

Design & Access Statement Heritage Statement

Market Chambers
No. 56 High Street, Cheadle
ACB Phoenix

Design and Access Statement in support of:

The renovation and conversion of existing offices into 2no. residential apartments

"Good design can help to create lively spaces with distinctive character, streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale; and places that inspire because of imagination and sensitivity of their designers."

- *By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System; Towards Better Practice (DETR & CABE, 2000).*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Design & Access statement has been prepared in response to the Governments changes to the planning application process outlined in circular: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System, which came into effect on the 10th August 2006.
- 1.2. The statement provides an analysis and narrative of the proposals and is in line with guidance produced by CABE entitled Design and Access Statements: how to write, read and use them.
- 1.3. The building is located at No. 56 High Street, Cheadle, adjacent to the Market Square.
- 1.4. The proposals consist of the conversion of the upper storeys from office use into residential accommodation.
- 1.5. The production of this appraisal has been considered as a necessary part of the design development process to ensure that any potential changes actively seek to respond positively to the building's specific context and significance.

2.0 USE

- 2.1. The three-storey building is currently occupied by Moshi café and a retail unit at ground floor, while the upper storeys have lain vacant for approximately four years. Their last known use was as an office unit for a quantity surveyor.
- 2.2. The current access situation makes the property less appealing for potential businesses, as users have to travel to the rear via an alleyway adjacent to the café, making it difficult to maintain a presence along the High Street. The property has been marketed for let in the intervening years, but nobody has found the accommodation suitable.
- 2.3. It is felt that the best use of the property would be to convert the upper storeys into residential accommodation, while maintaining the commercial use at ground floor.
- 2.4. The property has been left in relatively good condition for potential conversion, although there are areas of damp appearing to the internal walls. It's likely that the roof and rainwater goods require some attention.

3.0 AMOUNT

- 3.1. The first floor extends to 120sqm internally, while the second floor is smaller at 85sqm. The ground floor has a similar footprint to the first floor, with the addition of a flat roof extension housing the café's kitchen area at the rear.
- 3.2. It is proposed to split the accommodation over the two floors, with one 2-bed flat at first floor, covering approximately 108sqm, and one 3-bed flat at second floor, covering approximately 95sqm (incorporating the hallway and staircase at first floor).
- 3.3. It is proposed to demolish a small area of lean-to (approximately 2.5sqm) to allow for two separate entrances to the flats, avoiding the need for a communal hallway.
- 3.4. A small external terrace area (approximately 9.5sqm) will also be provided for use by residents.

4.0 LAYOUT

- 4.1. The proposed layout has been carefully considered to utilise the existing space as best as possible, minimising the need for alterations, while providing suitable accommodation and amenity for potential residents.
- 4.2. The existing first floor has two entrance doors, one leading into a small porch off the main office area, and the other to a utility area and central hallway with staircase. Utilising both entrances for each flat was explored but dismissed, as the first-floor layout doesn't lend itself to the living accommodation being situated at the rear.
- 4.3. It is proposed to remove a small section of lean-to and create two new entrance doors which will allow private access to each property.
- 4.4. The first floor flat utilises the larger spaces to the front of the building as living space, overlooking the High Street. These rooms offer the best accommodation and features, with a large chimney breast (that could see a fireplace reinstated), high ceilings and tall sash windows. It is proposed to remove the modern partition and create an open plan living/kitchen/dining space benefitting from an abundance of natural daylight.
- 4.5. The addition of a doorway into the corridor section means that the first floor flat can utilise the rear rooms as bedrooms, whilst retaining the private staircase for the second floor flat. The space is currently long and narrow, lit via two rooflights above. It is proposed to reduce the "corridor" by creating a small lobby off the

living space, and adding a new partition to the opposite end, forming a wardrobe area for the second bedroom. Eaves storage will be maintained in the areas of limited headroom.

