

Vale Royal Borough Council

# **FRODSHAM (TOWN) CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

August 2006  
Adopted  
September 2006



**VR** VALE ROYAL  
Borough Council  
The heart of Cheshire

## INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas are many and varied. They were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, and are now an accepted part of Town and Country Planning legislation and practice. More than 9,100 have been designated in England. Local Authorities are required to identify “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. They are also under a duty to review existing designations regularly.

It has been recognised that if the special interest, character and appearance of a conservation area is to be retained, it must be managed. The first task in this process is to define and analyse the special characteristics that justify the designation of the conservation area. This is achieved by carrying out a Conservation Area Appraisal.

The character of an area depends upon its historic background, the architectural quality and interest of its buildings, their materials and detailing, the way they relate to each other, the line of the highway, the quality of the landscape, trees and open spaces and a variety of unique features. A Conservation Area Appraisal provides a description of those elements.

An appraisal also provides the basis for development plan policies and development control decisions, both within and adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary. The appraisal will subsequently provide the background for a management plan; proposals to preserve or enhance the area and additional control regimes. It may also identify development opportunities. Therefore the Government has stated that up to date appraisals (not more than 5 years old) are considered to be essential for all existing and proposed conservation areas.

Vale Royal Borough Council understands the importance of involving the local community in the appraisal process. It has recognised that these studies are only valid if those people

who are most closely affected by the designation of the conservation area accept the content of the appraisal. As a result, a public consultation exercise has been undertaken, the considered responses from which have been incorporated into this final version of the appraisal.

The Borough Council’s methodology for conducting Conservation Area Appraisals was adopted in 1997 and has been accepted as an example of Good Practice In Conservation by the Royal Town Planning Institute. However the Council has resolved to continue to revise and improve its methodology for conducting conservation area appraisals whilst striving to maintain a degree of consistency between the various completed studies. The format presently used is in bullet points under standard headings and therefore some duplication of text will occur.

The principal effects of this designation are:

1. The Council is under a duty to prepare proposals to ensure the preservation or enhancement of the area
2. In carrying out its functions under the Planning Acts, and in particular when determining applications for planning permission and conservation area consent, the Council and the Secretary of State are required to take into account the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area
3. Permitted development rights are more restricted within the designated area
4. Consent must be obtained from the Council for the demolition of any building in the area (subject to certain exceptions)
5. Extra publicity must be given to planning applications for development in the area
6. Six weeks’ notice must be given to the local planning authority before any works are carried out to trees within the designated area. It becomes an offence, subject to certain exceptions, to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy any tree in the area without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

## Background

Frodsham Conservation Area was designated by Cheshire County Council on 25 July 1973 and extended by Vale Royal District Council on 17 November 1977. Following the October 2003 designation of the Frodsham (Castle Park Locality) Conservation Area (much of which was formerly part of the Frodsham Conservation Area) a review and appraisal of Frodsham (Town) was completed in Spring 2006 and adopted on 28 September 2006.

## Policy Context

The Regional Spatial Strategy proposes that the majority of development should be in a corridor between Liverpool and Manchester. Regeneration proposals should also focus on these metropolitan centres.

The Borough's Local Plan First Review Alteration, adopted June 2006, is the relevant document for the control of development.

Frodsham sits within the North Cheshire Green Belt, and all forms of new development, especially new housing development, is heavily constrained. Within the Large Village Centre of Frodsham, the loss of existing residential use is resisted, as is the change of use from general retailing. The use of upper floors for residential use is promoted, subject to meeting certain criteria. Proposals need to meet national and local requirements for sustainable development.

Planning applications will normally be required to be fully detailed, in order that the impact of the proposals can be assessed. They should also address the preservation of the archaeology of the site. The highest standards of design, signage, advertising and security shutters are required to protect street scene character. The submission of design and access statements with planning applications is now a statutory requirement.

Local Plan Policy BE23 states:

The Borough Council will evaluate applications for development within and adjacent to the boundaries of designated conservation areas against those characteristics which are revealed in conservation area appraisals. Significant consideration will be given to ensuring that development proposals respect, maintain and compliment those aspects of the appraisal which define the local distinctiveness of the area, in particular these elements will include:

- The prevailing townscape of the area;
- Dominant building styles, materials and details;
- Important spaces and landscape within the area;
- Views into and out of the conservation area;
- Unique characteristics of the area.

Demolition proposals within conservation areas normally require consent and need to be justified. They may not be allowed until a contract for the development of an approved, appropriately designed replacement property has been made.

## Appraisal Summary

Situated close to the Mersey Estuary, the town of Frodsham lies close to drained marshland, below the spring-line of a scarp slope to an adjacent sandstone ridge upon which a pre-historic hill fort was established. Significant outcrops of rock (a Site of Special Scientific Interest or SSSI) influence the form of the North-East part of the conservation area.

Although a pre-Domesday settlement, Frodsham was developed as a mediaeval market town. The original street pattern and burgage plot layout are still very obvious. Despite having archaeological potential, there has been little physical investigation and no recorded finds.

Sitting astride a long established highway, the part of the town that forms this conservation area is constrained between more recent parallel-aligned transport links, a railway and a motorway. It is essentially linear in urban form and character.

Properties survive from the mediaeval period. Timber-framed and thatched cottages sit next to red brick and slate dwellings and more substantial and formal Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian structures. There are numerous listed and locally important buildings, including some unique structures. Properties are generally attractive, with many interesting details, although inappropriate alterations (especially to shop fronts and fascias) and disrepair are evident. The more recent (mainly residential) development tends to be of contrasting, often inappropriate, design and scale. Land use is mixed, being residential and small-scale retail, office, public sector and even small-scale industrial.

Traffic and parking is an issue. The weekly market adds both vitality and visual chaos as it utilises the unusually wide Main Street, which normally acts as a car parking facility. This street (lined by century old trees, planted for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, that make an important contribution to the area's

character) is the main public space within the area, although the reclaimed marshland acts as a difficult to access, recreational resource. Properties tend to be constructed directly to the rear of the pavement with few having private space at their frontages

Although some disrepair still exists, many properties (and elements of the public realm) within the conservation area have been the subject of a recent three-year grant aided regeneration scheme. Because of the town's history and potential to attract visitors, a programme of interpretation work has also been prepared and is close to completion..

The conservation area is lively but has the potential for considerable further physical and visual enhancement. However additional planning controls may be necessary to ensure that the special character of the area is not eroded further.

## Practical Support

Within the conservation area, the potential exists to grant aid both private enhancement schemes that have a public benefit, and repairs to certain categories of listed building. The enhancement of the public realm may also be supported.

Detailed supplementary design guidance may be provided to assist applicants when developing their proposals.

Applicants are invited to discuss any significant development proposals within the conservation area with the Council's Planning Control Service at an early stage. Telephone 01606 867715 after 1pm.



## HISTORY

### 1. Historic evolution of the settlement

#### 1.1 Origins and development of the settlement

- Important area in prehistoric period.
  - Hill forts overlooking the Rivers Mersey and Weaver nearby.
- Little evidence of Roman activity.
  - Roman road probably at Overton.
- Probable original royal estate centred on Overton – site of St. Lawrence – an ancient mother-church.
- Importance of *Frotesham* noted in Domesday Survey of 1086.
  - Frod's village held by Earl of Mercia.
- Early C13<sup>th</sup> – Borough charter.
  - Castle/Manor House recorded.
  - Development of burgrave plots.
  - Occasional unofficial markets.
  - Petty port recorded at nearby Frodsham Bridge.
- Black Death – mid-C14<sup>th</sup> – ended town expansion.
- C16<sup>th</sup> market re-established.
- Street pattern shown on Ogilby's road map of 1675 and settlement pattern on Burdett's map of 1777.



