

5.8 Q. Boughton Approach

Character Area Assessment

Location

Boughton Approach is the name given to the area around Boughton – the road extending from the Barrs eastward away from the City Centre. The character area also includes the 'Boughton triangle' to the immediate east and streets leading off, and parallel to, Boughton to the north and south.

Sub-Areas

The area is comprised of the following sub-areas:

- **Q1. Boughton West:** Boughton from the Barrs to Hoole Lane.
- **Q2. Boughton East:** Boughton from Hoole Lane to the Boughton Triangle.
- **Q3. Boughton Triangle:** the shape formed by the intersection of Christleton Road and Tarvin Road after they split from Boughton.
- **Q4. Beaconsfield Street:** a terraced street lying parallel and to the south of Boughton.
- **Q5. Boughton Retail Centre:** the retail centre and land around it on the northern side of Boughton.
- **Q6. Hoole Lane:** Hoole Lane from Boughton to the Canal.

- **Q7. Russell Street:** the street lying between Boughton and the Canal at the western end of the area.
- **Q8. The Mount:** street to the south of Christleton Road
- **Q9. Sandy Lane Corner:** corner of Sandy Lane and Christleton Road.



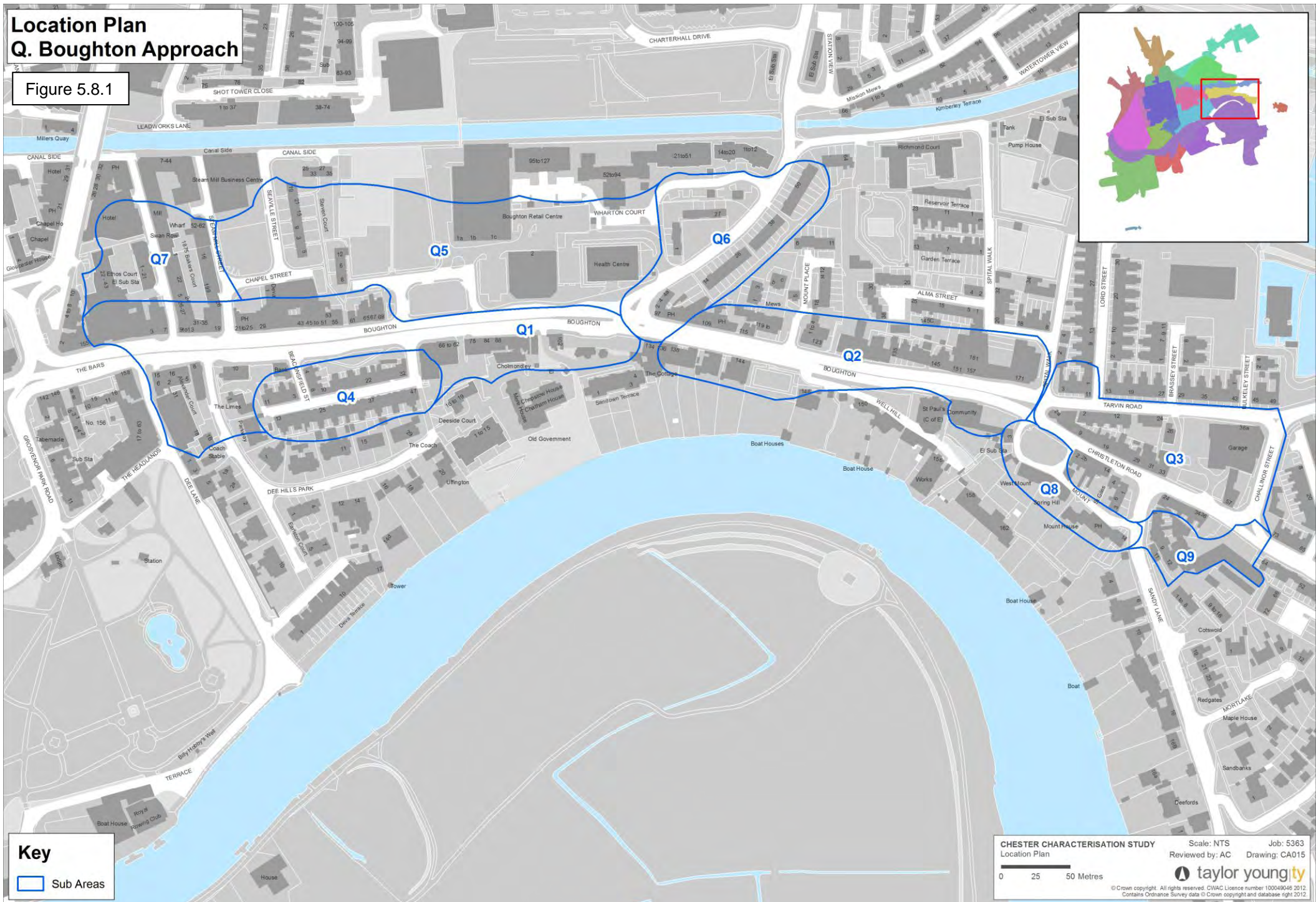
Q1. Boughton West




Q3. Boughton Triangle

Location Plan Q. Boughton Approach

Figure 5.8.1



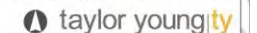
Key

 Sub Areas

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Location Plan

Scale: NTS
Reviewed by: AC
Job: 5363
Drawing: CA015

0 25 50 Metres

 taylor young

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Historical Development

Boughton is an historic road, extending from Foregate and leading eastwards out of the City. Braun's Plan of 1580 clearly shows roads along what looks like the present alignments of Boughton, Hoole Lane and the Boughton Triangle. The majority of this appears to be undeveloped at this time. The Barrs is the site of the former outer defences of the City and entry from Boughton was marked by an outer gate called The Barr.

