

5.7 P. Hoole Road

Character Area Assessment

Location

This character area is located to the north of the study area, following the Hoole Road/Hoole Way corridor into the City from the north. It stretches for over one and a half kilometres, extending from St Oswalds Way in the south to Canadian Avenue in the North, crossing the railway line at Brook Street Bridge. This is the main approach into the City from the north-east, and, crucially, from the M53 motorway.

Sub-Areas

The area has been divided into three sub-areas:

- **P1. Hoole Road** – from Lightfoot Street in the south to Canadian Avenue in the north
- **P2. Hoole Way** – the Hoole Way corridor between St Oswalds Way to Lightfoot Street, including the St Anne Street housing estate
- **P3. Ashby Place** – equating broadly with the Flookersbrook conservation area, but excluding Old Hall Gardens.
- **P4. Flookersbrook** - housing overlooking the brook plus the adjacent part of Halkyn Road.
- **P5. Shavington Avenue/Kilmorey Park** - two streets north of Hoole Road.

- **P6. Derby Place** - a small street to the south of Hoole Road
- **P7. Hamilton Street** - extending south from Hoole Road
- **P8. Alexandra Park** - the park behind the Hoole Road frontage
- **P9. Former Station Goods Dept** - between Lightfoot Street and the railway



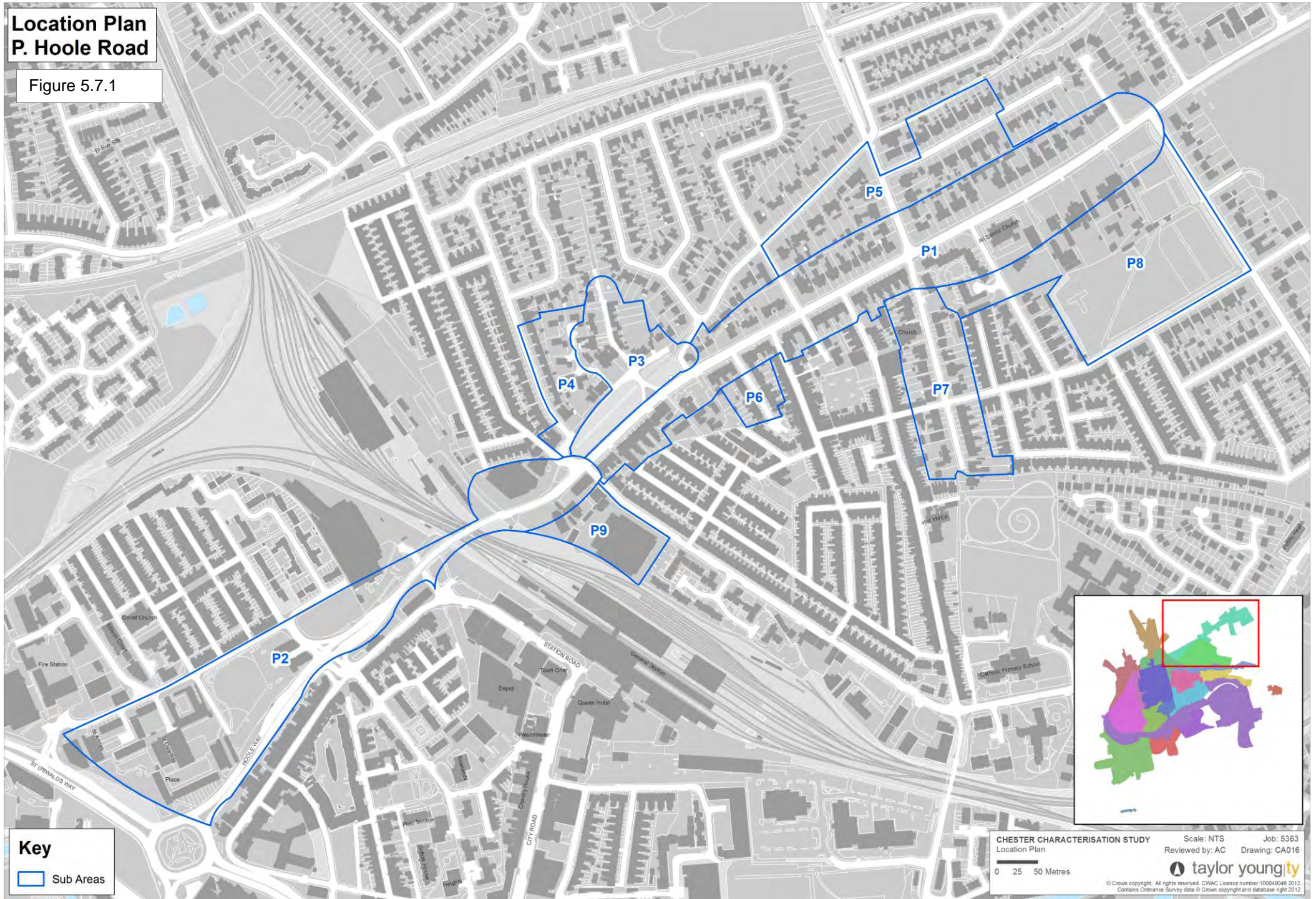
Hoole Road (P1)



Ashby Place (P3)

Location Plan P. Hoole Road

Figure 5.7.1



Key
Sub Areas

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Location Plan
Scale: NTS
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Historical Development

Up until the 18th Century, the main route into the City from the north was via Newton Hollows – an ancient route and an example of a medieval hollow way (a road or path which over time has fallen significantly lower than the land on either side of it). The ancient route still exists as a sunken pathway connected with Mannings Lane before the construction of the now disused railway. Originally a Roman Road, Netwon Hollows was later used as a main route for people, cattle and herds of sheep and may have been formed by the Flookersbrook which flows underground roughly along the course of the track and only surfaces briefly between Ashby Place and Halkyn Road. Flookersbrook is where the cattle were rested and watered on the way into the market in the city centre.