- 4.6. A stepped access leads to a good-sized master bedroom. Both bedrooms are ensuite, as the current layout didn't lend itself to the addition of a larger bathroom. Guests can utilise a new WC off the entrance lobby. Egress in the event of fire could be via a fire escape window in the master bedroom, if exit via the front door was impossible.
- 4.7. The second floor flat is accessed via a private hallway and the existing feature staircase. The removal of the second-floor stair partitions (subject to building control approval) will ensure a more domestic, rather than institutional, feel.
- 4.8. The living accommodation is smaller, but again utilises the more appealing front rooms, overlooking the High Street. A master bedroom with ensuite is formed alongside the living room.
- 4.9. A family bathroom serves two further bedrooms at the rear. The space has been planned to make best use of the areas of reduced headroom.

5.0 APPEARANCE

- 5.1. The key elevations from the High Street and Market Place are unlikely to change beyond general maintenance and repair of the windows, rainwater goods etc.
- 5.2. To the rear, the partial demolition of the lean-to and the creation of an external terrace area should serve to improve what is essentially an unappealing rear yard. The flat roof extension containing Moshi's kitchen will be suitably enhanced by the addition of a parapet wall and should form a more attractive courtyard space.
- 5.3. The bay window to the first floor master bedroom will be removed and replaced with a flush timber sash window, providing more privacy internally, but also more space to pass externally.

6.0 SCALE

- 6.1. There will be no change to the scale of the building beyond the removal of a small section at the rear entrance.

7.0 LANDSCAPING & ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1. The area surrounding the proposed flats is semi-private, with a gated access into a shared space utilised by the café and another residential property. No landscaping is proposed beyond the creation of the roof terrace.

8.0 ACCESS

- 8.1. For the purpose of this statement compliance with the current edition of the Building Regulations Part M is assumed to be covered within the detailed design and the proposals, as this is mandatory. It is not intended to provide exhaustive coverage of all means taken to secure such compliance.
- 8.2. For the purposes of this statement of the definition of 'disability' is taken as that in Part 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 8.3. The site is considered to be in a sustainable location, being located off the main High Street, with the many facilities it has to offer.
- 8.4. The upper storeys of Market Chambers are accessed via a stepped alleyway to the side of the café, through a secure gate, and up further steps onto an external terraced area. For this reason, it is considered that the proposed flats would not be suitable for wheelchair users or those unable to manage several stairs. It wouldn't be possible to provide a ramped or lift access in this case.
- 8.5. The High Street operates a one-way system for vehicles, with short stay on street parking. Long stay parking is available at various sites around Cheadle, on a pay-as-you-go or permit basis. However, due to the central location of the proposed flats, it may be that potential residents will not require the use of a private vehicle. The building sits within walking distance of major bus routes that give regular access to both the surrounding towns and villages, and the city of Stoke-on-Trent.

9.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Description of the Asset

- 9.1. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), any design should seek to "conserve and enhance" the historic environment. Section 12 of the NPPF states that LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, with a level of detail proportionate to its importance (P128).

- 9.2. No. 56 High Street (or Market Chambers as it is known), though not nationally-listed, represents a key historic building within Cheadle Conservation Area. In developing this scheme, consideration has been given to the *Cheadle Conservation Area Appraisal*, along with the *Extensive Urban Survey*, both of which evaluate the historic significance of the area and identify features of townscape and landscape importance.
- 9.3. Cheadle is one of the oldest market towns in the Staffordshire Moorlands dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. It was granted 'market charter' in 1216. Since then it has grown steadily over the centuries – just 220 households were recorded in 1772, expanding to 696 by 1871.
- 9.4. There are 21 listed buildings/monuments within the conservation area, the closest being No.s 1-6 The Square, 47, 51, 62 & 64 High Street, The Wheatsheaf Hotel and the Market Cross. The HER also contains information relating to non-designated buildings such as the Market Hall. However, no information pertaining to No. 56 can be found.
- 9.5. The town's medieval structure has altered little over the years, and the character appraisal describes the buildings along the High Street as forming the historic central core of the town. This is reflected in the medieval burgage plots still visible to the north side of the High Street.
- 9.6. Cheadle is described as "a typical undefended linear town, which incorporates the market place within a deliberately widened street." It is believed that the original market place was situated between the medieval church (on the site of the current St. Giles' parish church) at the south western end, and the junction with Cross Street, where the 17th century market cross can be found.
- 9.7. For this reason, it is believed that many of the properties along the High Street, particularly those to the northern side, might have much earlier origins than their frontages suggest. Some retain medieval footings or later timber framed elements within updated Georgian/Victorian brick facades. Of these such buildings, only No. 64 has been the subject of any archaeological assessment, which established that the original market place was likely much wider, the building line having since been extended forward.
- 9.8. The built form of the High Street, defined as HUCA 1 within the extensive urban survey, is described as primarily 2-3 storey buildings in red brick with tiled roofs, with 14 of the 21 listed buildings being of early 19th century origin. However, there is potential for many of these properties to yield medieval provenance. The town was prospering during this time due to the arrival of the textile industry, and so many of the town centre buildings were remodelled during this period.
- 9.9. Lewis' 'Topographical Dictionary for England' (1848) states "the houses in the main street have, for the most part, been either rebuilt or modernised of late years, and appear substantial and roomy." It seems likely that this is the case for