The suburb of Boughton was formerly known as Spital Boughton after the medieval hospital of St Giles, founded as a leper colony by Earl Ranulf (1181-1232). This hospital was probably destroyed during the siege of Chester in 1645 and the site is now marked by a small burial ground later used for plague victims in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Boughton has long been known as an area from which water is supplied to the City. Its wells and springs were used to supplement supplies from the River Dee since Roman times. In the 16th century water was piped to a cistern at the Cross. Until the 1960s this function had a strong visual impact in the area, with dominant tall chimneystacks for the pumping engines. Vestiges of the infrastructure remain today, such as the large viaduct arch on Barrell Well Hill. The water supply function continues in the form of the waterworks, now located between Boughton and the Canal, to the east.

Until the early 19th century the land in this area was used primarily for agriculture and there were numerous small market gardens. Prior to 1801 condemned prisoners were hanged at Gallows Hill; today this is a small garden overlooking the river with a plaque commemorating its grim history. Hunter's plan of 1789 show both sides of Boughton developed with linear, shallow-depth development, with a number of market gardens behind. By 1908 most of the surrounding area was developed for workers' housing, due to the presence of the Steam Mill and Leadworks to the north. This growth led to a number of new streets extending to the

north and south of Boughton, including Beaconsfield Road and the full development around the Boughton triangle.

In the 19th century parts of Boughton were redeveloped with large villas, taking advantage of commanding views over the riverside and toward Wales, which led to the area becoming one of Chester's earliest fashionable suburbs. During the 20th century the earlier terraced streets of mill workers' housing to the north of Boughton were either lost, in place of 1960s housing redevelopment and the Boughton Retail Centre (i.e. Steven Street and Forsbrook Street) or became the site of later industrial development (i.e. Russell Street, Steam Mill Street, Chapel Street and Seaville Street) which have since been redeveloped for apartments.



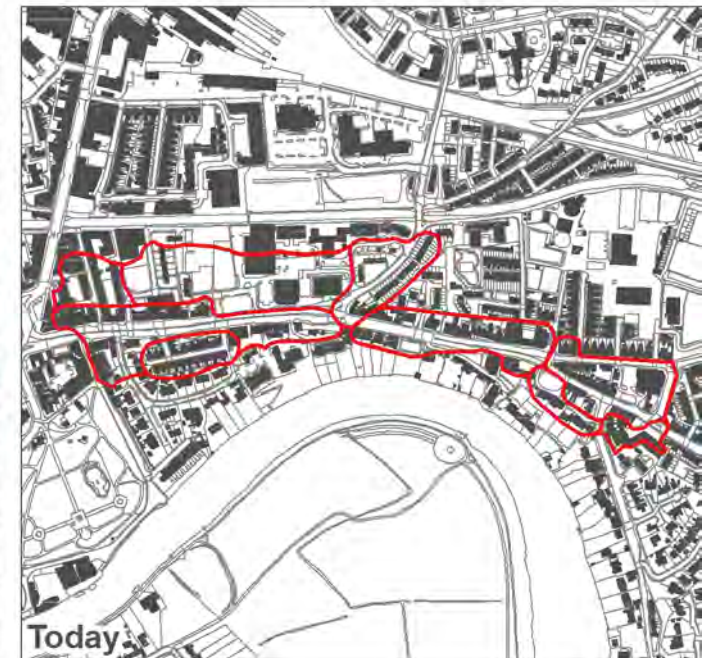
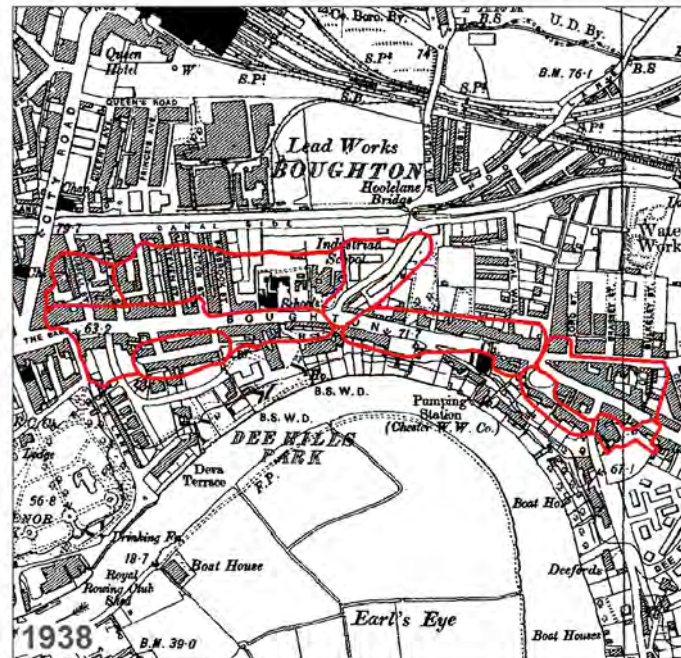
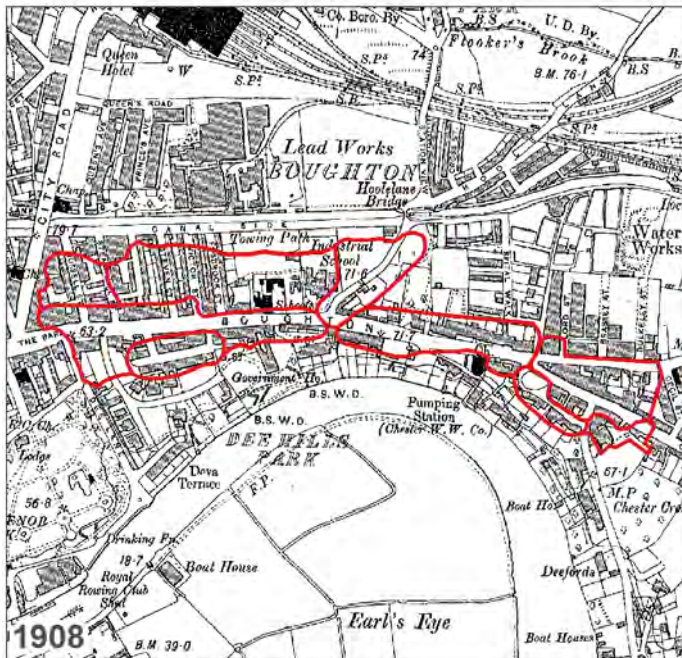
Steven Street, 1932