Extract from Burdett's map of 1777

#### 1.2 Topographic elements that have influenced the settlement form

- At the junction of three environments –
  - Mersey estuary marshes.

- Mouth & valley-side of River Weaver.
- Uplands of Cheshire Sandstone Ridge.
- Near to a probable fording point of River Mersey.
- Frodsham and Overton faults runs North-South through town.
  - Town founded on Triassic Red Helsby Sandstone.
    - This bedrock is exposed in North-East of Conservation Area – part of the Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS).
  - Older Wilmslow Sandstone underlies western part of Conservation Area to West of Frodsham Fault.
  - Younger permeable Tarporley Siltstones to East of Overton Fault.
  - Spring line above town at Overton.
- High tides from Mersey – 1802 and 1862 recorded by 'tide-stones' (Old Hall garden) – predate Manchester Ship Canal construction.

#### 1.3 Influences of current or previous land uses on the area

- Probably a planned C13<sup>th</sup> medieval town.
  - 110 burgrave plots recorded in 1283.
  - Main highway probably realigned to present lower level.
  - Petty port on River Weaver nearby – until Weaver Navigation of 1721.
- Manor – possible Castle – C13<sup>th</sup>.
  - Manor house situated in adjacent Castle Park locality.
    - Destroyed 1654, later, twice rebuilt.
    - Site given into local trust in 1933.
    - Now public buildings and park.
    - Also a separate Conservation Area.
- Agriculture on marshes – enclosed C17<sup>th</sup>.
- Market town of varying degrees of success from C13<sup>th</sup>.
- Importance of the highway – major route.
  - Coaching staging post.
  - Numerous inns.
- Impact of railway embankment to South-East of High Street circa 1850.
- Impact of Motorway to North-West late C20<sup>th</sup>.

## 2. Archaeological significance and potential of the area

- No Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Conservation Area.
- Most of Conservation Area identified as having archaeological potential – Cheshire Historic Towns Survey (2002 Final Report).
  - Only two known late C20<sup>th</sup> investigations – revealed nothing.

## TOWNSCAPE

### 3. Form and structure of the settlement

#### 3.1 *Boundary of the Conservation Area*

- The boundary of the existing conservation area needs to be revised to reflect the Castle Park Locality conservation area designation and physical changes to the area.
- The boundary described below is a recommendation but is subject to the results of the consultation exercise.

#### **Proposed boundary and reasoning**

- Clockwise from the North-East, the boundary;
  - Commences on High Street at the North-East corner of the site of the former Holy Trinity Methodist Church and its manse, Trinity House and follows its curtilage Southerly to the top of the railway cutting embankment, down which it drops, to the base of the cutting wall, which it then follows to the South-West;
  - parallel to the Eastern edge of the railway station platform it turns Southerly and encloses the Southerly platform until it reaches the perimeter fence of the former goods shed which it follows round in a Southerly direction until again meeting the rear of the platform which it again follows Southerly;
  - meeting the Church Street bridge, the entirety of which it encloses, it then follows the base of the railway embankment along the rear of the properties on the South side of Main Street, including the tunnel to the footpath at the rear of the Queen's

Head and the totality of the Fountain Lane bridge, to the bridge over Main Street at the point where it becomes Chester Road, the entirety of which it encloses;

- from the North-West side of the bridge the boundary turns North-West along the Western curtilage of No. 1 Main Street then West-North-West along the South side of a stream before turning North-East along and then South-East around the rear curtilages of Millbank Court (which although modern properties have an appropriate character);
- it resumes to the North-East following a property boundary alignment that runs to the curtilage of No. 12 at the Southern end of Maori Drive, which it follows round to that of No. 11 where it turns to the South-East, and follows that curtilage to Main Street where it turns North-East until meeting the joint boundary of No. 9A and the Cheshire Cheese public house where it turns North-Westerly;
- it continues on this alignment along the rear boundary of the properties on the East side of Maori Drive, to the West of the passageway to the rear of Moreton Terrace, to Marsh Lane where it turns East along the centre-line of Marsh Lane;
- at the junction with Brookside Road, the boundary first turns North, along the road centre-line then briefly West and North again to follow the boundary between the Southern garden of No. 18 Brookside Road and the separated garden parcels at the rear of Nos. 1 to 13 Marsh Lane, which it skirts round to the East, to a point where it meets the developed rear garden curtilage of No. 47 Main Street;
- it then runs North-Westerly along the rear of the gardens of Brookside Road up to the boundary of the Tilbey Drive caravan site which it follows briefly to the North-East then North-West, meeting a drainage ditch spur, the centre-line of which it follows to the North-East then North;
- it follows the centre-line of the drainage ditch along the Southern boundary of the M56 motorway for approximately 428 metres in a North-

Easterly direction to a further drainage ditch spur, where it turns to the South-East until it meets a fence, slightly to the North of the rear curtilage boundaries of properties on Rodgers Close (thus enclosing undeveloped former marshland which now protects the setting of the mediaeval and post mediaeval town development);

- following the fence to the South-West it skirts around the grounds of the Fire Station, first to the South-East and then runs North-East, along the Northern boundary hedge of the bowling green site to the rear of the Red Lion public house, then to the centre-line of the Fire Station access which is followed to the South-East to the centre-line of Ship Street which it follows to the North-East until opposite the centre-line of Plumpstone Lane, where it turns to the South-East;

- at the Southern edge of the access of Beech House it turns East to follow the Southern boundary of Beech House to the South-East then North-East and maintains this alignment across the rear garden of Rockholme to meet the rear boundary of No. 59a High Street which it follows around to the South-East to the back of the footpath of High Street;

- it then turns East to follow and include the sandstone wall forming the Southern curtilage of St. Luke's Church and continues along the rear of highway pavement until it meets the extended curtilage of Rock Villa, No. 67 High Street, which it follows to the North and North-East to the curtilage of No. 71/71a High Street which it follows around to meet that of No. 73 High Street which it then follows to the North then East and along the rear walls of the properties Nos. 73 to 79 and 79a High Street to the centre-line of St James Close where it turns to the South and crosses High Street to meet the North-East corner of the site of Trinity House.

- High Street gently curves to the South-East to give a vista of the totality of busy Main Street.
- Silhouette of Helsby Hill escarpment behind.



**View South-West down High Street to Helsby Hill**

- Reverse view from South-West is linear – with a rising sky-line sweeping right
- In the South-West – views limited by;
  - Changing sweep of alignment of highway.
  - Railway embankment and bridge portals.
- From footbridge over railway in North-East – interesting views of sandstone cutting – part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Regionally Important Geological site.



**Railway cutting sandstone outcrop**

### 3.2 Views within, into and out of the area

- From its high point in the North-East

- Linear views along railway track – curves around Castle Park to South-West.



