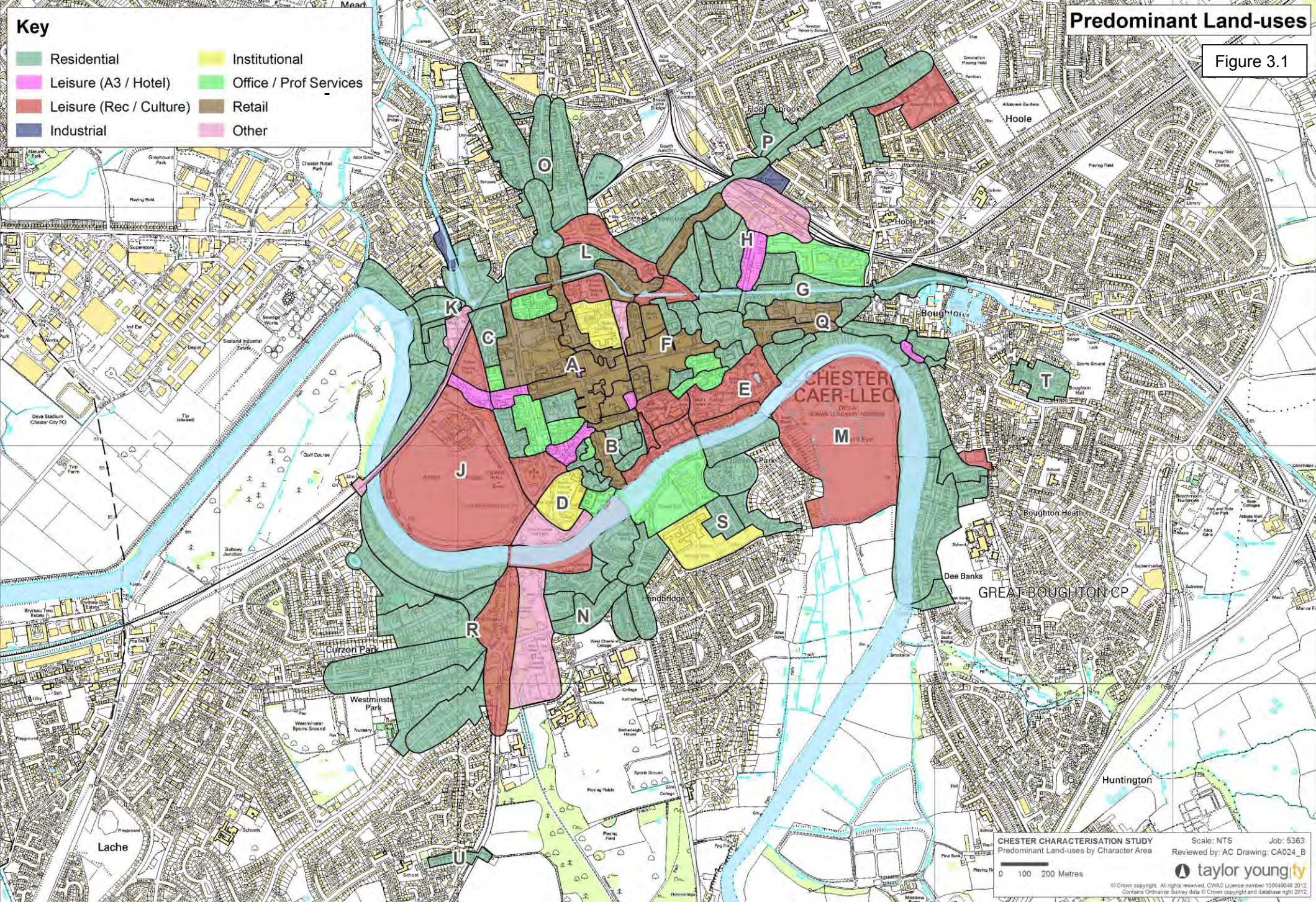
3.18 The priority **Critical** sub-areas within the study area comprise the following. These are listed alongside a brief summary of the critical elements within them, or rationale for their critical assessment. Conservation effort and development management within these sub-areas should pay special attention to these critical elements/reasons.