*Boughton Post Office,
Christleton Road/
Tarvin Road, 1920
(note original position
of water fountain)*

Historical Development Q. Boughton Approach

Figure 5.8.2



Land-uses

The main corridor through the area (comprising Boughton and Christleton Road) is generally in a secondary retail use. This is most pronounced at the western end, where it has an edge of centre feel, and again on Christleton Road, where it forms a local centre role. Along the corridor this is mixed with office and leisure uses. The central part of Boughton has partially retained a residential use in the form of the villas and houses looking over the riverside although many of these are now converted to offices. North and south of this corridor residential use predominates.

Urban Form

Urban form is markedly varied across the area depending on the era of development and redevelopment. The following patterns are clearly evident.



Linear development on Boughton

A tight linear, back-of-pavement form with narrow plot widths and 2-3 storey properties is dominant at the western end of Boughton (sub-area

Q1), the northern side of Boughton in sub-area Q2, around the Boughton triangle (Q3) and on The Mount (Q8). This is the most historic form in the area, with predominantly Georgian and Victorian development, and it originates from the importance of this route as a linear corridor. Many of these properties are now in poor condition, with unsympathetic alterations and obtrusive shutters and security features.

A more spacious arrangement of villas and detached houses is found along the northern bank of the River Dee (in Q2), and at its closest point on the northern side of Boughton. Originally these villas on Boughton would have sat within their own gardens back from the road but the 20th century widening of the road has removed the gardens and left the villas fronting the back-of-pavement (or with a very small set back). Properties here are generally 2-3 storeys in height. This form replaced earlier development of the form described above and originates from the rise of this area as a fashionable suburb and the advantage of maximising the attractive southern aspect to the River.

