

# NEW ROAD CHATHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL (Adopted October 2004)

## **PURPOSE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

This document aims to define what gives the New Road Conservation area its special character. This includes the historic development of the area, its architecture and the layout and setting of the buildings. It also looks at factors that threaten the historic character of the area and puts forward policies and proposals for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. As supplementary planning guidance it is intended to guide and inform residents and planners, particularly when applications for planning permission and listed building consent are being considered.

### **Summary: Characteristics of the Area**

New Road was built as a residential suburb between 1790 and 1820. When built it was one of the smartest parts of Georgian Chatham and is one of the few parts of the 18<sup>th</sup> century town to survive. Key characteristics of the area are:

- Attractive townscape of terraced buildings with formal façades
- Gibraltar Terrace – an important group of historic buildings with a uniform façade that forms the centrepiece of the conservation area
- All buildings in the area are of architectural or historic interest, many are listed
- Materials and detailing, such as brickwork, roof coverings, window and door details that make a major contribution to the architectural quality of the buildings in the area
- Varied rear elevations to buildings featuring a mix of plan forms, materials and detailing
- Location on a main traffic route
- A potentially attractive street layout of wide road lined with trees
- Remains of original steps and railings remain in front of some houses

### **Topography and Townscape**

The conservation area consists of a single street situated on gently rising ground close to the centre of Chatham. New Road forms part of the A2 and is one of the main traffic arteries through Chatham. The road follows the contour of the Hill, resulting in the topography of the conservation area itself being relatively flat. As with the rest of central Chatham, New Road is densely settled and consists entirely of terraced houses. Those at the west end of the area are grander, with a uniform three-storey façade. The east end is more varied with a jumble of houses of different designs. New Road was originally built as a residential district and most of the properties were originally single occupancy houses. Shops began to be introduced during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and the area is now a mix of houses, offices and flats, though the residential character of the street remains. Until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the area was surrounded by densely packed terraces dating

from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, during the 1960s and 1970s these were replaced by a new road layout and blocks of flats, offices and car parks, which isolate the area from the historic street pattern of the town centre.

## History

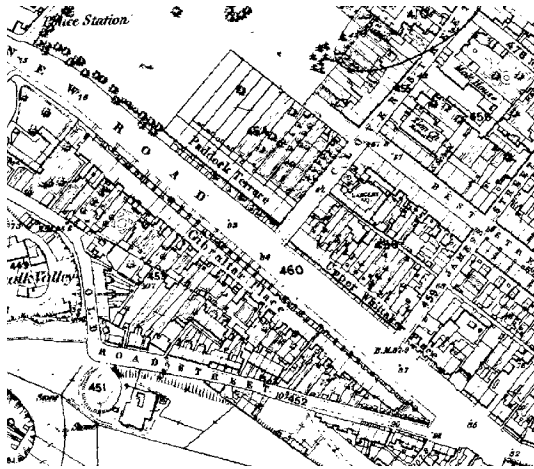
New Road was created in 1791 when an act was granted in parliament for the cleaning and lighting of Chatham's streets. This included the building of New Road to bypass the congested High Street and formed a continuation of New Road Rochester. Building work was completed with the erection of the viaduct over Rome Lane (now Railway Street) in 1794. Once built New Road became part of main road between London, Canterbury and Dover and continued in this role until Chatham was bypassed by the construction of the M2.

The eastern part of the land on which New Road was built was owned by Thomas Whittaker. He was quick to take advantage of the new, wide street situated away from the crowded and squalid tenements of central Chatham and in 1793 leased his land to Thomas Milton, a bricklayer and William Mannering, a house carpenter, on the condition that they built houses on the land within three years.

Milton and Mannering divided the land between themselves and erected houses on both sides of the street between 1793 and 1805. The properties were then either leased part finished to carpenters who undertook to finish the property and sell it on or as finished houses to individuals. Each house appears to have been designed either individually or as a pair, the wide variety of designs may suggest that the new owners were involved in the design and specification of the property. Photographs of the now demolished north side of the street show it to have consisted with a mixture of two and three storey properties constructed out of brick and timber. To the rear of these properties a variety of cottages and warehouses were erected.