- **A1. The Cross:** a key, historic street intersection, with a remarkable mix of historic buildings, most of which are listed. Includes The Rows.
- **A3. Cathedral Precinct:** includes the Cathedral, the Dean's Field and Abbey Square, bound by City Walls.
- **A4. St. Werburgh Street:** attractive Vernacular Revival group by Douglas and outstanding arts and crafts terrace by Ayrton opposite the Cathedral.
- **A5. The Northgate:** important historic street, includes the Walls and Northgate.
- **A12. Dean's Field:** significant Roman archaeological site, Scheduled Monument, bounded by City Walls, views to Cathedral.
- **A13. Town Hall:** city centre heart, includes Town Hall and faces Cathedral.
- **A15. King Street:** intact street of Georgian town houses. Also strong Victorian terraces. Water Tower Street faces City Wall.
- **B1. Lower Bridge Street :** a key historic City Centre street with many fine Georgian buildings, includes Bridgegate.
- **B4. Albion Street:** a strong example of planned late Victorian neighbourhood associated with the Drill Hall.
- **C1. Watergate:** an important medieval street lined with fine Georgian buildings, leading to the historic Watergate.
- **C2. Stanley Place:** an excellent example of a complete Georgian residential street in excellent condition.
- **D1. The Castle:** crucial buildings in the history of Chester and nationally.
- **E1. The Groves West:** an attractive riverside setting
- **E2. The Groves East:** strong riverside frontage
- **E3. Grosvenor Park:** a city-wide asset, important in residential development form of the surrounding area
- **E4. Roman Gardens:** an important setting for the Walls and containing valuable Roman relics
- **E5. Amphitheatre:** a site of national historic importance
- **E8. Grosvenor Park Road/Bath Street:** a gateway to the area with fine listed townhouses by John Douglas
- **F1. Foregate Street:** an historic route into the central core via Eastgate, with a number of listed, vernacular style buildings.
- **F4. Priory Place:** considered to be the best example of the work of the Chester Cottage Improvement Company.

- **G3. City Road Bridge to Hoole Lane Lock:** includes the Canal and Grade II former Steam Flour Mill and the Grade II* listed Shot Tower
- **H1. Station Gateway :** a strong planned townscape set-piece and arrival point at the City comprising the station, Queen's Hotel and Town Crier PH.
- **J1. The Racecourse:** a major destination with a long and interesting history.
- **J2. Watergate Square/New Crane Street:** gateway to the Racecourse and setting to the Watergate.
- **J3. City Walls Road:** a pleasant street abutting the City walls and providing attractive views towards Watergate and across Queen's Park.
- **K5. Water Tower Gardens:** an attractive area of open space and setting for the Water Tower and City Walls
- **M3. Sandy Lane:** excellent series of riverside villas, visible across the River from Earls Eye Meadows.
- **M4. Curzon Park Riverside:** complete example of fine riverside villas in a variety of architectural styles, visible from across the River on the Roodee.
- **M6. Edgar's Field:** includes mix of simple Victorian and Georgian properties and the historically critical Minerva shrine, with valuable views across the riverside.
- **M7. Old Dee Bridge:** historically significant bridge and weir (Grade I listed an Scheduled Monument) and fine views across the River to the walled City.
- **M8. Lower Park Road:** a series of fine riverside villas contributing to character on both sides of the River; also benefits from the landmark Queen's Park Bridge and riverside views.
- **M9. Earls Eye Meadows:** a key open space in the urban form of the City, offers important views to, from and across it and the Riverside.
- **M12. Dee Banks:** Elevated views from Victorian riverside villas with gardens separated by the road.
- **M13. Walmoor House:** Good Edwardian housing, dominated by the significant Walmoor House and its grounds.
- **N1. Overleigh Road:** the historic village centre of Handbridge, includes St Mary's Church and several important buildings in a well preserved street form.
- **N2. Eaton Road:** a series of adjacent buildings of townscape value, clearly showcasing several different historical architectural styles, provides a very rich townscape setting.
- **P3. Ashby Place:** a well preserved and secluded enclave of early and mid 19th century, previously rural cottages and villas.
- **P6. Derby Place:** an excellent example of a Georgian-style (early Victorian) street.
- **Q4. Beaconsfield Street:** well preserved Victorian street.
- **Q8. The Mount:** important historic site with strong surviving townscape.
- **R2. Grosvenor Road:** key approach to Grosvenor Bridge and the Walled City.
- **R3. Overleigh Road Cemetery:** important historical use and part of the open space approach corridor from the south.