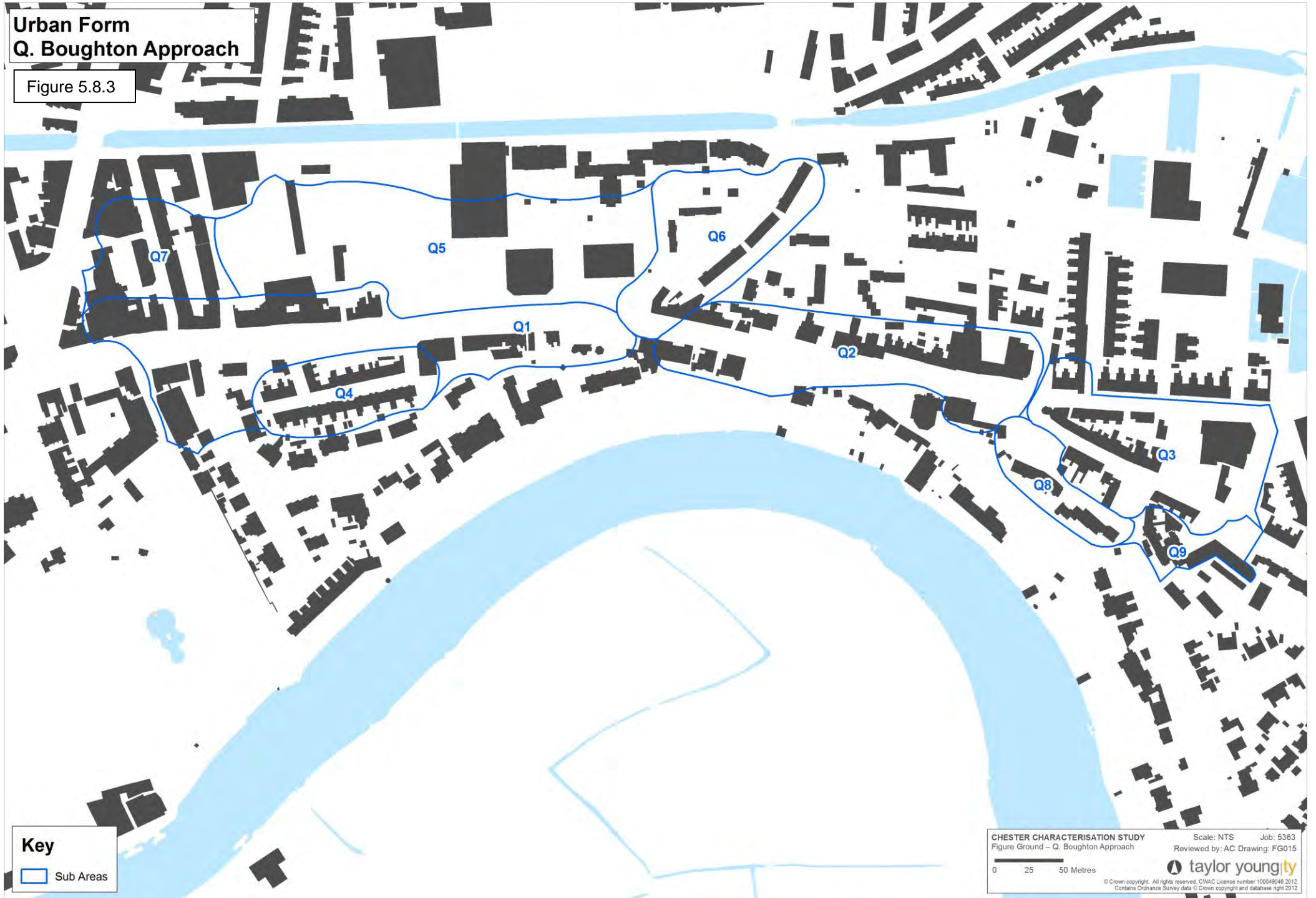


Villa development on Boughton

The Y-shaped intersection of Boughton triangle is a strong and historic townscape feature providing an interesting street form and allowing the former post office to act as a strong visible landmark.

Urban Form
Q. Boughton Approach

Figure 5.8.3



Key

Sub Areas

CHESTER CHARACTERISATION STUDY
Figure Ground – Q. Boughton Approach

Scale: NTS Job: 5363
Reviewed by: AC Drawing: FG015

0 25 50 Metres

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There is also an example of a planned Victorian/Edwardian development of a more modest nature with straight linear streets of back-of-pavement terraces. This is found on Beaconsfield Street (in sub-area Q4).



Beaconsfield Road

The final forms (in sub-areas Q5, Q6 and Q7) are represented by the 20th century redevelopments to the north of Boughton. These have imposed their own structure on the previous layout. This includes the traditional, set back from the pavement, linear form of inter-war housing on Hoole Lane (reflecting the influence of Sir Patrick Abercrombie, who was active elsewhere in the City at this time); the shattered approach of the (predominantly) 1960/70s development between Seaville Street and Hoole Lane (there are also two significant vacant sites here at the time of writing); and the tall, canyon-like form of Russell Street and Steam Mill Street, which seeks to replicate the massing of the mill buildings which once occupied this area.

Townscape Character

Townscape Character is mixed throughout the area. This follows the pattern described above, but with wider variations within each group.

In sub-area Q1, on Boughton, the properties are back-of-pavement, 2-3 storeys and generally of plain design with sash windows and traditionally pitched roofs. There is a mix here of Georgian and Victorian plain architecture, interspersed with examples of the black-and-white Vernacular Revival style. This is also broken up with some low grade 20th century retail buildings.



Boughton West (Q1)

This form continues in sub-area Q2 (Boughton East) but here the mix is dominated by cream coloured rendered buildings in the Regency style. These are generally large, detached, 2-3 storeys and with sash windows.

Around the Boughton triangle area (in sub-areas Q3 and Q8) the form is terraced, back-of-pavement, generally three-storey and mostly Georgian. This does include a varied mix of styles though, such as the fine

Edwardian pub: The Wheatsheaf, St Paul's Church and the former Post Office corner group – the latter two of which provide a strong townscape feature terminating views eastwards on Boughton.

At Beaconsfield Street (Q4) the dominant form is of traditional back-of-pavement, two-storey brick terraces but with some interesting detailing, especially on the southern side where the terrace has consistent first floor roof canopies and second floor gables with a part rendered pattern.

In the redeveloped areas north of Boughton (Q5, Q6 and Q7) the form is modern, varied in accordance with the age of development and bears little relationship to the historic context of the wider area.