- Untidy, stark supermarket service area and car park.
- Railway yard and back-gardens of High Street properties.
- Distant Welsh Hills – petro-chemical industry, pylon and M56 traffic in middle ground, seen over rooftops of Main Street.
- From main 'T' junction
  - View up Church Street is curtailed by railway bridge from where there is a limited distant view of St. Lawrence's Church tower beyond trees.



**View up Church Street to railway bridge**

- Bear's Paw – attractive terminal view down Church Street from railway bridge.
- Looking North from junction – interesting staggered terraces of Rock Mount and High Street rising to Holy Trinity Church spire.



**View up High Street to rock outcrop**

- From M56 boundary – views of town to South – open grass playing fields in

foreground – exposed backs of properties and back-land development – against background of Frodsham Hill with War Memorial – Trinity Methodist Church spire prominent.

- Views South to Frodsham Hill and War Memorial in breaks between buildings on South-East side of Main Street.
- Occasional views – to Mersey Estuary marshes – of distant pylons – traffic movement on M56 – chemical industry – Runcorn – especially from higher land at the Rock on High Street, eg. from the top of the footpath steps between Nos. 44 and 44a.



**View North from steps between Nos. 44 and 44a High Street**

### *3.3 The importance of spaces within conservation area*

- Broad linear space of Main Street – due to original market foundation – emphasised by continuous facades of mainly domestic scale buildings.
  - Car park off Moor Lane is a small but essential hard space.
- Church Street – separate space contained by railway-bridge, embankment and taller buildings.
- Related untidy open areas of the car park and service yard to the Supermarket and railway station – fortunately mainly hidden from view.
- Many interesting spaces behind buildings – sometimes viewed through arches and between buildings.



- Trinity Gardens within site of former Trinity Methodist Church is an important semi-private garden area.



**Trinity Gardens off High Street**

- Open grassland – between Main Street and M56 – historic estuary associations with potentially high amenity value.

### 3.4 *Enclosure within the settlement*

- Overall – conservation area is strongly bounded by late C20<sup>th</sup> M56 and Victorian railway embankments both with South-West to North-East orientation.
- Strong sense of enclosure of public realm in centre of area – traditional development off the back of the pavement.
- Burgage plots boundaries still evident.
- At Old Hall Hotel
  - Tall white painted vertical wooden pales set at 45° within heavy timber rails



**Old Hall Hotel fence**

to stone gate-piers above pebbledash low wall – all painted black – across courtyard front to recessed entrance.

- Also – simple metal bars to solid timber posts – all painted white – defining areas in front of bays at each end of front elevation.
- Simple white painted metal railings with scrollwork – more ornate to gates – above low stonewall with stone gate piers painted black to The Gables – No. 52 Main Street.
- New tall modern style but attractive metal railings above low stonewalls around the open frontage to Nos. 2 and 4 High Street.
- Similar modern metal railing systems being introduced throughout the area.
- Rock outcrop in High Street – North-East of area – part of Site of Special Scientific Interest – creates interesting enclosure –
  - Especially as supporting boundary to elevated roadway (former high street).
  - Where built upon to form wall frontages of properties.



**Boundary wall on sandstone outcrop – High Street**

- Private frontage spaces at each end of conservation area – usually to residential properties – bounded by walls of varying heights – coursed stone or brick topped by metal railings or hedges.
- Some concrete block walling and recent timber fencing to residential curtilages – e.g. Marsh Lane – no character – not really appropriate.
- Assorted modern front boundaries to more open curtilages in South-West of area – generally lacking unity or character.

### 3.5 Urban form

- Established by mediaeval market and burgage plot plan form – still retained.
- Essentially linear – ribbon development along three main highways – closed to South-West – five distinct areas can be defined.
  - Main Street – wide (to facilitate street market) and tree lined – mixed use development follows the highway line – small areas of well-hidden back-land development off narrow accesses.
  - Main Street/Marsh Lane area – narrower highways – no street trees – properties set back from highways – mainly residential – off Marsh Lane are two terraces (only one within conservation area) at right angles to street.
    - adjacent part of Main Street (and Fountain Lane) is more mixed use and transition from Main Street area.
  - Church Street – similar to Main Street but narrower and short (up to railway bridge) with fewer trees at edge of footpath and no residential elements.
  - High Street – similar to Main Street but more residential – climbs exposed rock outcrop – narrowing as it rises.
    - adjacent and parallel – ‘The Rock’ – the original highway at higher level.
      - initially residential in south – leads to area of non-residential uses – chemist and 2no. doctor’s surgeries and site of former Methodist Church (spire remains).



Fishermen's Cottages on the old 'Rock' road

- library (clinic below) – in former chapel – across High Street.
- Playing fields and former marshland to North-West – mainly open with few trees.
  - recent development (Chapelfields) intruding into South-West of this area.
  - marshland edge was historically developed for unsocial uses (e.g. gas works) off Greenfield Lane – sites now cleared – future development is now being encouraged here.

### 3.6 Road pattern

- Essentially linear – High Street and Main Street – main coaching road – South-West to North-East but with gentle meandering form – vaguely convex to the South-East.
- Central ‘T’ intersection – short length of Church Street at heart of conservation area – narrow cul-de-sac (Greenfield Lane) opposite and slightly offset.
- Complex junction in South-West – Main Street to Marsh Lane (‘Y’ shaped) with nearby Fountain Lane at right angles.
- Various short, narrow, almost unseen culs-de-sac and service accesses throughout Conservation Area.



Service access besides TSB, East side Main Street

- Chapelfields (recently constructed and unadopted) services new development in the South-West of the conservation area.
  - Main Street Chapel (Iron Church) relocated 3 metres to the left to allow Chapelfields road development.



- The Rock – narrow road at high level – parallel with South side of High Street in North-West of area – was original highway until 1833 turnpike improvement.
  - Interesting flight of steps up from High Street – although traffic volume and speed presents hazards to pedestrians.



- Steps up to The Rock from High Street
  - Footpath off to South from top of steps crosses railway cutting by recently refurbished bridge.

## 4. BUILDINGS

### 4.1 Age profile

- Continuous development from medieval origins to early C21<sup>th</sup>.
- Many medieval buildings refaced in later styles.
- Some timber-framing remains, including :-



Incorporating possibly the oldest dwelling in town

- No. 44 High Street – exhibits timber-frame elements of possibly oldest building in town – late C16<sup>th</sup> – listed grade II.
  - Complete timber-frame recently revealed within No. 68 Main Street.
- Georgian and Late Victorian/Edwardian buildings very evident throughout.



Typically Georgian – Lloyds TSB Main Street, formerly the Town Hall

- Large-scale late C20<sup>th</sup> development is limited to Coop supermarket and larger residential developments at Trinity Gardens, at Millbank Court and in Chapelfields area.



Late C20<sup>th</sup> Coop supermarket

- Very few – but noticeable – small-scale late C20<sup>th</sup> developments such as Barclays bank on Main Street.
- Trinity Gardens – Early C21<sup>st</sup> development at former Victorian Trinity Methodist Church in the North-East of the conservation area.





**New Trinity Gardens flats**

- Flats block incorporates Church ruins.
- Adjacent small terrace and semi detached properties – strong Georgian influences.



**Georgian influence – Trinity Gardens development**

- Much evidence of late C20<sup>th</sup> superficial work throughout – alterations & shop-fronts.