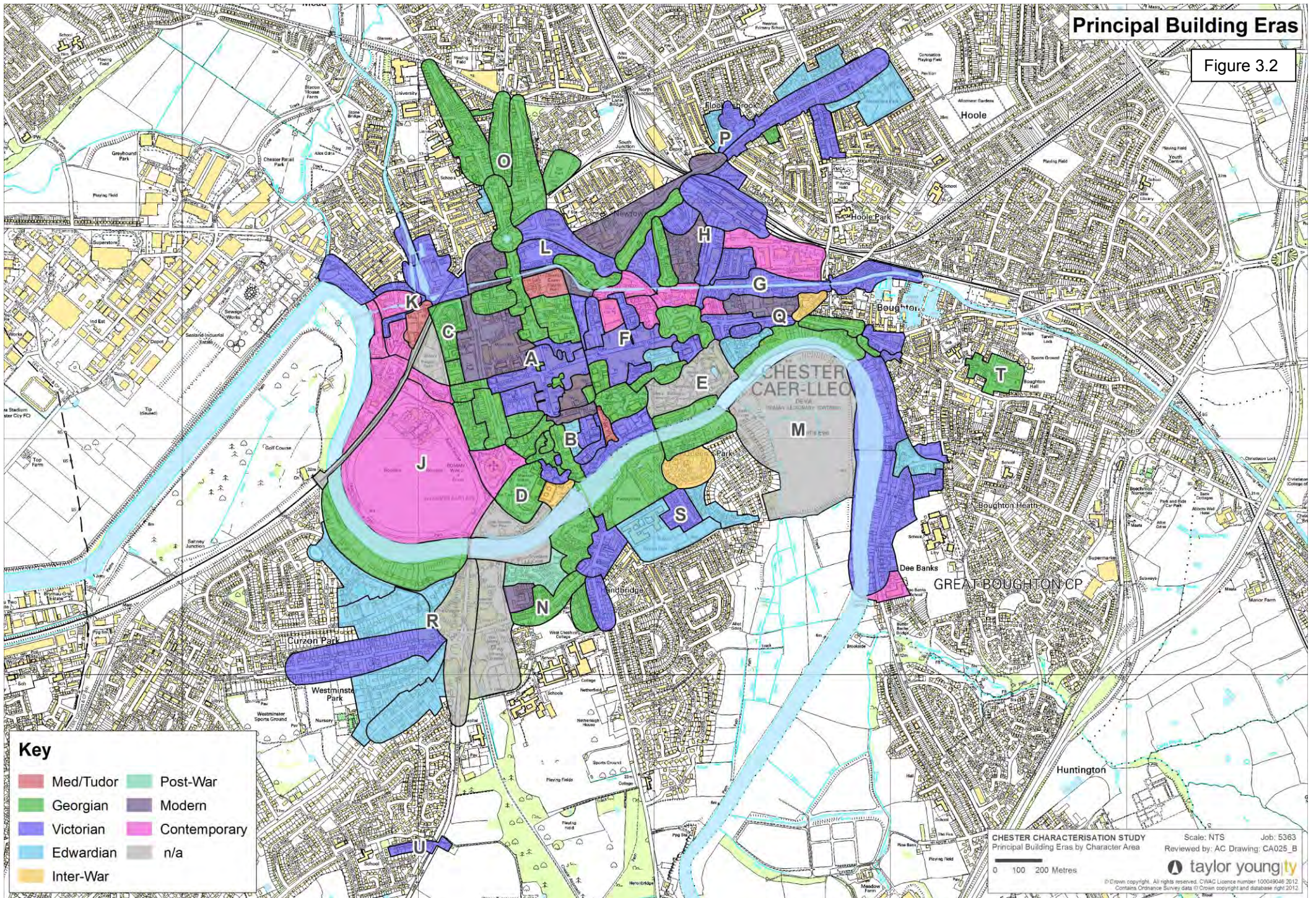
Predominant Land-uses

Figure 3.1



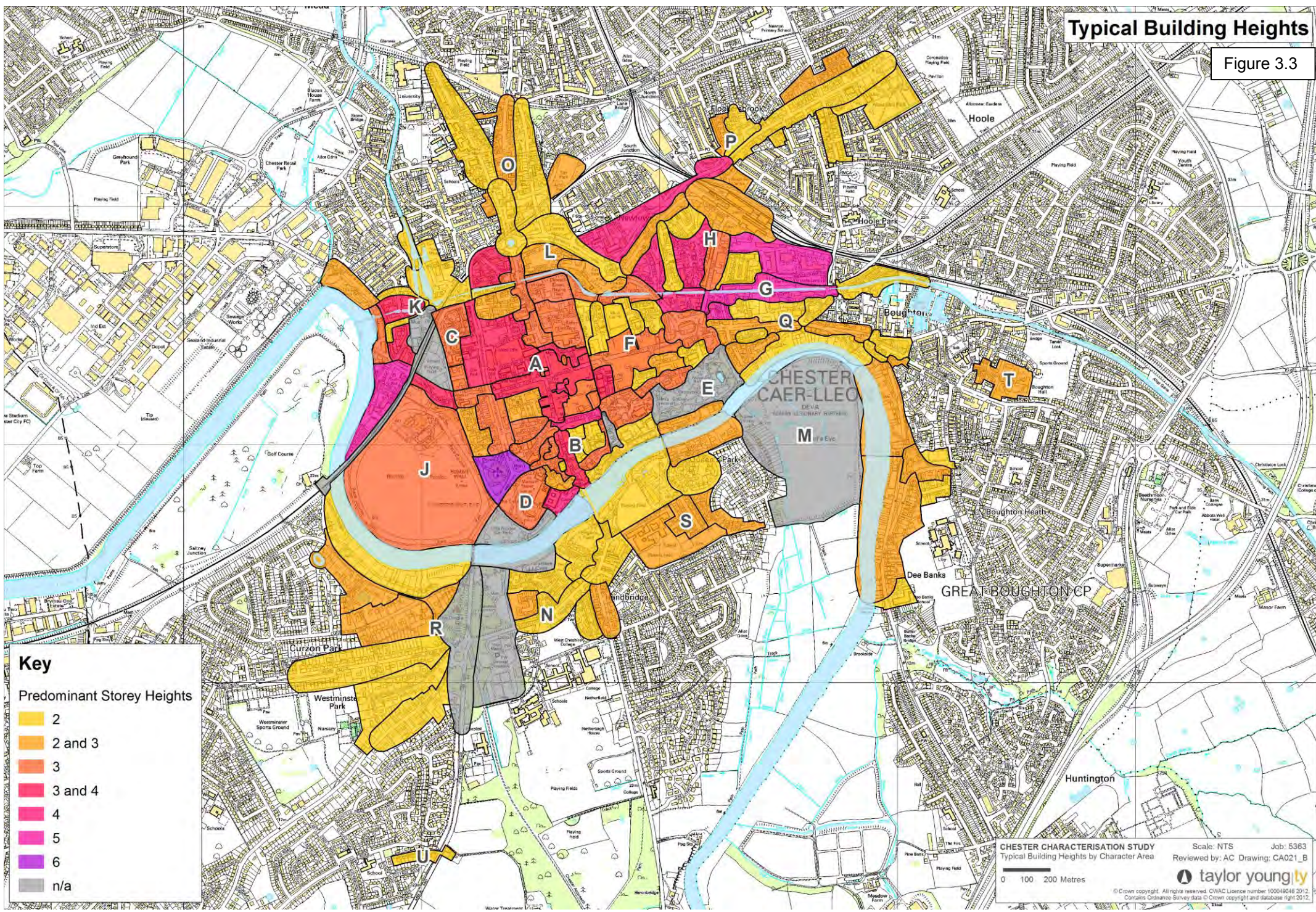
Principal Building Eras

Figure 3.2



Typical Building Heights

Figure 3.3

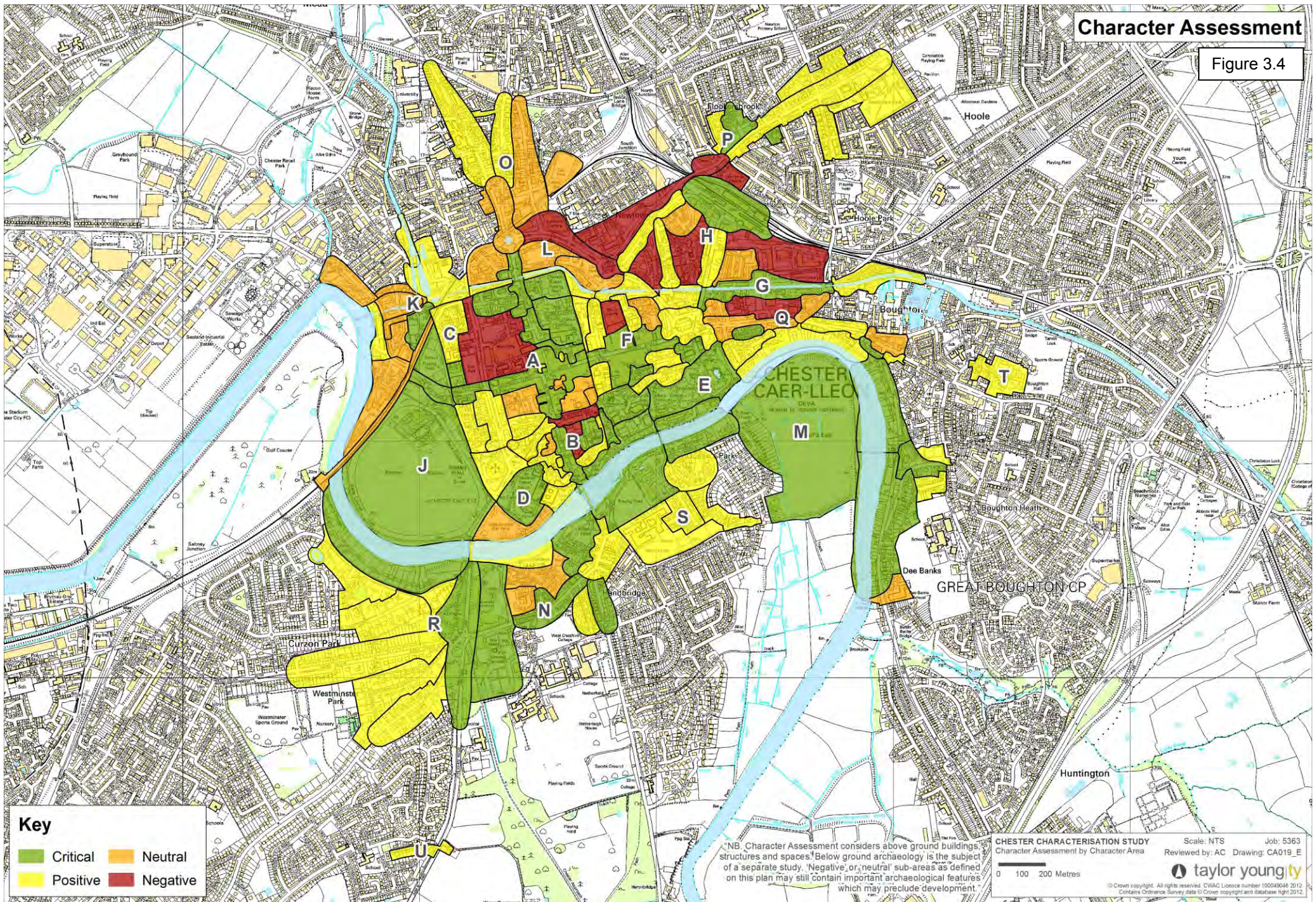


Key

Predominant Storey Heights

- 2
- 2 and 3
- 3
- 3 and 4
- 4
- 5
- 6
- n/a

Figure 3.4



Key

 Critical	 Neutral
 Positive	 Negative

'NB. Character Assessment considers above ground buildings, structures and spaces.' Below ground archaeology is the subject of a separate study. 'Negative or neutral' sub-areas as defined on this plan may still contain important archaeological features which may preclude development.'

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Character Assessment by Character Area

Scale: NTS Job: 5363
Reviewed by: AC Drawing: CA019_E

0 100 200 Metres

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