The western half of New Road was owned by the Best Family, owners of the local brewery situated on what is now Manor Road and a large house in Rome Lane (now Railway Street). The south side of the road was developed first with the construction of Gibraltar Terrace (2-38 New Road). This has a complex constructional history with a façade being built in 8 phases between 1793 and 1820. 12-16 were built first as a symmetrical block of four houses. The terrace was gradually extended eastwards during the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with numbers 18-38. A western extension (numbers 2-12) was constructed during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in a slightly different style. It is likely that the frontages were built by a principal builder who sub-let each property to different builders who built the rears either singly or in pairs. This was common practice during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and would account for the varied design of the rear of the terrace. The full constructional history of the terrace is shown in more detail in fig 1.

On the northern side of the street, Paddock Terrace (now 5-19) was laid out between 1840 and 1860. While slightly more modest than Gibraltar Place these were high quality properties set in small front gardens with wrought iron railings with a wide tree lined pavement. Two large detached vicarages for the incumbents of St John's and St Mary's churches were erected at the west end of new road between Paddock Terrace and The Old Courthouse during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. St Mary's Vicarage is now a club and St John's has been demolished and replaced by modern flats.



New Road 1861



New Road Today

By the 1960s much of the eastern end of the High Street was considered to be substandard housing and a radical plan of slum clearance and road improvements was launched in 1963, at which point much of the north side of New Road was compulsory purchased by the Council. Demolition took place in 1970, with much of the historic housing at the east end of New Road (outside the present conservation area) being demolished around the same time. Numbers 61-71, adjacent to the Admiral Duncan, survived a little longer, being demolished between 1979 and 1982.

### **Built Environment**

The centrepiece of the conservation area is Gibraltar Terrace (numbers 12-38). Despite the piecemeal nature of its construction the builders of the later part of the terrace (22-38) managed to give a unified appearance to the façade with a central pediment. The terrace is three stories high throughout and built of deep red brick above a basement with a stringcourse between the first and second floors and a parapet hiding a variety of different roofs. Doors are panelled and set under semicircular arches with decorative fanlights and windows are of the sash type set under gauged brick lintels. Ground floor windows are set under gauged brick arches springing front white painted imposts. Most of the original frontage has survived unaltered. Alterations have concentrated on the basements, many of which have been rendered and windows have been replaced, the introduction

of Victorian bay windows in numbers 32 and 34 and the rebuilding of number 16 with an exuberant Doric porch and lantern above the parapet.



32-34 New Road



14 New Road, Porch



38 New Road, Door detail

The earlier part of the terrace, numbers 12-20, have frontages of two unequal bays, a narrow bay with an arched headed door above which is a six over six pane first floor window and a low three over three pane attic window. The wide bay consists of a tripartite sash window set under a segmental arch and featuring decorative fanlights. Tripartite sashes are used throughout the rest of this bay, though in some instances false shutters have replaced the side windows.



18-20 New Road



24-26 New Road

The later part, numbers 22-38, is slightly simpler. The frontages consist of three bays, all of equal width. The ground floor features semicircular-headed windows, the first floor six over six pane sashes and the first floor three over three sashes.

The rears of these houses are varied. Apart from 22-28, which are very similar and consist of a single square wing, most houses have a different footprint and



plan form often with narrow rear wings. Walls are a mixture of brick, timber-framed weatherboarding and render. Windows are mostly of the sash type and generally flush fitted. Roofs are all hipped and were originally either set at a low pitch and covered in slate or set at a high pitch and covered in peg tiles. There are two pairs of houses 18-20 and 34-36 which were built by different builders but set under a common hipped roof. Roofs of the rear wings are either of the mansard type, hipped or mono pitched. One of the cottages once common in this area remains to the rear of number 22. The rear of number 16 has been completely rebuilt in brick with a parapet all round and recessed four paned sashes. In general the rears of the buildings are well preserved and form an interesting contrast to the formal façade of the property. However, some poor quality work, such as overly large extensions, concrete tiles and poorly detailed doors and windows has been fitted. Many rear gardens have been converted into car parking.