**Assorted late C20th shop front alterations**

## 4.2 Dominant architectural styles and types

- No style dominates – most buildings have domestic origins – ground floor retail conversions common at heart of area.
- ‘Monumental’ buildings set amongst humbler cottages contribute to interesting townscape.
- Some early oak framed buildings exist.



**Oak-framed No. 84 Main Street**

- Georgian frontages – large and small – with original sashes and glazing in evidence – good portico'd entrances throughout conservation area.



**Portico'd entrance of Lloyd's TSB**



**Ashley House Main Street**

- Strong Georgian influences towards upper area of High Street.
  - Reflected in recent Trinity Gardens residential development.
- (Good) Victorian influences can be seen in some conversion/replacement buildings on Main Street.
- Recent, alien, large scale blocks of residential flats to South-West of Main Street and North-East of High Street.

#### 4.3 Building materials – texture and colours

- Blue/grey Welsh slate roofs predominate – varying pitches but not very steep.
- Some thatch and plain terracotta tiles.



**Thatched cottages on Main Street**

- Some brick banding and diaper pattern brickwork to some Victorian properties. E.g. Trinity House.

- Cheshire buff red brickwork – pale-headed Flemish bond is common – sometimes above sandstone base or rock outcrop.



**Moreton Terrace featuring pale-headed Flemish bond brickwork**

- Some oak framed properties – scattered throughout the conservation area.
- Some ashlar sandstone – surprisingly little considering proximity to quarries.
- Stone dressings – quoins, lintels, arches, pilasters and columns.
- White and pastel coloured render – some white painted brickwork.



**Old Hall Hotel, Main Street**

- Many well-detailed multi-paned 'Georgian' window sashes – some with exposed vertical sash boxes – also mouth blown glass to more important buildings.
- Many poor replacement windows.
  - Includes recent shop-fronts in PVCu of aesthetically unsympathetic designs.
- Weathered red sandstone walls – in random coursed rubble – are common.



- Brutal – alien – utilitarian concrete ramp and service area to Coop supermarket.
- Glazed Victorian style ironwork canopy to High Street frontage of Coop supermarket.



Victorian style canopy fronting High Street

#### 4.4 Key buildings – listed and unlisted

- Many imposing grade II listed buildings along Main Street;
  - Bears Paw Hotel – red sandstone with good detailing – nicely restored by John Douglas in late C19<sup>th</sup>.



The Bears Paw public house

- Nos. 83 to 89 Main Street – picturesque group of C17<sup>th</sup> thatched cottages.
- No. 81 Main Street – The Old Hall Hotel – heavily textured white render – retains many original C18<sup>th</sup> features including gateway and fencing.

- No. 59 Main Street – Ashley House – mid Georgian – Flemish bond brown brick – dominates North side of West end of Main Street.
- Golden Lion on Main Street/Church Street corner has external early C19<sup>th</sup> features.



Golden Lion, Main Street

- Lloyds TSB bank – former Frodsham Town Office – Italianate red/brown Flemish bond brickwork – strong presence on Main Street.
- Queen's Head Hotel – wide white rendered frontage – early Georgian features especially in brick outbuildings to rear – restored mid 2005.



Recently restored Queen's Head Hotel, Main Street

- No. 84 Main Street – restored timber-framed house.
- Commemorative Barracks Archway Main Street – Coursed red-sandstone archway with crenellated parapet – bold presence on South side of Main Street.



- No. 52 Main Street – symmetrical late Georgian with linked pavilion wings.



**The Gables – No. 52 Main Street**

- No. 38 Main Street – Brook House – possibly part of a tannery – early C18<sup>th</sup> with perhaps earlier features at rear – and related range adjacent, along Main Street, awaits restoration.
- Significant quantity of less prominent listed buildings along Main Street – see Appendix One for further information.
- Significant unlisted buildings on Main Street;
  - NatWest Bank – red brick in late French Renaissance style.



**NatWest Bank, Main Street**

- Nos. 91 to 99 Main Street – terrace of five Flemish bond houses – uniform in character with black and white detailing.



**Uniform terrace – Nos. 91 - 99 Main Street**

- Eve, No. 68 Main Street – recently revealed and restored (2003) timber framed building.



**Timber-framing discovered during renovations**

- Millbank Cottage, No. 1 Main Street – 1882 – good detailing – in the style of John Douglas.
- Main Street Chapel – St. Dunstan's – interesting pre-fabricated corrugated iron clad structure – well converted and preserved.
- On High Street;
  - Good Georgian group at corner of High Street and Church Street (Crosbie House and Pollard Building) – Nos. 2 and 4 High Street are listed grade II.



**Crosbie House & Pollard buildings**

- No. 44 High Street, partly timber-framed and possibly incorporating the oldest building in the town – listed grade II.
- Former Police Station, corner of Ship Street – Edwardian with good terracotta work in the style of Douglas.



**Old Police Station, High Street**

- Former Court House, dated 1894, on Ship Street adjacent to former Police Station – now Girl Guides Hall.
- Groups of cottages sit on rock outcrop below – e.g. Nos. 28 to 32 Fisherman's Cottages.
- Library – formerly 1837 Wesleyan Association Tabernacle Chapel.
- Retained sandstone spire of Holy Trinity Methodist Church – focal point to North-East.
- On Church Street;
  - Church Street generally displays early Victorian detailing and design.

- K4 telephone kiosk by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott – rare – one of only 4no. known survivors from 50 originally made in 1927 – listed grade II.
- Cholmondeley Arms – late Victorian black and white with good detailing – locally important building.



**Cholmondeley Arms, Church Street**

- Railway Station complex – 'Jacobethan' style station building (listed grade II), embankment and railway bridge over Church Street – all skyline features.



**'Jacobethan' Railway Station incorporating Station Masters house**

- Former goods shed complex (relating to, but across the track from, the Station building) retains its character.
- Footbridge (encased in steel cladding on safety grounds) has lost its character.
- Conservation Area also contains several locally important buildings –
  - for full list see Appendix Two.



#### 4.5 *Interesting and unusual details*

- Earlier origins detectable at unaltered rear of some premises.
- Bear's Paw door lintel inscribed W:L:ANNO:DOMINI:1637
- Early shop fronts exist to parts of Main Street.
  - No. 90 Main Street. Jewellers. Good intact example of small shop front with shutters – listed grade II.



**Harris Jewellers – No. 90 Main Street**

- Many Georgian door and window casements remain.
  - Unusually high proportion of exposed vertical window sash boxes.
  - Some unusual designs – often hidden away.



**Interesting Georgian sash to side of the Old Hall**

- Georgian walls to garden at rear of Old Hall Hotel have quadrant-stepped copings.



**Quadrant-stepped walls to Old Hall garden**

- Roundel to front of County Library (former Methodist Chapel) – stained glass – renovated circa 2005 to include 'Bee' motif.



**Restored Library window with new 'Bee' motif**



- Good gable and interesting cornice details – also roof finials – throughout the town core.
  - Nos. 105 and 107 Main Street – roof finial – attractive cast iron guttering – polychromatic window and eaves details.



**Polychromatic window and eaves detailing – note roof finial**

- Exposed stepped brick chimney flues on side of the Lloyds TSB bank building.



**Prominent stepped chimney flues to Lloyds TSB**

- Many decorative chimney pots.
- Recent station name in mosaic on walls to both platforms.