Market Chambers, as some internal walls look to contain timber framing that appears incongruous with its Georgian brick facade.

- 9.10. By the early 19th century, Cheadle lay along an important coaching route, which may be the reason the market place was relocated further north to its current location, likely requiring the demolition of several properties. The Grade II listed properties at the rear of the current market place have been dated to the early 19th century.
- 9.11. No. 56 doesn't appear in Kelly's Directory for 1904 or earlier, despite many of the town's businesses being focused along the High Street. A grocer resided at No. 54, and a draper at No. 57. The property was, instead, used as a private residence.
- 9.12. 'Edwardian & Great War Cheadle' records Richard Francis Godwin (1874 – 1930) living at the property as early as 1851. He was the second son of Thomas Steele Godwin and Matilda, landowners & drapers, living there until the building was sold in 1906. He later lived with his mother and sisters at Harewood Park. Mr Godwin was a well-known character within the town, while his sister Sarah was the commandant for the Red Cross Society.
- 9.13. Photographs from circa 1900 show Market Chambers with a central pilastered doorway with windows to either side, and a tall bay window to the far right side. By 1925, these had been replaced by a large glazed shopfront with awning above. The 1910 Rate Evaluation Book records the property as a house with outbuildings, occupied by Wardle & Sons Pawnbrokers.
- 9.14. It's likely that the upper storeys remained in residential use, until a change of use application was submitted in 1990 (SMD/1990/0012), becoming office space. An application to return the rear portion to residential use was submitted and approved in 2008 (SMD/2008/0313), and these works were subsequently carried out.
- 9.15. The adjacent market place and Grade II listed properties at the rear were subject to planning approval for refurbishment in 2003/04, and the area now forms a key focal point for Cheadle town centre, with markets taking place throughout the week. The market hall is designated a key unlisted building within the conservation area, housing two iron Georgian verandas dating from 1822.

10.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Assessment of its Significance

- 10.1. To assess the significance of any affected heritage assets, this document adopts the methods outlined in Historic England's publication "*Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance*." The guidance describes four heritage values that may contribute to the significance of a place: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal.
- 10.2. *Evidential Value* is described as "the potential of a place to yield evidence of past activity." For example, archaeological deposits may provide clues in place of any written record. It is often proportional to the amount of material evidence that has since been lost or altered.
- 10.3. The extensive urban survey reports high evidential value for the High Street, being the likely extent of medieval Cheadle. Burgage plots to the northern side are still clearly legible within the town plan, with high potential for archaeological deposits yielding evidence of domestic and industrial activity from this period.
- 10.4. Works to buildings along the High Street, such as No. 64 and No. 73, have revealed 15-17th century origins with internal timber framing. It appears that Market Chambers may also have an earlier provenance than its façade suggests. The survey states that "such information reveals an understanding of the earliest character of the town as well as enhancing the wider social and economic history." However, the building has obviously undergone a number of changes over the years, and therefore evidential potential may be somewhat limited.
- 10.5. *Historical Value* derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative and may be closely related to whether an asset retains its original use.
- 10.6. Historical value is identified as high within the High Street area due to the number of legible heritage assets and surviving historic buildings. Market Chambers has an interesting history given that it appears it was used as a private residence for a considerable period of time, at least during the 19th century. This is relatively unusual for a town centre property, where the majority had shops at street level and accommodation above. It seems that the property was only converted into such use in the early 20th century, and the upper storeys have since seen both residential and office use.
- 10.7. *Aesthetic Value* derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Aesthetic value within this section of the conservation area is high. The built character is one of 2 to 3 storey red brick properties, many with Georgian or Victorian sash windows and shop fronts. The

market square, bounded by historic buildings, including the particularly attractive row of bow fronted shops at the rear, represents a charming focal point within the town. Further east, some of the character has been lost to more modern development.