Rear of 2-28 New Road

2-10 New Road are in a similar style to Gibraltar Terrace but are built of a lighter yellow stock brick and the attic windows have been enlarged to 9 panes. Ground floor windows feature square headed windows set under gauged brick lintels set under round headed arches. Number 4-6 is slightly lower than 2 and 8-10. Number 2 has been rendered and features a large two-storey corner wing with a bay. The rears of properties display a similar variety to numbers 12-38 but were originally exclusively roofed in slate.



8-10 New Road



4-6 New Road



Rear of 8-10 New Road

Most of the properties at the eastern end of the road are typical late 18<sup>th</sup> century small town houses. The façades are more varied than Gibraltar Terrace and are generally two storied with a basement and attic. Most buildings are either two bays wide with an offset door or three bays wide with a central entrance flanked by bay windows. Some of these bays are original; others have been added during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Walls are generally of yellow or dark brown stock brick with red brick dressings including gauged bricks, lintels and segmental arches, though many of them have been rendered. Some buildings feature flat roofed porches supported by square columns. Roofs are generally tiled and of the mansard type set behind a parapet.



42-44 New Road



50-54 New Road

The original 18<sup>th</sup> century structures are interspersed with several 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. A pair of early 19<sup>th</sup> century two storey buildings of yellow stock brick with low-pitched slate roofs are situated at the extreme eastern end of the conservation area. Number 50 is a later insertion from c.1900 of red brick with a decorative pediment and single storey wing to the front covered in green tiles. Numbers 40-42 feature a 1930s rendered façade with paired sash windows and porthole fanlights above the doors.

Windows were originally universally of the sash type, being generally of the six over six pane type on earlier buildings and two over two panes in later buildings and inserted bay windows. Unfortunately many windows have been replaced with uPVC units. Doors are generally of the six-panelled type, though again several have been replaced by unsuitable uPVC units. One traditional shop front remains at number 62.

The rears of the properties are again varied, but are generally of brick, which is often rendered. Many have suffered extensively from inappropriate alterations such as large balconies and replacement windows.

## **Streetscape**

The streetscape is urban in nature with tarmac roads and concrete slab pavements. Both sides of the road are lined with small street trees set in cobbles. Street furniture is modern with traffic islands and internally illuminated bollards, modern streetlights and steel bollards that are not in sympathy with the character of the area. Some traditional street furniture, such as post boxes, survives.

Most buildings have a small private area in front of the building. Gibraltar Terrace originally featured a York Stone terrace at ground floor level surrounded by wrought iron railings and stone steps to an entrance at street level. This only survives in front of number 26. Elsewhere in the terrace original dividing walls capped with railings and steps survive along with some later Victorian stair railings. Number 14 features stone steps and steel railings dating from the 1930s. Many concrete steps and modern railings, some of which are reproductions of the original type, have been introduced. The eastern part of the street originally featured a small private area at ground level surrounded by railings. None of these survive.

## **Views**

The area is enclosed by rising ground to the south and modern structures to the north. Curves in New Road mean that the conservation area is hidden from view until entered. The only significant views are to be found within the area along Gibraltar Terrace and northwards from New Road to the green ridge of Great Lines and the Chatham War Memorial.

## **Problems and Pressures**

- The loss of traditional detailing, particularly the replacement of sash windows with uPVC units
- The loss of many original railings and their replacement with poor quality modern railings and boundary treatments
- Inappropriate street furniture and signage
- High volume of traffic on New Road resulting in high levels of air and noise pollution
- Poor quality modern development surrounding the conservation area
- Poor quality and intrusive signage on commercial premises
- Overly large rear extensions to non listed buildings

## **Development**

The area is densely developed with structures all of which make a valuable contribution to the conservation area. There is therefore little scope for large-scale development within the conservation area. However, there are opportunities for future redevelopment immediately to the north of the area as

part of the regeneration of Chatham. As new buildings in this area would face directly onto the conservation area they have the potential to significantly affect the area's character. New development would be expected to be of a similar scale and massing to buildings inside the conservation area and would be expected to exhibit a high standard of materials and detailing.