The ancient village of Hoole dates back to at least 1119, when it was first recorded in the records of the Chartulary of the Abbey of St. Werburgh. Hoole lies on the historic Newton Hollows route. The name "Hoole" is thought to mean 'at the Hollows' (or hole) and most likely refers to the 'hollow way' formed by the road. Hoole Road continued to be used as a major route into the centre, with its sunken topography at Hoole making it infamous in medieval times as a place where bandits lay in wait to ambush travellers [Lucian the Monk, c.1200]. These fears were perhaps grounded by the fact that Hoole Heath had then been granted by the Earl's of Chester as a sanctuary for criminals. Newton Hollows was also feared haunted by hell hounds at this time.

Ashby Place represents the rural housing that once stood in this area surrounded by fields. This has survived but is now surrounded by later development which has changed its contextual setting. Infill development of large detached houses later took place around its edges.

In the 19th century, Hoole Road, which followed the alignment of the historic Newton Hollows route, became lined with early Victorian grand terraces and semi-detached houses. Samuel Lewis, in 1848, noted:

"HOOLE, a township... containing 294 inhabitants... Various plots of land here, belonging to the Rev. Mr. Hamilton, of Hoole Lodge, and others, have been laid out for building purposes, such as the erection of villas, &c., by Mr. Rampling, architect, of Liverpool; and some of the plots have been sold at the rate of 5s. the square yard, or £1210 per acre; while, before the introduction of railways, the price was not more than about £150 an acre."



Hoole Road (1900s)

In the later 19th century Chester's suburbs were extended into Hoole, north-east of Chester General railway station and outside the city boundary. There had already been some development of villas and smaller houses north of Hoole Road in Flookersbrook, but the arrival of the railway in 1840 produced a Victorian suburb of considerable diversity and with an ambiguous relationship to the city as a whole. Development began in the 1850s, and from a nucleus around Faulkner Street, areas of relatively modest terraced housing spread south-westwards in the late 19th century. Higher quality development extended in the opposite

direction, especially after the Flookersbrook Improvement Act of 1876. Housing in that area catered both for Chester's own middle classes and for those travelling by train to work elsewhere.

Hoole Road now had an identity which related more to the adjacent City of Chester rather than the small village of Hoole through which it passed. The houses became popular with Chester's emerging middle class and commuters. This development along the historic route continued with the gradual infill of plots of land between the larger houses. The village of Hoole, by then represented by an independent urban district council, formally became incorporated into the City of Chester in 1954, although by then it had long ceased to be an independent settlement, existing as it does today as a district of Chester. The built fabric from the 19th century, however, has remained largely intact with little alteration to the built form along these routes. Hoole Road has now become a destination for hotels and guesthouses.

Closer to the City Centre (and the station and surrounding industries), change has been more dramatic. In the early 1900s this became the location for a densely developed enclave of Victorian terraced workers' housing which still exists today to the north of St Anne Street.

The arrival of the railway first fractured the historic street pattern, notably at Hoole Road Bridge, where the Hoole Road/Brook Street connection was visually severed, changing the setting of surrounding buildings and environments. Greater changes occurred with the construction of the inner ring road, which ended the continuous alignment of Hoole Road into the City Centre by fracturing the link to Brook Street and creating the parallel Hoole Way at the southern end. These changes have altered the role and nature of Hoole Road, and of Hoole itself, but this history is still evident within the character of the area today.