## 5. Street Scene

### 5.1 Street furniture, wirescape, water pumps/troughs

- Street lights are varied.

- Main Street – recent, modern, tall, dual lamped, sympathetic, attractive – incorporate hanging basket arms with attractive displays in season.



**Appropriate, modern street lights**

- Lower Main Street – older, unattractive metal section columns.
- Church Street – recent, crude, mock-Victorian – copper topped, gold relief work on base.
- High Street – older, unattractive metal section columns – some concrete bases.
- Numerous utilitarian floodlights in Coop supermarket car park.
- Clutter of highway direction signs close to the traffic lights.
  - Base of one pavement gantry sign in Church Street is corroded and a potential safety issue.



**Heritage Interpretation panel by railway bridge**

- 4no. large Heritage Interpretation Panels installed Spring 2006 – dated 2005!

- Newly installed finger posts – black and white featuring the “bee” logo circular finial.



**Finger post**

- Mainly modern “reproduction” style cast iron street furniture – black with gold detailing – incorporating a mixture of logos – Vale Royal ‘VR’ and ‘Bee’ (from 2003/4).
  - Late C20<sup>th</sup>/early C21<sup>st</sup> bollards and litterbins– some plain.



**Recent cast iron bollards and bins featuring ‘Bee’ logo contrast with plastic ‘Keep Left’ bollards**

- Some cast iron bollards used to protect younger street trees from vehicle impact.
- Seats – uniform – timber slats and cast iron ends – ‘Bee’ logo – renewed 2003/4.
- Insensitive, standard, plastic, highways ‘Keep Let’ bollards on new traffic islands.

- Numerous planter units – some in black and gold plastic – some tiered metal – some affixed to tops of railings.
  - Attractive displays in season.



**Tiered planter unit on Main Street**

- Also assist with preventing pavement parking in Church Street.
- Important red telephone kiosks.
  - Red K6 outside No. 101 Main Street – listed grade II.
  - 2no. unlisted, locally important, red K6 kiosks one either side of Main Street.
  - K4 Church Street – listed grade II.



**K4 telephone kiosk Church Street**



- ‘Millennium’ Town Clock on Main Street close to Church Street junction.



**The Town Clock**

- A clock probably first installed for visit of George V on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1925.
- Restored through grant aid 1976.
- Replaced for 2000 millennium.
- Some modern bus shelters in early 2003 – grey with bold yellow – lack subtlety.
- Purpose designed – late C20<sup>th</sup> black and white railings at bus stops.
- Recent ‘Sandstone Trail’ marker adjacent to Bears Paw car park entrance – black metal frame featuring raised detailing and bee logo with sandstone block infill in heavy mortar.



**Sandstone Trail marker and map panel to rear**

- Blue framed ‘Sandstone Trail’ map panel at front of Bears Paw car park.

- There is little wirescape – however a pole and radiating wires adjacent to the Cheshire Cheese public house is intrusive.



**Wirescape near the Cheshire Cheese**

- Granite glacial erratic “Brook Stone” on plinth at Marsh Lane/Main Street junction.
- Smaller foreign erratic protects Moor Lane corner of NatWest Bank on Main Street.

## 5.2 Shop fronts, advertisements

- Many shop fronts are poor quality.
  - Some poorly and inappropriately detailed shop fronts – both historically and recently – many include use of PVCu window framing and doors.
- Few shop fronts of value on Church Street (South-West side) – no relationships with upper storey windows.
- Nos. 101 to 113 Main Street – Victorian terrace of varied properties with assorted,



**Contrasting quality shop fronts and external lights**



mainly poor quality shop fronts – some from bay windows and some single story extensions.

- Poor unsympathetic signage.
  - Many large, intrusive, brightly coloured, glossy plastic fascias.
  - Little internally illuminated.
  - Some swan neck external lights to fascias.



Pair of contrasting shop fronts on a listed building

- Clutter of ad hoc adverts on Market day.
- Freestanding 'A' frame adverts sometimes clutter pavements and highway edges.
- Many painted hanging signs supported from distinctive wrought iron scrollwork brackets with floral detailing.



Wrought iron sign on the Golden Lion

- Ashcroft Veterinary sign – an assortment of animal images in silhouette.



Assorted animals on Vet's sign

- Number of 'blue' plaques – some wall mounted, some on posts – denoting significant historic buildings introduced in late C20<sup>th</sup>/early C21<sup>st</sup>.



Blue plaque on No. 84 Main Street

- Early C21<sup>st</sup> circular poster/information unit on Main Street in black with gold detailing – modern – based on C19<sup>th</sup> continental designs.

### 5.3 Landmarks and focal points with historic connection or visual interest

- War Memorial on Frodsham Hill to South – visible from various locations.



Distant War Memorial on skyline a significant focal point looking South

- Retained Trinity Methodist Church tower – a significant landmark throughout area.



Retained tower to former Methodist Church

- Bears Paw – significant location at the T-junction.
- Town Clock in centre of Main Street at traffic signals

### 5.4 Floorscape – materials, colour and texture

- Highways are macadamed.

- Kerbstones mostly concrete – some of ‘conservation’ character – a few original stone kerbstones that should be retained.
- Some original setts form an attractive gutter feature that should be retained.



Modern and traditional floorscape materials

- Small element textured concrete paving slabs in pale buff.
- New ‘York stone’ paving adjacent to Main Street bus shelters, outside ‘Amore’ and on the highway crossing point peninsulas.



A recently completed highway crossing point

- Concrete setts define some parking bays and footpath crossing points.
- Some setts and cobblestones in vicinity of Bears Paw and Greenfield Lane – in need of repair.
- Pavement below highway level in places to North side of High Street beyond traffic signals – interesting stepped kerb detail.





Stepped kerbs to North side of High Street

## LANDSCAPE

### 6. Landscape setting

- Originally an estuarine setting at the foot of Frodsham Hill – steep scarp slope of sandstone ridge.
  - Elevated just above reclaimed marshland of Mersey estuary.
  - Tidal encroachment close to properties – North of Main Street in 1802 and 1862.
    - Marked by listed tide stones in garden of Old Hall Hotel.



One of two tide stones at rear of the Old Hall Hotel

- Further tidal encroachment ceased with construction of Manchester Ship Canal (1894).
- Historic core of town now effectively physically and visually isolated from original landscape setting by transport infrastructure

of M56 motorway to North-West and railway to South-East.

### 7. Green spaces, trees, hedges

- Drained marshland to North-West – trees and hedgerows now being established.
  - Playing field in South-West enclosed by mature hedges and metal security gates – used by Frodsham Cricket Club.
  - Central area developed as Marshlands Tree Garden by Frodsham Town Council.



Marshlands Tree Garden

- Rough ground in North includes remnant hedgerows – former field boundaries.
- Bowling green to rear of Red Lion is an important 'community' space.
- Limited other green space – few obvious private gardens.
  - Bowling green at rear of Conservative Club – hidden and essentially private.
  - Excellent attractive walled cottage garden – walls listed grade II – to rear of Old Hall Hotel – semi-public.
- Lime trees planted 1897 for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in three key streets – make a significant contribution to area's character.
  - Many now lost – limited number of small size replacements.



- Attractive hanging baskets and planters in village core when in season.

## 8. Water Features

- No visually significant water features.
  - Some ornamental ponds in gardens – such as at rear of Old Hall Hotel.
- Drainage ditches on marshland to North-West of conservation area - essential.