- 10.8. Market Chambers is typical of the architecture found along the High Street, being a three storey, three bay Georgian property in red brick, with (later) timber sash windows and a pretty decorative bargeboard to the market place elevation. Internally it retains many attractive features such as coving, picture rails, deep skirting and a turned balustrade staircase.
- 10.9. *Communal Value* is about the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it. Again, communal value along the High Street is high, being the commercial heart of the town. It allows the community to interact with historic buildings on a daily basis. At ground floor, Market Chambers retains high value, currently occupied by a hairdressers and café, but communal value inevitably diminishes to the rear and upper storeys, as spaces become more private.

11.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

The Design Concept

- 11.1. The proposals for change of use into residential accommodation have been discussed at length in preceding chapters of the design & access statement, but in summary consist of:
 - division of the upper storeys into 2 flats – 1 no. 2 bed flat at first floor & 1 no. 3 bed flat at second floor
 - partial demolition of the entrance lean-to to form two new entrances
 - replacement of the bay window with a timber sash window, to match those on the adjacent property
 - blocking up of one external door with recessed brickwork (utilising reclaimed brick from the lean-to), with timber sash above (etched privacy glass to ensuite)
 - addition of parapet wall to flat roof to create external terrace area
 - no change to the key High Street elevations beyond routine repair & maintenance
 - blocking of internal openings and addition of new doorways to aid layout
- 11.2. The layout has been carefully considered through exploration of several alternatives before settling on the submitted design. It was felt this is the best compromise between minimal alteration and creation of saleable properties, which should serve to enhance the existing historic features.
- 11.3. Wherever possible, works should be in line with the conservation principles of minimum intervention, careful repair and reversibility. For example, internal openings should be blocked using stud partition, leaving reveals and architraves

visible to ensure future legibility of the building. Windows are to be repaired using traditional methods or replaced like-for-like if beyond repair.