Landscape Character

The landscape in the area is a mix of hard urban forms with open views and formal public and semi-private spaces. There are also many strong riverside gardens but these are all in private ownership within the plots of houses. The most striking views are from the break in Boughton opposite the junction with Mount Place. Here it is possible to experience commanding views over the River and Earl's Eye meadow, providing an indication of the views possible from the adjacent villas. To the immediate east of this is a similar viewpoint, looking over properties southward set at a lower level. This is the infamous Gallows Hill, and is marked with a stone plinth. Positive views also existing looking down Barrel Well Hill from here. Another positive landscape environment exists in the form of the former leper cemetery on The Mount. This is now a walled and grassed enclosure ringed with Georgian and Victorian development, creating a pleasant setting to the surrounding semi-circle of buildings.



Former lepers' cemetery at The Mount

Poorer incidental green spaces exist on Boughton where demolition has been replaced with temporary landscaping. This is typically of rather low grade provision and usually faced with the rear of adjoining properties or concrete walls. In the context of the heavy traffic on Boughton these are neither pleasant spaces to use nor do they create a strong frontage to this key approach to the City. There are two examples of this type of space: one north of Beaconsfield Street and one north of Sandown Terrace. The latter space offers views of the upper storey of the attractive, listed Sandown Terrace, partially obscured by a concrete wall. Allowing greater visibility or improving the boundary treatment would significantly improve the frontage here.



Poor quality incidental open space on Boughton



Incidental open space in front of Sandown Terrace on Boughton

Open spaces in the redeveloped area north of Boughton are variable in quality and semi-private in nature. The spaces at Steven Court for example are well maintained and provide good amenity (though little

contribution to wider character) but the spaces to the west of Hoole Way are in poor condition and detract from the local environment.

Other than these spaces most development is back-of-pavement leaving the public realm a very hard space. The street furniture and paving here is not of a particularly high standard and the environment at Boughton is dominated by its highways infrastructure. This is softened in the eastern part of Boughton by the views over the River and of surrounding planting in rear gardens.



Views south from Boughton

Views northward to the former Milns Seeds Warehouse and Leadworks towers from Boughton also contribute to local character.

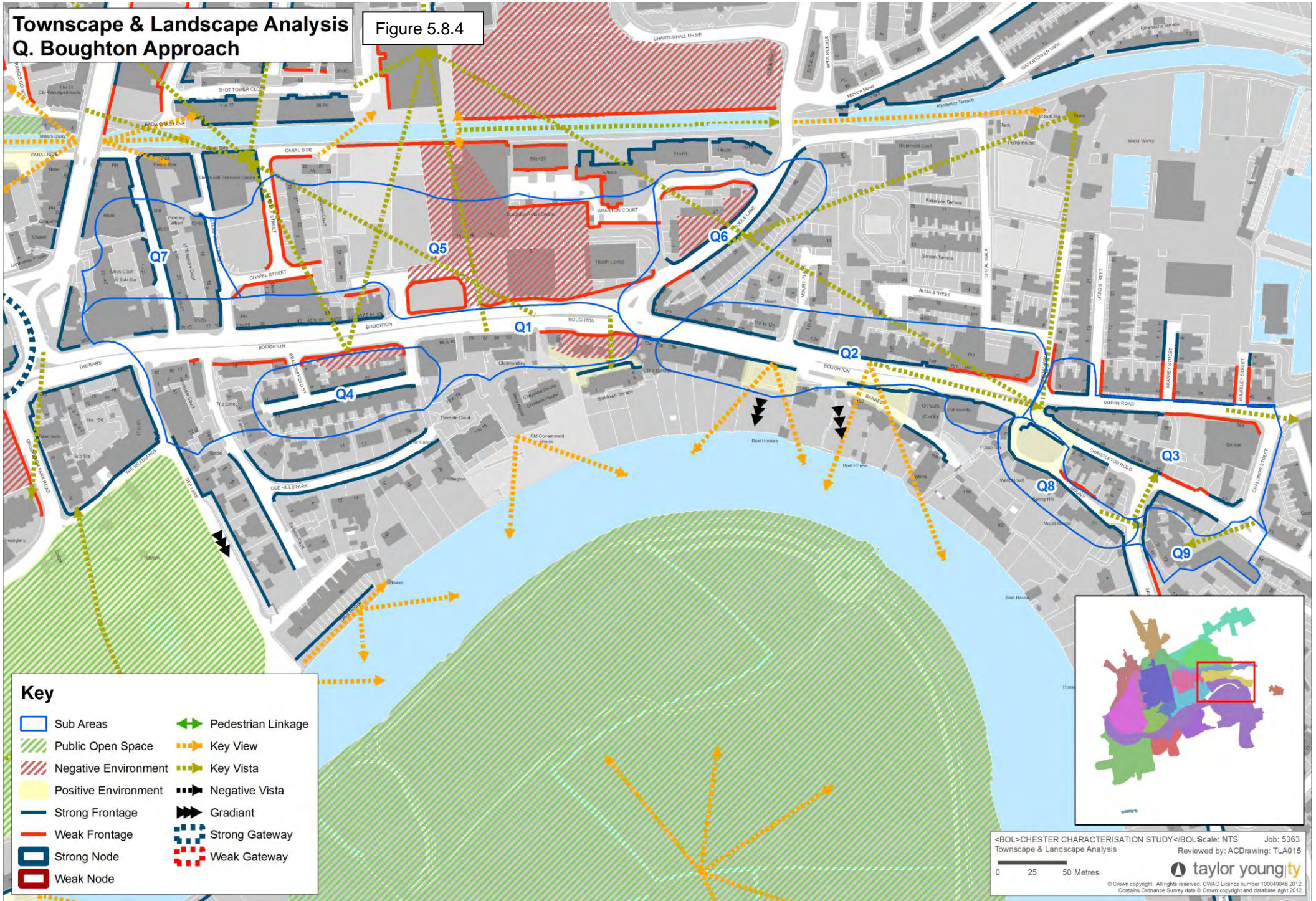
The whole Boughton corridor carries heavy traffic. This significantly detracts from its character. The pedestrian experience and landscape character are at their worst where the streets are narrower in the Boughton Triangle and the back-of-pavement buildings here suffer most from traffic pollution.