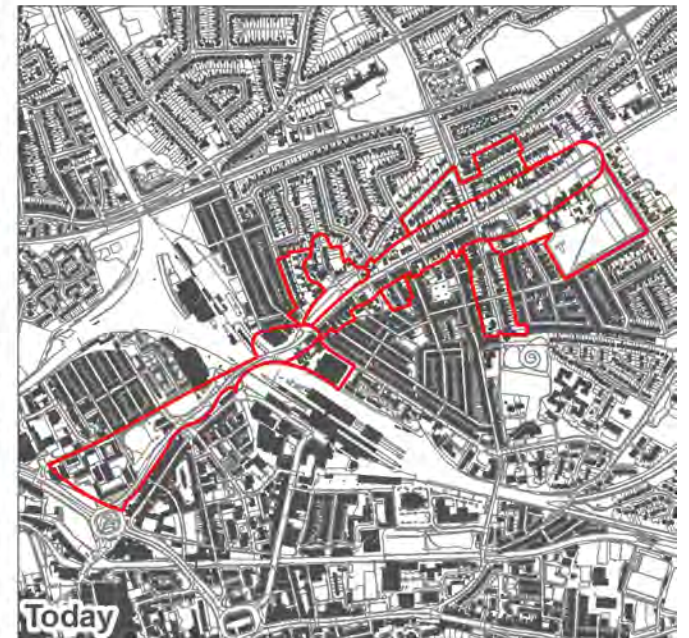
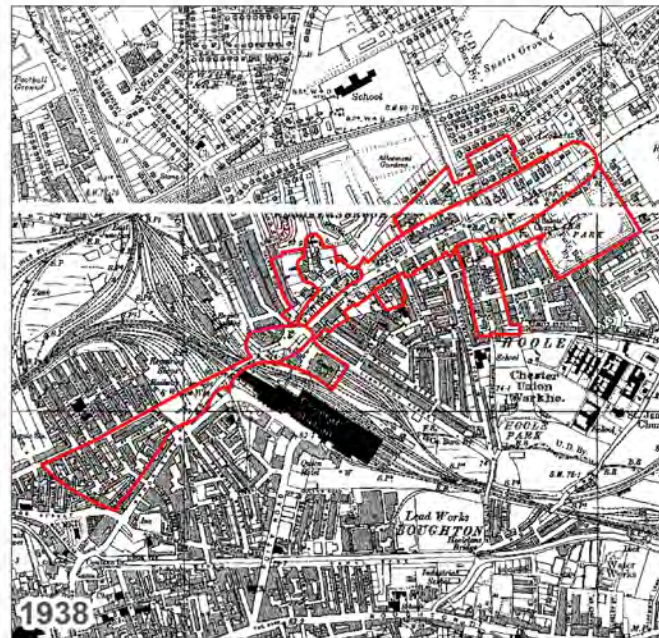
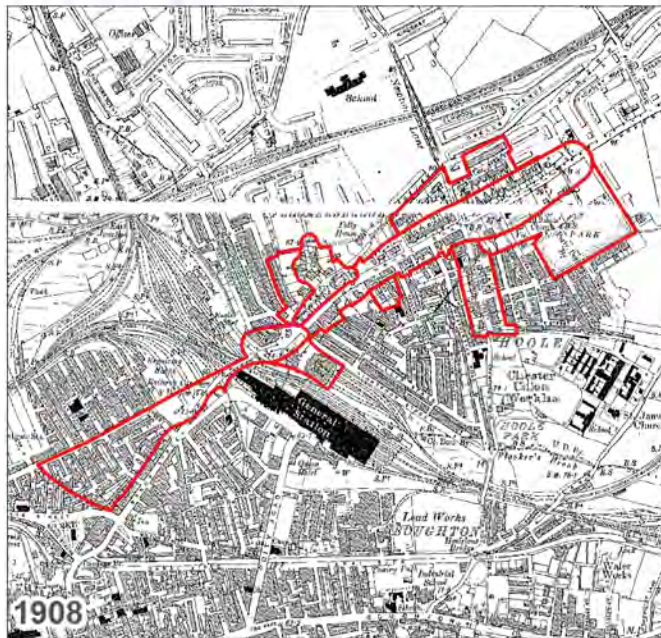
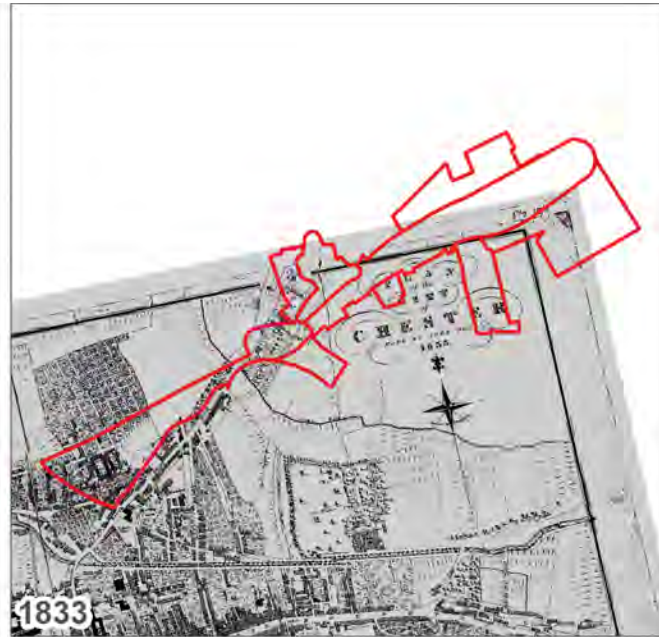
Left: Hoole Road/Brook Street junction in the 1960s, prior to construction of the ring road (with Coal Exchange in the foreground).



Hamilton Street, Hoole, (late 19th century)

Historical Development P. Hoole Road

Figure 5.7.2



Land-uses

The principal land-use within this character area is residential. This includes a mix of both privately owned properties together with a significant proportion of social housing, concentrated around St Anne's Street. A new development of one and two bedroom apartments and houses has recently been completed at Black Diamond Street and a new office headquarters building is planned (St. Anne's House). At St James Street, there are a couple of fast food outlets and some small scale retail use. Hoole Road supports a large number of hotels and guesthouses, interspersed with private housing. Commercial uses are concentrated primarily along the Southern side of Hoole Road, including a number of public houses/restaurants and several banks.

Urban Form

The urban form varies greatly within this character area, reflecting the different age and style of properties within it.

At Hoole Way/ St Anne Street (sub-area P2), the urban form is typical of post-war social housing projects. The estate comprises three ten-storey apartment blocks and nine low-rise blocks arranged around a series of landscaped courtyards.

The urban form lacks coherence. Landscaped areas are well managed and contain a number of mature trees, providing a natural setting which softens the impact of the brutalist architecture. However, there is no clear hierarchy to the spaces or routes within the site, making legibility difficult. Parking space is provided in the form of large communal parking areas and secure garages which integrate poorly with the housing.

The junction of Hoole Way/Brook Street/Black Diamond Street is a visually confusing area of highway, hard surfacing, railings and signage which provides a poor environment at the entrance to the city.



Sub-area P2

Travelling north along Hoole Way, the road rises over the railway at Brook Street Bridge, providing panoramic views of the City. The bridge also provides the first view of the Cathedral when approaching the City from the north. The three tower blocks at St Anne Street feature prominently on the skyline, dwarfing the Cathedral. The experience for pedestrians is poor, particularly crossing the bridge itself. The pavement narrows and the combination of the high sides of the bridge on one side and fast moving traffic on the other create an unpleasant experience of being 'hemmed in'.