12.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

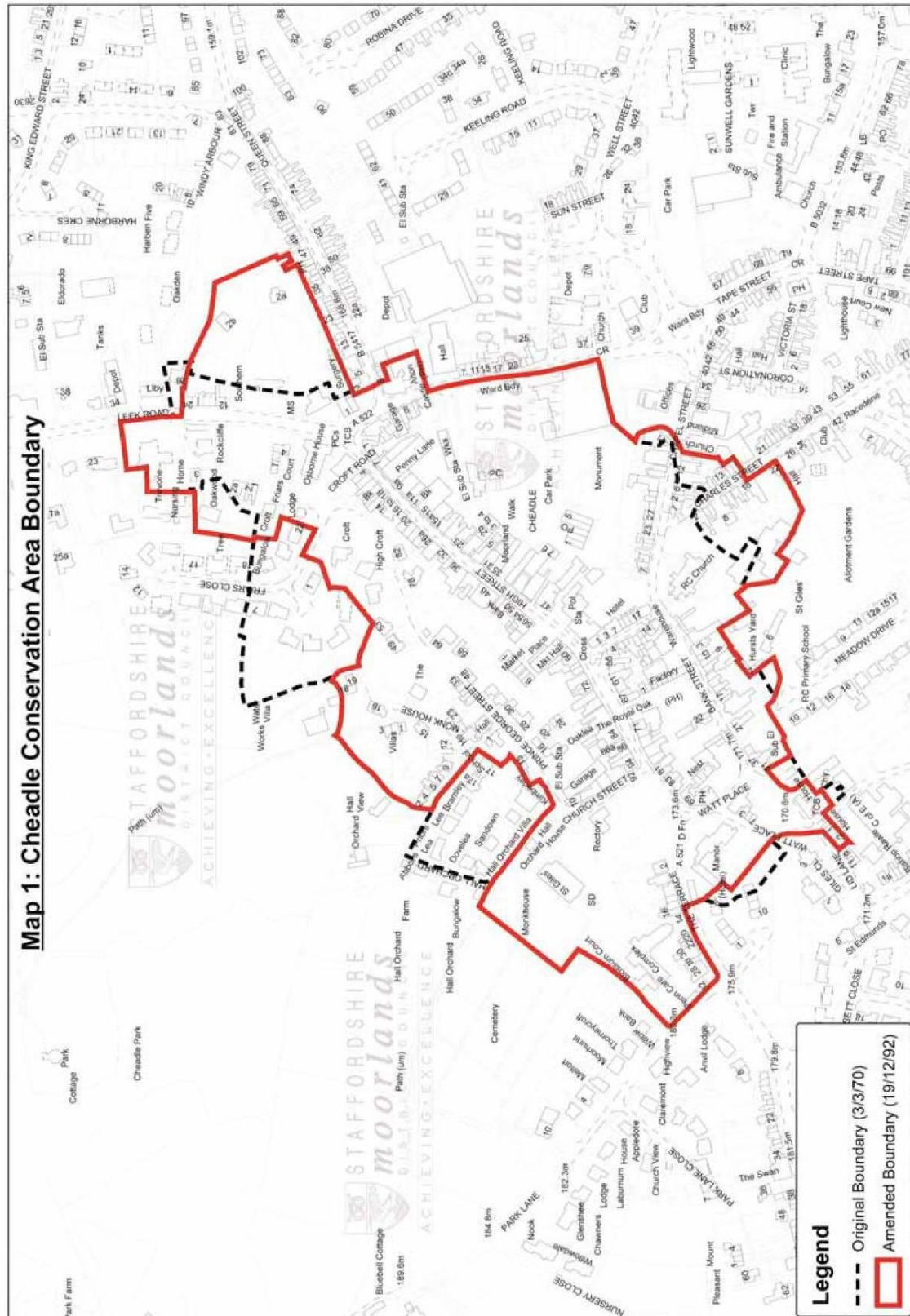
The Impact

- 12.1. The aim of this report is to assess the impact of any proposals on the significance of any heritage assets that might be affected. In line with current NPPF guidance, any proposals should seek to conserve and enhance historic character.
- 12.2. The property lies within the Cheadle Conservation Area, which is a heritage asset that can be afforded a relatively high level of significance. The building is unlisted but sits at a key location within the town centre and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. Therefore, it is considered to retain some level of heritage significance in terms of legibility of the medieval market town, and the evolution of the high street (particularly in the early 19th century).
- 12.3. Impact on the significance of the conservation area will be minimal. The key elevations to the side and front (those visible along the High Street) will remain unchanged, benefitting from repair and maintenance where necessary.
- 12.4. According to the conservation area appraisal *"some buildings on the High Street and Cross Street are still being under used on the upper floors. Although the problem has been targeted over recent years, the lack of use of floor space can act as a disincentive to owners to keep their buildings in a good state of repair. It is also a missed opportunity for additional income and helps create a lively area at night."* The upper storeys of Market Chambers currently lie vacant and have done for some time. The application seeks to return these rooms to residential accommodation, thereby ensuring a continued use benefitting the area as a whole.
- 12.5. Changes to the rear are minimal - removing a bay window and part of the lean-to, both of which appear as more modern interventions. The addition of an external terrace will serve to make the semi-private yard area more attractive to residents.
- 12.6. Internally, changes have been kept to a minimum, and every effort has been made to retain and enhance the original features of the building. The addition of partition walls (and blocking of openings using studwork) ensure that changes are reversible and shouldn't negatively impact the significance of the building.
- 12.7. The proposed changes are unlikely to affect any other heritage assets within the immediate vicinity, being focused to the rear of the High Street within an enclosed yard area. Therefore, it is concluded that the application represents