## OTHER FACTORS

### 9. Negative Factors

- Many buildings and cottages of good architectural quality – some with original features – being spoilt by insensitive repair/replacement/alterations – critical balance may already be upset.
  - Poor quality design – often ignoring building's essential character.



**Unsympathetic Church Street shop fronts**

- General introduction of inappropriate materials and details of shop fronts and fascias – modern plastics, standard joinery details – alarm boxes on front of properties.
- Increasing number of PVCu windows and doors to commercial and residential premises – often inappropriately designed.
- Greater planning control (article 4 directions) probably necessary to prevent further devaluation of architectural (and capital) value of buildings.

- Low standards of maintenance and repair – especially roofs – despite 2002-2005 grant scheme.

- Railway Station and No. 38 Main Street – Brook House – both listed grade II – are notable problems.
- Railway bridges provide good frameworks for views – could be better treated.
  - Poor character metal railing to top of railway-bridge on Church Street.
- Exposed concrete legs to railway platform at top of poorly landscaped embankment.
- Continual local and through traffic flow creates hazard, noise and smell.
  - Continual background noise from M56.
- Number and poor condition of highway direction signs near traffic signals – clutter and potentially hazardous in one case.



**Traffic sign of poor design – potentially hazardous**

- Parking to both sides of Main Street presents an intrusive foreground to streetscape and highway safety issues



**Market day Parking issues along Main Street.**

- compounded by Thursday market – needs better management of vehicles.
- Parking along Marsh Lane and on South side footpath at lower end of Main Street is also a visual and traffic hazard.
- Barrel drop in front of Golden Lion – brewery drays reverse onto paved area causing damage and rainwater retention.
- Hazard created by users of NatWest Bank cash point – short term parking at access to car park and on footpath.
- Double parking hazard outside Frodsham Taxis on Main Street close to traffic lights.



**Hazardous double parking near traffic signals**

- Loss of and poor/lack of maintenance and potential vehicle impact to highway trees.



**Main Street trees and parking conflicts**

- Litter is generated from increasing number of 'fast food' outlets and following Market day.

- Some recent provisions for disability access ramps etc. could have been better designed to reduce their visual intrusion.

- Cooperation by former owner of property with steps could have resulted in a more coordinated access solution when ramp was installed at Post Office.



**Uncoordinated steps and ramp**

- No. 125 Main Street – Barclays Bank – modern building in very prominent location – incongruous style should not be repeated.
- Recent, inappropriate, prominent, Charter House development on Main Street – uncomplimentary height with fussy eaves details – not of a local traditional design, but incorporates traditional elements.



**Cluttered roofline on Charter House development**

- Much of the 'back land' development is poor quality, untidy, neglected and derelict – needs addressing or problems may spread.



- Moor Lane and Greenfield Lane off Main Street particularly bad.



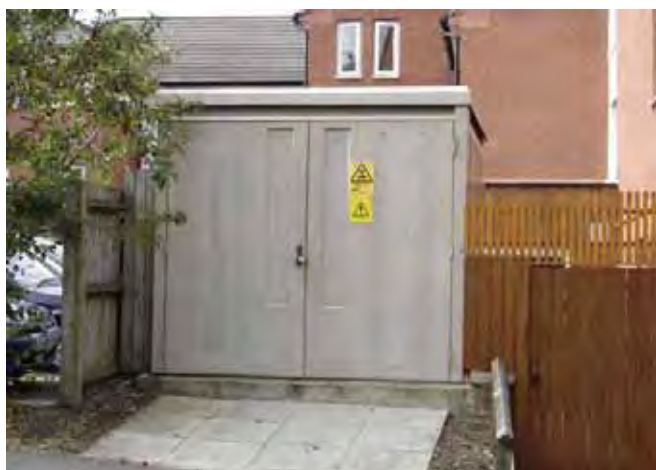
**Metal clad hall adjacent to Scout Hall on Moor Lane**

- Inappropriate design of Telephone Exchange.



**Utilitarian 60s style Telephone Exchange**

- Modern, ugly utilitarian MANWEB substation by Ashley Court flats.



**Ugly substation by Ashley Court flats**

- Similar inappropriate feature recently introduced in yard of Queen's Head between three listed buildings.



**Inappropriately sited Queen's Head substation**

- Uncertain future of former Bourne Methodist Church.

## 10. Neutral areas

*10.1 Areas which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the area*

- Modern Coop supermarket off High Street – alien in design and scale but generally set back from highway so impact is reduced.
  - Essential daily provisions retail outlet – brings activity to area and provides relatively concealed and enclosed parking.
- Modern housing development behind Ashley Court – well screened from Main Street and provides residential activity.



**Ashley Court modern development off Main Street**

- Articulated elevations help break up the inappropriate scale and massing.
- Developments to the rear of Main Street properties tend to be hidden from view due to limited access – only occasional glimpses.



Interesting rear extension to a Main Street property

- Recent residential development near car park off Moor Lane is inconspicuous and in a sympathetic style.
- Scale of flats element of Trinity Gardens development is disguised by location within/to rear of former Church premises.
- Bears Paw beer garden – good sett paved surface – generally drab appearance but vibrant in good weather.



Bears Paw sett paved courtyard

## 10.2 Areas and opportunities for development and/or enhancement

- Few if any areas have potential for new development – possible clearance of older

properties to facilitate new needs to be well controlled – although some poor recent development could be replaced by better designs.



Modern Main Street property with little character

- The further establishment of trees/planting to marshland area would encourage wildlife, present an interesting amenity close to town and may help screen/muffle motorway noise and air pollution. (Marshland habitat should not be changed however).
- Enhancement scheme for modern Coop supermarket frontage on High Street would be welcomed.
- Improved definition of Church Street railway bridge parapet railings.
- Poor quality shopfronts and plastic fascias could be improved by redevelopment.
- Re-establishment and replanting of those trees, originally planted to commemorate diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria, that have been lost along Main / High / Church Streets.
- Modern Main Street lighting design could be extended throughout the area.
- Pedestrian tunnels through both sides of Church Street railway bridge embankment would improve pedestrian movement.

## 11. Ambience/Uniqueness

### 11.1 Sounds and smells

- Busy main road – unattractive sounds and smells.
- Drone of distant motorway traffic.



- Occasional sound of railway traffic, particularly freight trains.
- Thursday market brings people, bustle, activity sounds and smells.



**Busy street scene on Market day**

### 11.2 Vitality and vibrance of the area

- Busy and attractive local shopping centre.
  - Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> best in national survey of 103 town centres for its individual character and distinctive shops and services (New Economics Foundation – reported June 2005)
  - Traditional coaching houses, inns and cafés with ambience.
  - Especially busy when traditional street market underway on Thursdays – some visual chaos.
- Recent development of outdoor cafes/bar seating adds to sense of vitality.



**Amoré café bar/restaurant High Street**

- Heavily trafficked – parking and through traffic are issues.
  - Improvement to maintain vibrancy but must be controlled to reasonable and safe levels allowing freer use of Main Street.
- Street planters and hanging baskets – enhance buildings and area.
  - Town experienced considerable recent success in 'Britain in Bloom' event.