Hoole Road has a well defined built form, with properties on both sides following a uniform building line for most of its length. Properties on both sides of the street are set back from the pavements edge behind low brick or sandstone walls. The street space is quite wide giving the street a spacious quality despite its strong enclosure. As one would expect, traffic is heavy along this route but the width of the street and

mature tree cover helps to soften the impact and the experience for pedestrians is generally pleasant. Each side of Hoole Road has a distinct urban form resulting from the style of the properties. On the northern side, properties are mostly semi-detached villas, a mix of two and three storeys in height, with variety provided by several large detached buildings set in wide plots. Properties on the southern side are mostly terraced and are more modest in scale (mainly two stories).



View of the Spire of All Saints Church from Hoole Road

At the junction with Faulkner Street, the character of the street changes as it opens out to reveal an inviting view of Hoole Village.

All Saint's Church (Grade II, 1867) is a local landmark, its spire visible from long distances along Hoole Road. The character of Hoole Road changes within the vicinity of the Church. There is a stronger green edge to the street and properties on the southern side become larger and are set further back.



Hoole Village

To the north of Hoole Road housing is generally later and more planned in form, with distinct regular styles evident. The general feel here is more suburban in nature, with more extensive vegetation and properties set back from back of pavement. To the south of Hoole Road properties are generally older and more piecemeal and varied in form, although there are some strong Georgian and early Victorian groups of properties on Derby Place and Hamilton Street.

Sub-area P2 is a self contained area with a strong distinct character derived mainly from the green area which separates it from Hoole Road, creating a quieter and more secluded setting. It contains a number of mature trees and has a strong natural setting which softens the impact of traffic along Hoole Road. There is a deflected view of an impressive pair of semi-detached Villas at the entrance into Ashby Place.

This area derives much of its character from the compact row of cottages along its eastern side which are set to back of pavement and contain the street well. Properties on the opposite side of the street are larger (a pair

of semi-detached Villas and terrace of three houses), and are set well back within large gardens with front boundary walls.

The petrol station on the opposite side of Hoole Road is clearly visible from within Ashby Place and detracts from the quality and setting of the Conservation area.



View into Ashby Place



View out of Ashby Place

Urban Form P. Hoole Road

Figure 5.7.3



Key
Sub Areas

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Figure Ground – P. Hoole Road
Scale: NTS Job: 5363
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Townscape Character

Each side of Hoole Road has a distinct townscape character resulting from the type of buildings, their age and the material used. The semi-detached villas on the northern side date from the late 19th century and are built from red brick. Gable fronts and double height bay windows are a defining feature. Roofing is mainly slate. Boundary walls are typically sandstone with heavy landscaping behind.



North side of Hoole Road

Buildings on the southern side are older, dating from the mid 19th century. They are mainly terraces built from brown brick (although many are now painted) and have traditional pitched roofs. Boundary treatment is more varied with some properties having open fronts. Boundary walls, where they do exist, are typically brick and the landscaping is more sparse.



South side of Hoole Road

Gosforth Place to the north of Hamilton Street is a modern residential infill development, built from red brick and set within its own grounds. It marks a shift in the townscape character along this section of Hoole Road towards larger properties set further back within landscaped grounds.

The majority of properties at Ashby Place are early and mid 19th century, with the exceptions of Nos. 6 and 7 which are late 19th century. The cottages along the eastern side have a rural character, having been washed over by expansion of the City. Several have original multi-pane windows and door canopies. The villas opposite are in vernacular style with black and white timber detail and gable fronts. Most of the buildings within and around Ashby Place have a white rendered or painted finish which is a strong visual characteristic of the conservation area. Cobbled paving and granite wheelers at Ashby Place are a rare survivor and add greatly to the character of the street.

Housing to the north of Hoole Road - on Shavington Avenue, Kilmorey Park and Halkyn Road, is predominantly Edwardian and late Victorian. This is planned development with several consistent styles giving uniformity to individual streets and sections of streets. Houses are generally large terraces or semi-detached, set back from the road behind low walls. This would have been fairly standard middle class housing developed in volume after the houses on Hoole Road itself were built.



Kilmorey Park

To the south of Hoole Road - on Hamilton Street and Derby Place, housing is older, generally Georgian or early/mid Victorian though with later Edwardian infill. Styles are more mixed here, particularly on Hamilton Street, reflecting development that was more piecemeal over a longer period of time. On Hamilton Place houses are fairly large, mostly semi-detached and set back from the building line behind low walls and hedges.



Hamilton Street

Landscape Character

Landscape plays an important role in defining the character of this area.

Alexandra Park is a well used and well maintained local park with several sports facilities. It also provides an attractive setting for properties outside the Conservation Area on Canadian Avenue and Panton Road. The park is largely hidden from Hoole Road behind the frontage properties which themselves sit in large plots.

As noted above, The Green at Flookersbrook is an important area of open space and a defining feature of the conservation area. A Victorian open brick drain runs through its centre, a reminder of the brook that once ran through the area. At its northern end, there is a sandstone war memorial and seating area which provides an interesting feature. The Flookersbrook open space provides a very pleasant for the residential properties to the north, for which it also provides some privacy, and an attractive pedestrian route.



Flookersbrook

There are a number of mature trees along Hoole Road, particularly along its western side, which are crucial to the quality of the environment in this area and the amenity of residents living along this busy road.

There is also an area of open space located to the north of Lyon Street in sub-area P2. This is a formal recreational area with play equipment and sports pitches. It acts as a green buffer, separating the residential area north of St Anne Street from Hoole Way.