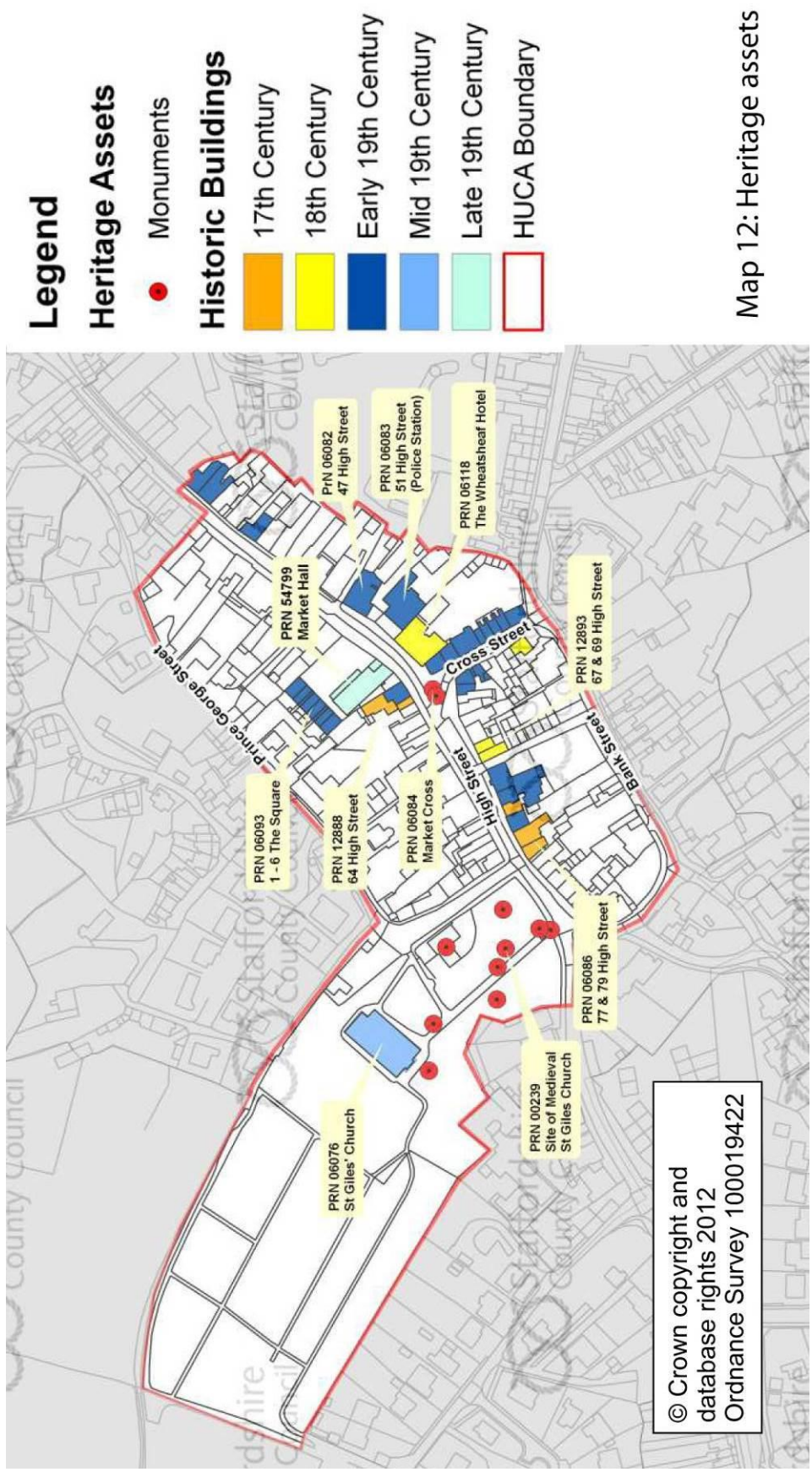
no substantial harm to the conservation area or surrounding listed buildings, and less than substantial harm to Market Chambers itself.