**Private involvement in Britain in Bloom**

- Frodsham Christmas Festival – recently introduced, successful event with market stalls, street entertainment, live music and procession – based on continental model.
  - Organised by Frodsham Forward – a community led partnership aiming to improve the sustainability and quality of life of the town and its hinterland.

### 11.3 Historical associations with unusual crafts, famous people and events



**Bee logo finial atop fingerpost**

- Bee symbol – adopted by Frodsham Town Council to honour Rev. William Charles Cotton (1812 – 1879) – former parish vicar and authority on bee keeping – reputed to have introduced bees to New Zealand in 1830's.
- No. 64 Main Street – Yuet Ben Restaurant – formerly Manor House School – former pupil – Prince Warabo from Opobo in Nigeria – died in 1882 – buried in Parish churchyard at Overton.
- Interesting names of properties on The Rock.
  - Cave Cottage has a rock cave to the rear.
  - Press Cottage originally housed a printing press and was later a shop before being converted to residential in the late 1970's.

#### *11.4 Other characteristics which make the area unique*

- Contiguous with Frodsham (Castle Park Locality) Conservation Area.
- Historic core subject of a 2002 – 2005 Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme – building repair grants and environmental improvements jointly funded by English Heritage and Cheshire County, Vale Royal Borough and Frodsham Town Councils.

CONSULTATION DRAFT  
Frodsham (Town)  
Conservation Area Appraisal  
(one of a series to be produced)

Revised after public consultation  
VRBC Cons 3/X  
Aug 2006



**Appendix One: Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area**

Church Street	K4 Telephone kiosk, North of Railway Bridge	II	
Church Street	No.1 (formerly listed as No.2 High Street)	II	GV
Church Street	Frodsham Railway Station with former Stationmaster's house	II	
High Street	No.4	II	GV
High Street	No.44	II	
High Street	No.67, Rock Villa	II	
Main Street	Entrance to army premises adjoining No. 52 Main St.	II	GV
Main Street	K6 Telephone kiosk, to front of Nos. 101 and 103	II	GV
Main Street	Millbank House (listed as No.1 (Main Street House))	II	GV
Main Street	Nos. 1 and 2, Millbank Cottage	II	GV
Main Street	No. 38 (Brook House)	II	GV
Main Street	Nos. 46 and 48	II	GV
Main Street	Nos. 47, 49 and 51	II	GV
Main Street	No. 52 (formerly listed as The Gables)	II	GV
Main Street	Nos. 53, 55 and 57	II	GV
Main Street	No. 59 (Ashley House)	II	GV
Main Street	No. 81 (Old Hall Hotel)	II	GV
Main Street	No. 83	II	GV
Main Street	No.84	II	GV
Main Street	Nos. 85 and 89	II	GV
Main Street	No. 90	II	GV
Main Street	No. 92	II	GV
Main Street	Nos. 101 and 103	II	GV
Main Street	Nos. 108 and 110	II	GV

Main Street	Queen's Head Hotel (formerly listed as Queen's Head Hotel and Outbuilding adjacent to Queen's Head Hotel)	II	GV
Main Street	Stable on E side of yard behind Queen's Head Hotel (formerly listed as barn to south east of Queen's Head Hotel)	II	GV
Main Street	The Bear's Paw Hotel	II	GV
Main Street	The Golden Lion	II	GV
Main Street	2 Tide-stones in garden at rear of Old Hall Hotel	II	GV
Main Street	(Lloyds) Trustee Savings Bank	II	GV
Main Street	Walls on W and N side of garden at back of Old Hall Hotel	II	GV

**Additional images of other grade II listed buildings within the conservation area**



**No. 38 Main Street**



**Stable in Queen's Head Yard**



**Nos. 101 and 103 Main Street**



**Nos. 47 to 57 Main Street**



**Millbank House, Main Street**



**Rock Villa No. 67 High Street**



**K2 telephone kiosk (on left)  
o/s No. 101 Main Street**



**Nos. 1 and 2 Millbank Cottage,  
Main Street**



**T A Arch Main Street**



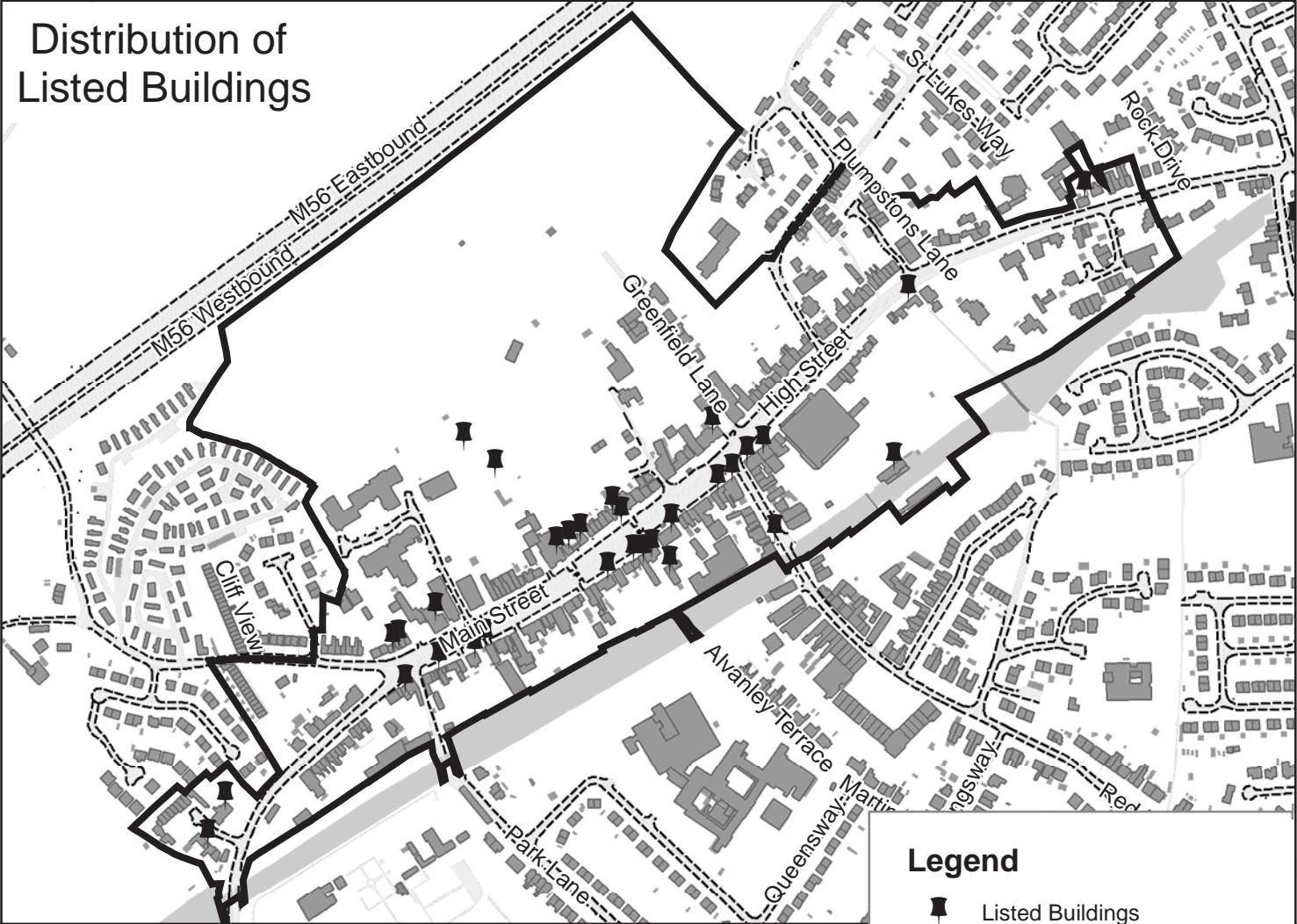
**Appendix Two: Locally Important Buildings within the Conservation Area**