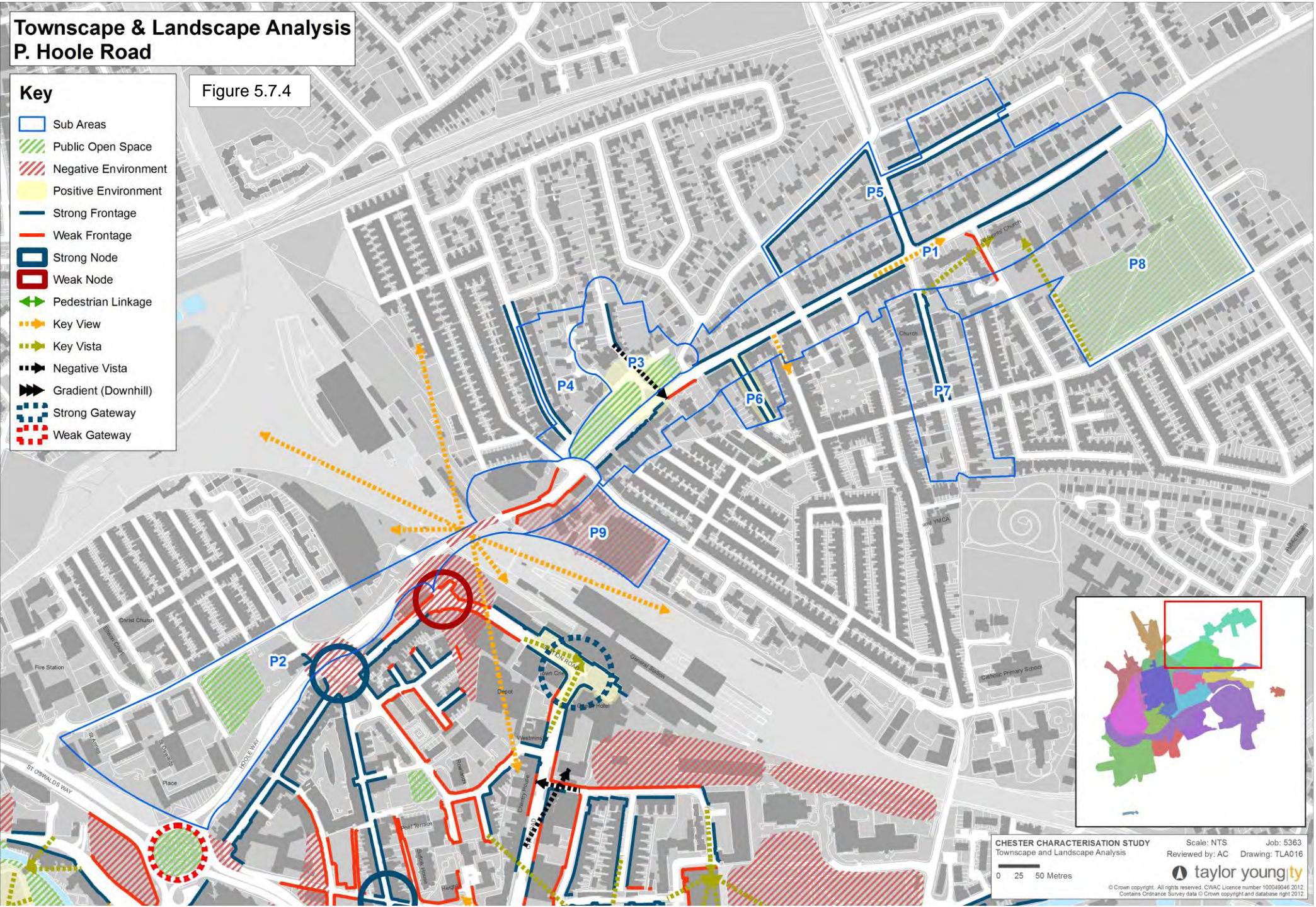
P. Hoole Road: Typical Materials and Details



Townscape & Landscape Analysis P. Hoole Road

Figure 5.7.4

- Key**
- Sub Areas
 - Public Open Space
 - Negative Environment
 - Positive Environment
 - Strong Frontage
 - Weak Frontage
 - Strong Node
 - Weak Node
 - ↔ Pedestrian Linkage
 - Key View
 - Key Vista
 - Negative Vista
 - ↘ Gradient (Downhill)
 - Strong Gateway
 - Weak Gateway



Designated Heritage Assets

This character area falls within several separate conservation areas. Most of the area falls within Hoole Road conservation area. Sub-areas P3 and P4 lie within the Flookersbrook conservation area. Sub-area P9 (the former Station Goods Depot) lies within the City Centre conservation area. Sub-area P2 (Hoole Way) does not fall within any designated conservation area.

This character area contains three listed buildings all of which are located along the south side of Hoole Road. They are:

- **All Saints Church** (Grade II, 1867). The gates and churchyard wall are also separately listed.



- **51 & 53 Hoole Road** (Grade II, 1850) – pair of late Georgian-style suburban houses.



- **37 Hoole Road** (Grade II, 1840) – part of a pair of Georgian townhouses (with no.1 Derby Place).



- **Poplar House, Flookersbrook** (Grade II) - large Georgian house



- **3-5 Derby Place** (Grade II, 1850s) - Georgian-style houses
- **7-11 Derby Place** (Grade II, 1850s) - Georgian-style houses
- **4-6 Derby Place** (Grade II, 1850s) - Georgian-style house



7-11 Derby Place

- **13-29 Hamilton Street** (four listings - all Grade II, mid-19th century) - Georgian-style houses



- **41-43 Hamilton Street** (c1850, Grade II) -Victorian large semi-detached pair with stone dressings.