Q. Boughton Approach: Typical Materials and Details



Townscape & Landscape Analysis Q. Boughton Approach

Figure 5.8.4



Key

Sub Areas	Pedestrian Linkage
Public Open Space	Key View
Negative Environment	Key Vista
Positive Environment	Negative Vista
Strong Frontage	Gradient
Weak Frontage	Strong Gateway
Strong Node	Weak Gateway
Weak Node	

Designated Heritage Assets

The character area is partially covered by conservation area designation. All of the land south of Boughton, and also the northern side to the east of Hoole Way, and the Boughton triangle and The Mount, is included within the Boughton and the Meadows conservation area (which also includes the adjacent riverside and Earl's Eye meadow). Russell Street, and the Boughton northside frontage west of the former school, falls within the Boughton Canalside conservation area, which also includes the canal corridor. The remaining land north of Boughton, and Hoole Way itself, are not within any conservation area.

There are 13 listed buildings in the character area, all of which are Grade II. Examples of some of the most significant are listed below. The most significant building affecting character is St Paul's Church (Grade II* listed) which lies just outside the character area boundary but is included because of its influence to this area. There are no other statutory heritage designations within the area.

There are 18 listed buildings (and structures or groups of buildings) within or significantly affecting the character area. The most significant are illustrated below.

There are also a number of Article 4 Directions, covering individual villas on Boughton (east) and terraced groups on Tarvin Road and Christleton Road.

- **Richmond Place townhouses**, Boughton (Grade II, 1800-1832).



- **Corner group (including former Post Office)** – Christleton Road/Tarvin Road – designed by John Douglas (Grade II, 1900).



- **St Paul's Church, Boughton** (Grade II*, 1897).



- **Campbell Memorial Hall, Boughton** (Grade II, 1897).



Buildings and Structures of Townscape Merit

17 un-listed Buildings or Structures of Townscape Merit have been identified in the area.

- **Q1a. 5-7 Boughton**, altered and deteriorated but nonetheless significant Georgian building with character.



- **Q1b. The Cross Foxes** – public house in traditional vernacular revival style.



- **Q1c. 67 Boughton** – former public house (now guest house) in traditional vernacular revival style.



- **Q2a. Victorian semis**, Boughton – altered but still significant.



- **Q2c. Edgeley**, Boughton – well-styled individual villa.



- **Q2d. Georgian townhouse**, Boughton – good example of a simple Georgian townhouse.



- **Q3a. Georgian shops**, Christleton Road – with jettied upper storeys.



- **Q3b. The Wheatsheaf**, Christleton Road – good Edwardian pub with tiled ground floor – currently vacant.



- **Q3c. Georgian terrace**, Tarvin Road – interesting door recess detail.



- **Q4c. Edwardian terrace with gables**, Beaconsfield Street – consistent group with distinctive detailing.



- **Q4d. Beaconsfield Terrace** - end terrace (no. 47).



- **Q8b. 1-3 The Mount** – good Vernacular Revival detailing.



- **Q6a. Georgian shop**, Boughton/Hoole Way – in original form with good shop-front.



- **Q8c. West Mount** – good Georgian building fronting the cemetery open space.



- **Q8d. The Mount Inn** – good, simple Georgian public house, remaining in same use (adjacent property also included).



- **Q9a. 11 Sandy Lane** - rendered four storey building in curtilage of listed building.



- **Q8e. St Giles Cemetery** – historic site formerly in use as leper cemetery (and later for plague and Civil War victims): 12th century to 1643; with inscribed plaque and historic stone wall. The wall itself is listed but the former graveyard open space would benefit from protection.



Key Detractors

A number of key detractors have been identified in this area. These comprise the following:

- **Boughton – between Beaconsfield Street and Dee Hills Park**, this is a particularly poor stretch of frontage, on the southern side of Boughton. It contains a 1980s two-storey brick building (currently housing a print shop), a surface car park and a small low-rise bank building. This location, close to the Barrs, lies on the approach to the City Centre and the buildings on this site pay no regard to the surrounding context and character.
- **Cleared site north of Beaconsfield Terrace, Boughton** – a long and narrow cleared plot that has now been landscaped, to a rather minimal standard, with a poor boundary treatment and exposed views to the rear of the Beaconsfield Street terrace. This creates a poor impression on the Boughton frontage.