References

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Edwardian & Great War Cheadle 1905 -1918 – F.J. Johnson (1997)

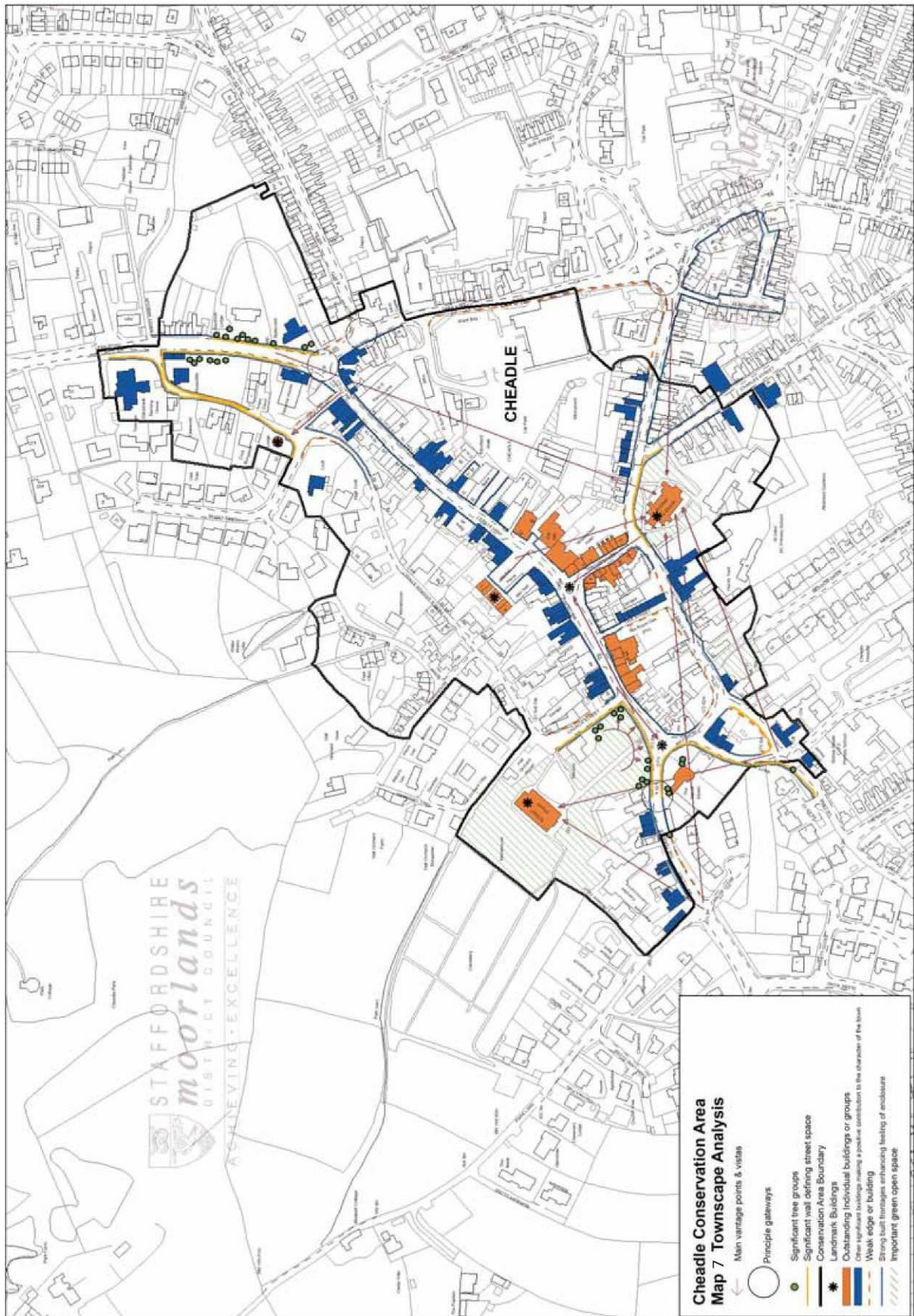


1: Cheadle Conservation Area Boundary. Cheadle Conservation Appraisal



Map 12: Heritage assets

2: HER map showing nationally and locally listed buildings with date of origin.
Extensive Urban Survey



3: Townscape Analysis - Market Chambers is identified as "other significant buildings making a positive contribution to the character of the area." Cheadle Conservation Area Appraisal



5: Cheadle High Street c.1900 showing Market Chambers before the ground floor was converted into a shop (left). *Around Cheadle – W. George Short*



4: Cheadle High Street c.1925, with shop front and awning. *Cheadle: The Second Selection – W. George Short*