Buildings and Structures of Townscape Merit

28 Buildings of Townscape Merit have been identified.

- **P1a. 55-65 Hoole Road** – an early Victorian, Georgian-style row, with sash windows, overhanging eaves, decorative door frame and fanlight.



- **P1b. Lodge Bar 8-10 Hoole Road** - large Victorian detached property (now public house), with stone surround windows, bargeboards to gable fronts and string course.



- **P1c. 17-27 Hoole Road** – a terrace of Edwardian properties with black and white detailing, dormers and corbels at eaves level.



- **P1d. 39-47 Hoole Road** – a Georgian style row of terraces with white coping band and Flemish bond brickwork. Includes birthplace of Leonard Cheshire (now BaBa guesthouse).



- **P1e. 67-69 Hoole Road** – a pair of early Victorian semis, with stone surround windows, white coping band and front bays.



- **P2a. The Old George (Richer Sounds), St. James St** – a Victorian property with dormers, heavy frieze below roofline, sash windows, and decorative timber.



- **P1g. 34 Hoole Road** – a detached property with black and white detailing on gable and cupola with spire



- **P3a. Flookersbrook Hall** – a Vernacular Revival style Victorian property, with strong fenestration, glazed porch and decorative timberwork



- **P3b. Ashby House** – a Vernacular Revival style property with white rendered finish and front gables.



- **P3e. Pair of Cottages**, Ashby Place – an attractive pair of cottages with paned windows, front dormers and door canopies.



- **P3d. The Gables**, Ashby Place – a Victorian property with strong character overlooking The Green.



- **P3f. White Cottage**, Ashby Place – a simple but attractive cottage with paned windows and door canopy.



- **P3h. Row of cottages**, Ashby Place – a simple row of terraces which contribute strongly to the character of Ashby Place.



- **P3i. 2-4 Ashby Place** – a row of three properties with black and white detailing and projecting gable.



- **P3j. 6-7 Ashby Place** – a pair of late 19th century semi detached properties with black and white detailing and tall chimney stacks.



- **P3k. Kilmorey Lodge** (Hoole Road/Kilmorey Park Avenue) – well detailed building on prominent corner, with integral stone boundary wall.



- **P4a. Spring Lodge, Flookersbrook** - well detailed, large vernacular revival house in excellent condition.



- **P5a. 1-23 Shavington Avenue** - Edwardian semi-detached houses with timber-facing detail. Included for group value.



- **P4b. 6-16 Halkyn Road** - Edwardian middle-class housing, included for group value.



- **P5b. Leven Grove/Kilmorey, Kilmorey Park Road** - Victorian semi-detached pair with good detailing, well preserved.



- **P6a. 8-10 Derby Place** - interesting Edwardian terrace.



- **P7a. 9-11 Hamilton Street** - Victorian house with good features preserved.



- **P7b. Methodist Church, Hamilton Street** - small but well detailed church in Gothic Revival style.



- **P7c. 22-40 Hamilton Street** - long Edwardian terrace of townhouses with distinctive period detailing.



- **P7e. 10-12 Hamilton Street** - neo-Gothic Victorian house.



- **P7f. 8 Hamilton Street** - Italianate style, whitewashed house in good condition.



- **P8a. The Vicarage, Vicarage Road** - the vicarage to the adjacent All Saint's Church, in complimentary Gothic Revival style.



- **P9a. Former Station Goods Depot** – refurbished as enterprise space for small business, recently suffered severe damage due to fire.



Key Detractors

The three towers of St Anne's, St Oswald's and St George's feature prominently on the skyline when approaching the City from the north and compromise the setting of the Cathedral.



The three tower blocks of St Anne's, St Oswald's & St George's

The petrol station on Hoole Road has also been identified as a detractor as it affects views out of the conservation area from Ashby Place.

The area either side of Hoole Road immediately east of the bridge over the railway line is also included as a key detractor. This area, comprising a car dealership, a single storey terrace of shops and visible elements of the industrial uses behind the wall, represents a rather low grade environment at what should be the gateway to Hoole.

Smaller scale detractors include a yard and chiller unit on Derby Place, serving an adjacent retail property on Faulkner Street. This is exposed to the street and detracts from the historic buildings on Derby Place. The local environment would be improved if the external appearance of this

unit was improved and the yard given a boundary treatment to the street.