- **Cleared site north of Sandown Terrace** – a second cleared site, at a highly visible location opposite the junction with Hoole Way. A minimal landscape scheme and poor boundary does allow a partial view of the magnificent Sandown Terrace but otherwise the site detracts from the local character.
- **Exposed rear of properties west of Chapel Street** – a series of yards and unattractive rear of properties that face the street between Chapel Street and the access road south of the former school. The street form is also fragmented here due to 1960s redevelopment.



- **Former Boughton St Paul's Nursery and Infant School** – a cleared site, detracting from local character until it is redeveloped. It is a prominent site, fronting the canal to the north.



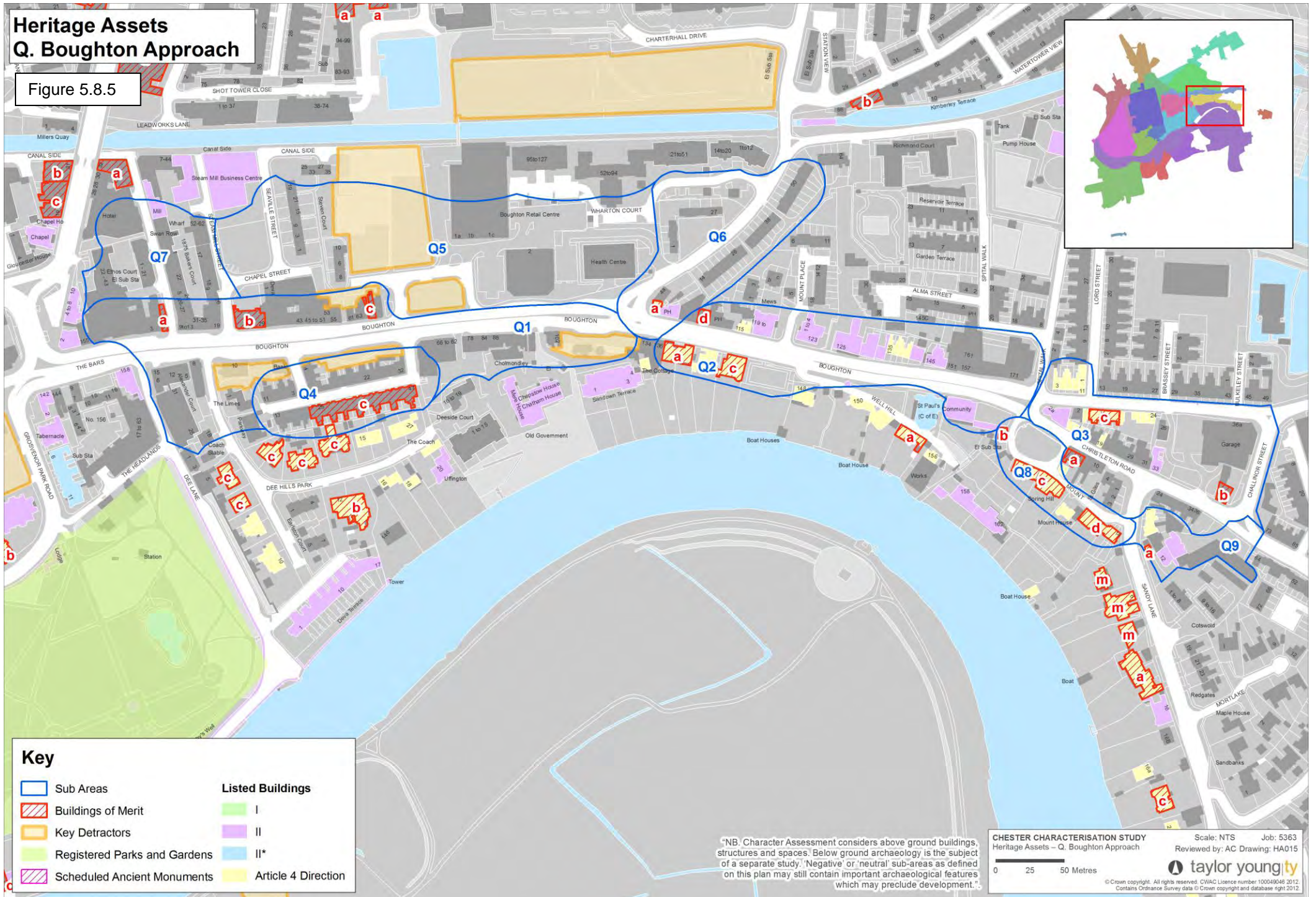
- **Cleared site on Boughton** – to the south of the above is another cleared site, fronting directly onto Boughton.



Heavy traffic – top: Boughton, bottom: Christleton Road

Heritage Assets Q. Boughton Approach

Figure 5.8.5



Key	
	Sub Areas
	Buildings of Merit
	Key Detractors
	Registered Parks and Gardens
	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
	I
	II
	II*
	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

This area represents the main approach to the City Centre from the east, along the Boughton corridor. Large parts of the area have no heritage value due to their redevelopment and, rightly, do not lie within any conservation area. Elsewhere there are areas and buildings of stronger character, some of which require greater protection than at present. Many older properties on Boughton have been unsympathetically altered or are in poor condition. There is much evidence of obtrusive shutters and security measures too.