<u>Street</u>	<u>Property</u>
Church Street	No. 3
Church Street	Warehouse to rear of No. 6
Church Street	No. 8
Church Street	Cholmondeley Arms, No. 12
Fountain Lane	Nos. 2 and 4
High Street	No. 9
High Street	Red Lion, No. 17
High Street	No. 25
High Street	No. 27
High Street	Nos. 28, 30 and 32
High Street	No. 37
High Street	No. 40
High Street	Rock House, No. 48
High Street	No. 50
High Street	Rock Cottage, No. 52
High Street	Trinity House
High Street	Trinity Methodist Church ruins and Spire
High Street	The Knoll
High Street	Former Police H.Q. on corner of Ship Street
High Street	The Cottage, Albert Row, off High Street
Main Street	No. 1 (Millbank Cottage)
Main Street	No. 14
Main Street	No. 20
Main Street	Nos. 26 and 28

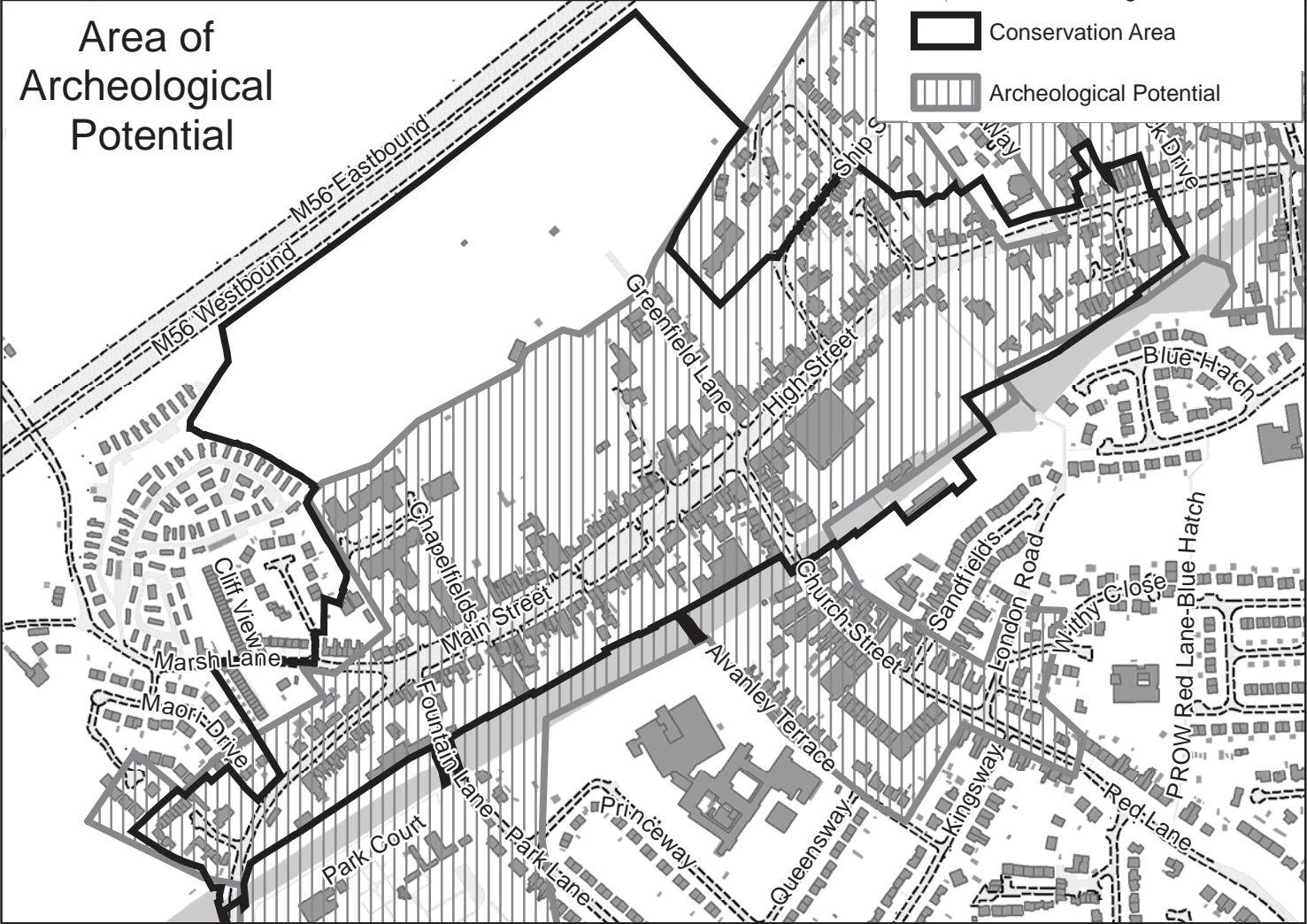
Main Street	No. 29 Cheshire Cheese
Main Street	Nos. 31 and 33
Main Street	No. 42
Main Street	Millstone Farm, 43 Main Street
Main Street	No. 68
Main Street	Nos. 70 and 72
Main Street	Conservative Club, No. 74
Main Street	Nos. 75 and 77
Main Street	Barn, No. 78A
Main Street	No. 84A
Main Street	No. 88
Main Street	Nos. 91 to 99
Main Street	No. 100
Main Street	National Westminster, No. 117
Main Street	No. 119
Main Street	Nos. 119A and 121
Main Street	No. 123
Main Street	Bourne Methodist Chapel
Main Street	Drill Hall
Main Street	Main Street (north side) K6 kiosk adjacent to listed K6 kiosk outside No. 101
Main Street	Main Street (south side) In pavement adjacent to wall of No.52.
Marsh Lane	Nos. 1 to 13
Marsh Lane	Moreton Terrace, Nos. 1 to 14
Ship Street	Former Court House dated 1894 now Girl Guides H.Q.
Ship Street	No. 1



# Distribution of Listed Buildings



# Area of Archeological Potential



*Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements that give an area its character, it can only be a 'snapshot' in time. Elements and details of an area may be important even if they are not specifically referred to in the document.*

*This document should be read in conjunction with "Conservation Area Appraisals", produced by Vale Royal Borough Council in July 1997*

**Frodsham Conservation Area was designated by Cheshire County Council on 25 July 1973 and extended by Vale Royal District Council on 17 November 1977. It was reviewed in 2004/5 following the designation of the Frodsham (Castle Park Locality) Conservation Area and a boundary revision was proposed.**

**This appraisal relates to the revised and renamed Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area, designated by Vale Royal Borough Council on 28 September 2006 following a consultation exercise. This appraisal was adopted as Supplementary Planning Information for the purpose of informing relevant planning control decisions.**

Utilising an initial survey by Robyn Wolley  
and work by the Frodsham and District  
Local History Group

**Copies of the summary of consultation comments and the responses to them are available as a separate document**

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