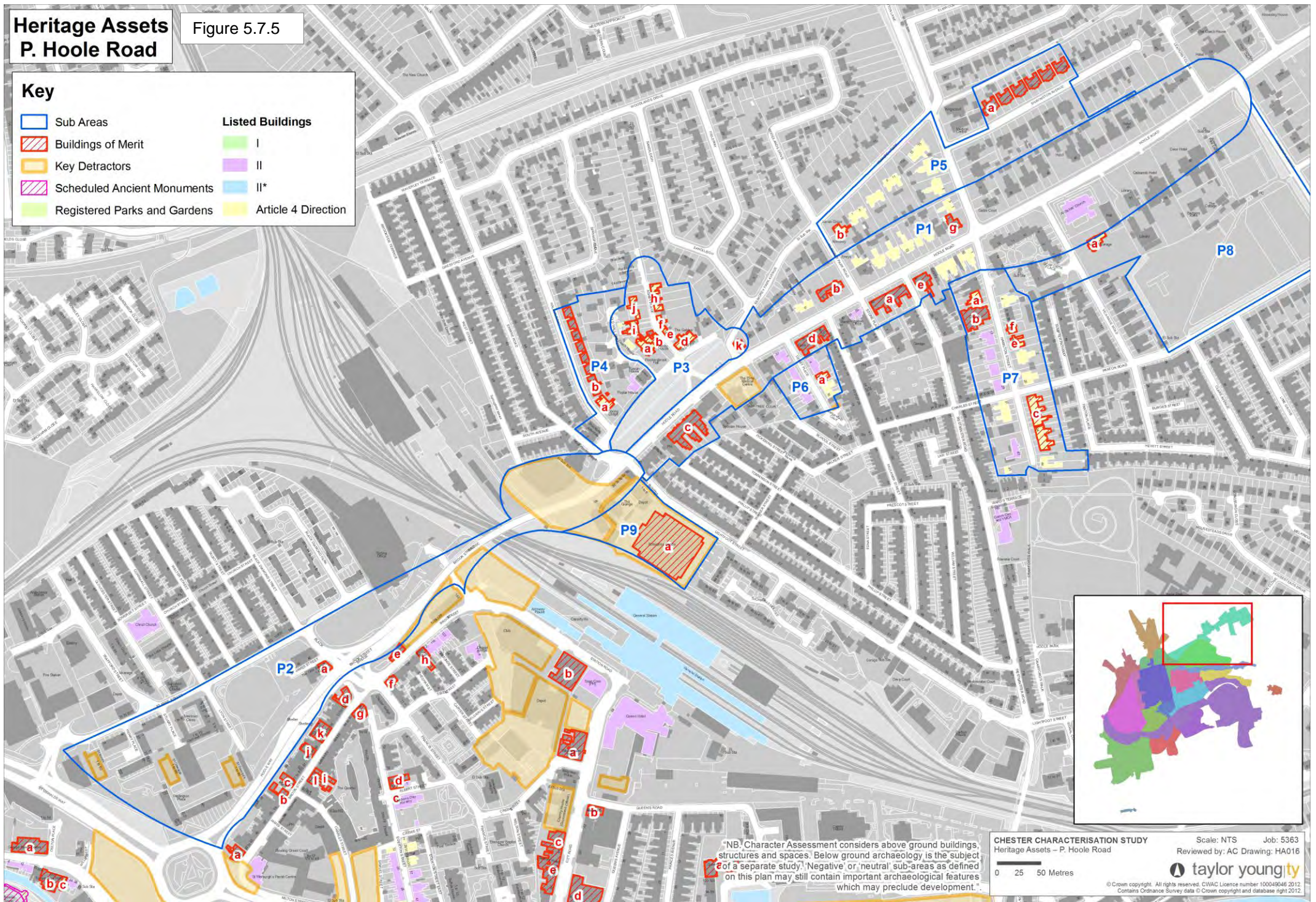
Chiller unit on Derby Place

Heritage Assets P. Hoole Road

Figure 5.7.5

Key

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|---------------------|
|  | Sub Areas |  | Listed Buildings |
|  | Buildings of Merit |  | I |
|  | Key Detractors |  | II |
|  | Scheduled Ancient Monuments |  | II* |
|  | Registered Parks and Gardens |  | Article 4 Direction |



‘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.’

Summary: Character Assessment

To summarise, this area can be divided into two halves of very distinct character. The first half, sub-area P2, stretching from the Hoole Way to Lightfoot Street, is of little heritage significance, consisting of a 1960s social housing estate. Beyond Lightfoot Street, the area develops a much stronger character in terms of both its townscape qualities and the quality of individual buildings, which date primarily from the nineteenth century and are built in Regency and early Victorian styles. The character of Hoole Road is defined by its villas and terraces and the continuity and enclosure these provide to the street scene. Ashby Place has a different character, deriving mainly from its rural history and intimate and secluded setting and relationship with The Green. Derby Place and Hamilton Street also provide strong, distinct areas of character.

Character Assessment is shown on Figure 5.7.6 and explained below:

- **P1. Hoole Road: Positive** – a key route into the City with a well defined built form of townscape interest.
- **P2. Hoole Way: Negative** – a 1960s social housing estate with three tower blocks that dominate the skyline.
- **P3. Ashby Place: Critical** – a well preserved and secluded enclave of early and mid 19th century cottages and villas.
- **P4. Flookersbrook: Positive** - attractive open space setting and planned Edwardian housing in good order on Halkyn Road.
- **P5. Shavington Avenue/Kilmorey Park: Positive** - Pleasant, suburban residential streets with consistent housing styles.
- **P6. Derby Place: Critical** - an excellent example of a Georgian-style (early Victorian) street.

- **P7. Hamilton Street: Positive** - interesting street with a mix of historic buildings.
- **P8. Alexandra Park: Positive** - The attractive park provides good amenity and setting.
- **P9. Former Station Goods Depot: Negative** - an important building sadly at risk and in poor appearance after fire. The associated yard is also unsightly.