- **Q1. Boughton West: Neutral** – dominated by traffic and road infrastructure with few buildings of note before arrival at the Barrs.
- **Q2. Boughton East: Positive** – A series of attractive Regency and early Victorian villas with commanding views over the Riverside.
- **Q3. Boughton Triangle: Positive** – An historic street form with some interesting buildings, but character is weakened by the effects of heavy traffic.
- **Q4. Beaconsfield Street: Positive** – consistent long terraces provide a strong townscape.
- **Q5. Boughton Retail Centre: Negative** – unattractive redevelopment that pays no regard to context or history.
- **Q6. Hoole Lane: Neutral** – standard inter-war housing.
- **Q7. Russell Street: Neutral** – generic contemporary development.
- **Q8. The Mount: Critical** – important historic site with strong townscape today.

- **Q9. Sandy Lane Corner: Positive** - an important corner with several listed and historic buildings, sloping downwards.

Character Statement

“Boughton Approach (including Boughton and the Boughton Triangle) is a key corridor for traffic entering the City from the east. The commercial importance of this corridor remains strong today and continues to act as a driver for change. This has resulted in continuous narrow plot development which has been redeveloped piecemeal over time. Boughton also boasts strong views over the riverside and beyond, as evidenced by a series of fine villas. There are also smaller townscapes of interest such as Beaconsfield Terrace and The Mount. All of these factors give Boughton Approach a varied character: City Centre edge in the west to a more local village character in the east; with the road itself acting as both a unifying feature and a factor that detracts from quality with its traffic noise and pollution.”



Riverside view from Boughton

Management and Policy Recommendations

The Boughton Approach area is probably the area with most conservation issues of all the Character Areas that have been surveyed as part of this study. The dominant highway infrastructure and level of traffic on the principal roads, coupled with often basic landscape and public realm treatments, is the first significant factor. Secondly, there is a high proportion of buildings in poor condition and with unsympathetic and low quality additions and alterations (particularly the properties on Boughton that are now in commercial uses). Thirdly, most modern development in the area lacks architectural quality and does not reflect the heritage character. This includes the large area between Boughton and the canal. This has meant that the key experience of the area, i.e. travelling on Boughton, leads to a poor overall impression.

There are areas of heritage value but these exist in pockets: the stretch of Boughton in Q2, the Y-shaped junction of Boughton/Christleton Road, The Mount and Beaconsfield Terrace. The priority therefore should be to improve the visitor experience on Boughton by both improving public realm treatments and by exercising greater control on development; and by preserving the value of the pockets of greater heritage value.

Capacity to Accommodate Change

The area could have significant potential, in conservation terms, to accommodate change. This would include demolition and redevelopment of buildings that lack heritage value and a number of vacant sites, particularly the large area between Boughton and the Canal. The opportunity should be taken with these sites to improve the overall design quality and public realm in the area. The opportunities are explored in more detail below.

Design Principles for New Development

The principal opportunities fall into two categories: sites on the south side of Boughton and sites between Boughton and the Canal.

- **Sites on the southern frontage of Boughton** - The three narrow sites identified on Boughton's southern frontage all contribute to the poor impression of this road corridor. The westernmost site has two modern and unsympathetic buildings whilst the others have simple landscape treatments and offer unattractive concrete boundary treatments to the rear. In the case of the westernmost site new development that provides a more considered approach to the massing and architecture of historic buildings would be the preferred approach.



- In the case of the other two sites the shallow plot depth would make this option unfeasible. The best solution there would be to implement an improved landscape scheme, providing respite from the back-of-pavement development and busy traffic and improving the roadside appearance. This should include new planting and the provision of better quality street furniture. A more attractive boundary treatment to the rear will also be

required. In the easternmost site the aim should be to open up views to Sandown Terrace whilst on the central site it will be more important to mask the rear of the terraces and Beaconsfield Terrace and provide better residential amenity and security.

- **Sites between Boughton and the Canal** - These three sites should be considered comprehensively. The largest site is the cleared site of the former primary school. The immediate surrounding buildings have no heritage value. They also offer a wide transition in massing: from domestic houses to the large Boughton retail centre. The site design will not resolve this transition and provide amenity to the site from the large retail centre. The key issue in heritage terms will be to provide a strong and positive frontage to the canalside. Development here should be in keeping with the form and appearance of historic canalside architecture and should respect view to historic landmarks, particularly the former Milns Seeds Warehouse, Shot Tower and Water Tower. It should also provide a consistent edge treatment to the Canal with existing surrounding buildings. Character Assessment G: Canal Corridor should be referred to for further detail.



- The smaller site fronting Boughton has roads on all sides and so must present a tidy appearance on all frontages but the most important is clearly to Boughton. Development here should be back-of-pavement, of similar massing to surrounding properties on Boughton and should respond to the colours, materials and proportions evident on historic buildings on this road.
- The rear to properties 51-67 Boughton is currently unsightly and should be improved, especially when the above sites are developed. This requires a presentable boundary treatment and improvements to the rear elevations of some of the properties. This may be difficult to achieve if these properties are in private ownership.



Character Assessment Q. Boughton Approach

Figure 5.8.6