Character Statement

“An important and historic route into the City Centre from the north-east, retaining much of its original Victorian and Georgian character. The character of Hoole Road is well defined, with a strong built form along its edges, continuity in boundary treatment and building line, and possessing an open suburban quality. Ashby Place is a an attractive and well preserved enclave of early to mid 19th Century cottages and villas in a close and peaceful setting”

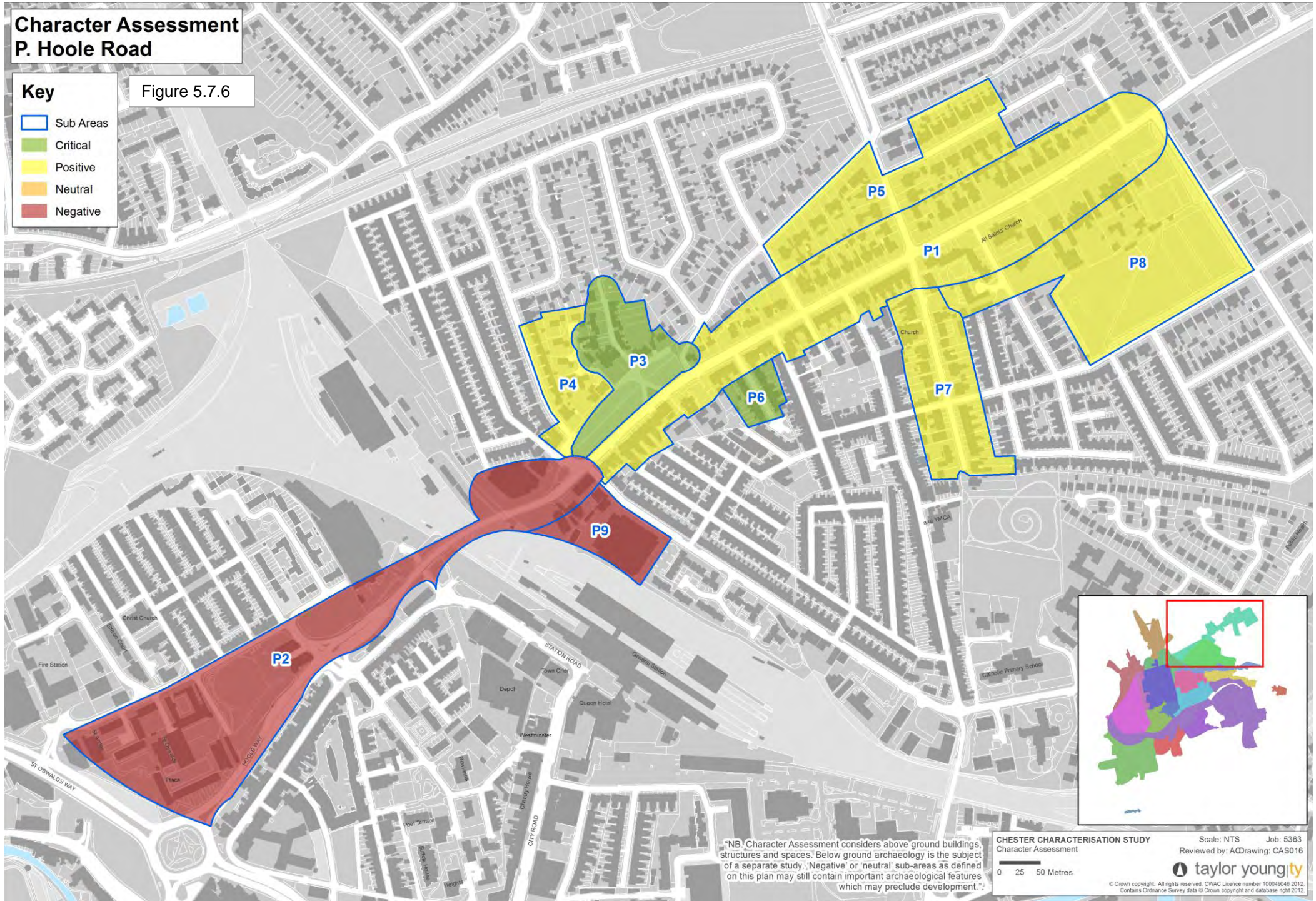


Hoole Road

Character Assessment P. Hoole Road

- Key**
- Sub Areas
 - Critical
 - Positive
 - Neutral
 - Negative

Figure 5.7.6



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CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Character Assessment

Scale: NTS Job: 5363
Reviewed by: ACDrawing: CAS016
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Management and Policy Recommendations

Although there has been some unsympathetic alterations to some properties in recent years the special character of the area is nonetheless strong today and there are large number of buildings of townscape merit that are in good condition, retaining many historic features. It will be important to protect these buildings from any further erosion. The condition of buildings on Hoole Road itself should be the priority.

There are a number of small scale improvements that could be made. For example, improving the appearance of the chiller unit on Derby Place (see Key Detractors). There is also a historic signpost on the north side of Hoole Road that is currently obscured by overgrown vegetation (see photograph below).



Signpost on Hoole Road

Capacity to Accommodate Change

There are few large scale development opportunities in the area. Most appropriate new development is likely to be replacement of buildings that have no special character (and not consequently have not been

identified as a building of townscape merit), infill development or alterations to existing properties. In all cases such development should positively address the setting of listed buildings and reinforce the special character of the area, as set out in this report.

Design Principles for New Development

Larger scale opportunities for development include the sites around the gateway to Hoole (either side of the railway bridge), the former Goods Depot site and the petrol filling station on Hoole Road.

- The **gateway sites** include the car dealership on the north side and the single storey shops and the industrial uses to the south. If these become available then it will be important to provide buildings of high design quality to mark the transition between central Chester and Hoole. These should address the approach from the bridge and define the corners. There could be an opportunity for some height on either side (but especially the northern side) if development was appropriately designed and mindful of key views. The southern frontage on Hoole Road should follow the established building line and reflect the proportions, rhythms and colours of historic buildings on the southern side of Hoole Road.
- If the **petrol filling station** were developed then a sensitive infill solution would be required which should follow the existing building line, scale, proportions and colours of properties on the southern side of Hoole Road. This could be a well-designed contemporary response.
- Efforts should be made to save, repair and refurbish the **former station goods depot**. It should also be given a better setting with a tidier and more attractive yard in front of it.