## **Planning Policies**

1. There will be a presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area
2. Proposals for new buildings bordering the Conservation Area should respect the layout, historical form of the townscape and street scene and respect existing properties in terms of bulk scale and siting. Materials and design details should be of a high quality.
3. Proposals for alterations and extension, including to the rear of properties, should respect the distinctive architecture style and character of the existing building in terms of bulk, height, position, size and detailed design. The overall character of the group of buildings will also need to be maintained.
4. Alterations which result on the loss of chimneys, or have a detrimental effect on roofscapes, including the insertion of rooflights onto front facing will normally be resisted
5. The Council will encourage the retention of original design features, such as railings, guttering, windows and doors, and where necessary will require the use of replica features in traditional materials in replacement of these works. Aluminium and uPVC replacement units will not normally be considered acceptable
6. In new works and replacement work, the Council will require that all materials, in particular brick and tile type and associated detailing, match the original building
7. The painting or rendering of unpainted surfaces on historic structures will not normally be acceptable
8. The positioning of satellite dishes in prominent positions will be discouraged
9. The retention of and reintroduction of high quality railings will be encouraged
10. The Council will encourage statutory undertakers to retain traditional street furniture, for example post boxes. Wherever possible replacement paving, street lamps, bollards and other street furniture should be in keeping with the character of the area in terms of design, materials and location



11. The Council will endeavour to preserve sites and structures of archaeological or historic importance

### **Extension of the Conservation Area**

Extension of the Conservation Area includes numbers 5-19 and 59 (formerly the Lord Duncan pub) New Road in the conservation area. These properties stand to the north of the conservation area and are all that remains of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces that once lined this side of the road. Numbers 5 -13 date from between 1840 to 1860 and are in a similar style to the 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings of Gibraltar Terrace, being of three stories above a basement with red brick walls, bands of yellow brickwork, a dentilated cornice and a simple parapet hiding the roofs. Most structures retain their original tripartite sash windows set under segmentally arched rendered lintels and four panelled doors set within recessed porches. Numbers 15-19 are a two storey terrace dormers lighting the attic. Yellow brick is used with red brick dressings around the windows. Roofs are of slate with an elaborate overhanging eaves detail and windows are two over two sashes. Modern shopfronts of an unsympathetic design have been inserted into the ground floors.



5-11 New Road



23-25 New Road

These structures are good examples of buildings of this period that retain many of their original features and are considered to be of architectural merit. They also complement and enhance the setting of the listed buildings opposite and add to the historic interest of the area by illustrating the development of the terraced townhouse in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

59 New Road is a timber-framed structure built in 1799 and listed grade II. When built it was named the Duncan's Head and commemorates Admiral Duncan, a naval hero who came to prominence in 1798. Currently unoccupied and in a deteriorating condition it does however have the potential to be restored and make a positive contribution to the character of the area as it occupies a prominent position when entering the area from the east. Inclusion in the conservation area helps to ensure that future restoration and development of the area would enhance the character of New Road.



59 New Road- Today



59 New Road- Conjectural Restoration

### **Article 4 Direction**

Much of the special character of the properties in New Road is derived from detail features such as timber sash windows, timber panelled doors, cast iron guttering and timber porches. The materials used, such as clay tiles and slates on roofs, the colour and texture of bricks and brickwork details such as parapets and gauged brick lintels.

As a large proportion of the buildings in the area are not listed in many cases these features are not controlled through the planning system. Consequently the rendering and painting of facades, the fitting of uPVC windows and the fitting of inappropriate modern doors have already marred the appearance of several buildings. The appearance of buildings is also at risk from the replacement of traditional roof coverings with concrete tiles and the erection of inappropriate boundary treatments such as concrete block walls.

The Council has therefore introduced an Article 4(2) Direction. Planning permission is required for the following works to a house fronting a road, path or public open space:

- Building, altering or removing a chimney
- Enlarging, improving or altering a house. This includes replacing windows, doors and guttering and applying bargeboards
- Altering a roof (including reroofing in a different material and fitting rooflights)
- Building a porch
- Building, altering or demolishing a gate, fence, wall or railings.
- Painting, rendering or pebble dashing the outside of the property (not including painting woodwork).

There would be no charge for making this type of planning application. The need for planning permission for extension, conservatories and roof alterations to the rear of the property would not change.

This would only affect single occupancy houses. Offices, shops, flats and buildings that are listed already need to apply for planning permission before making these changes.

*Appendix 1*

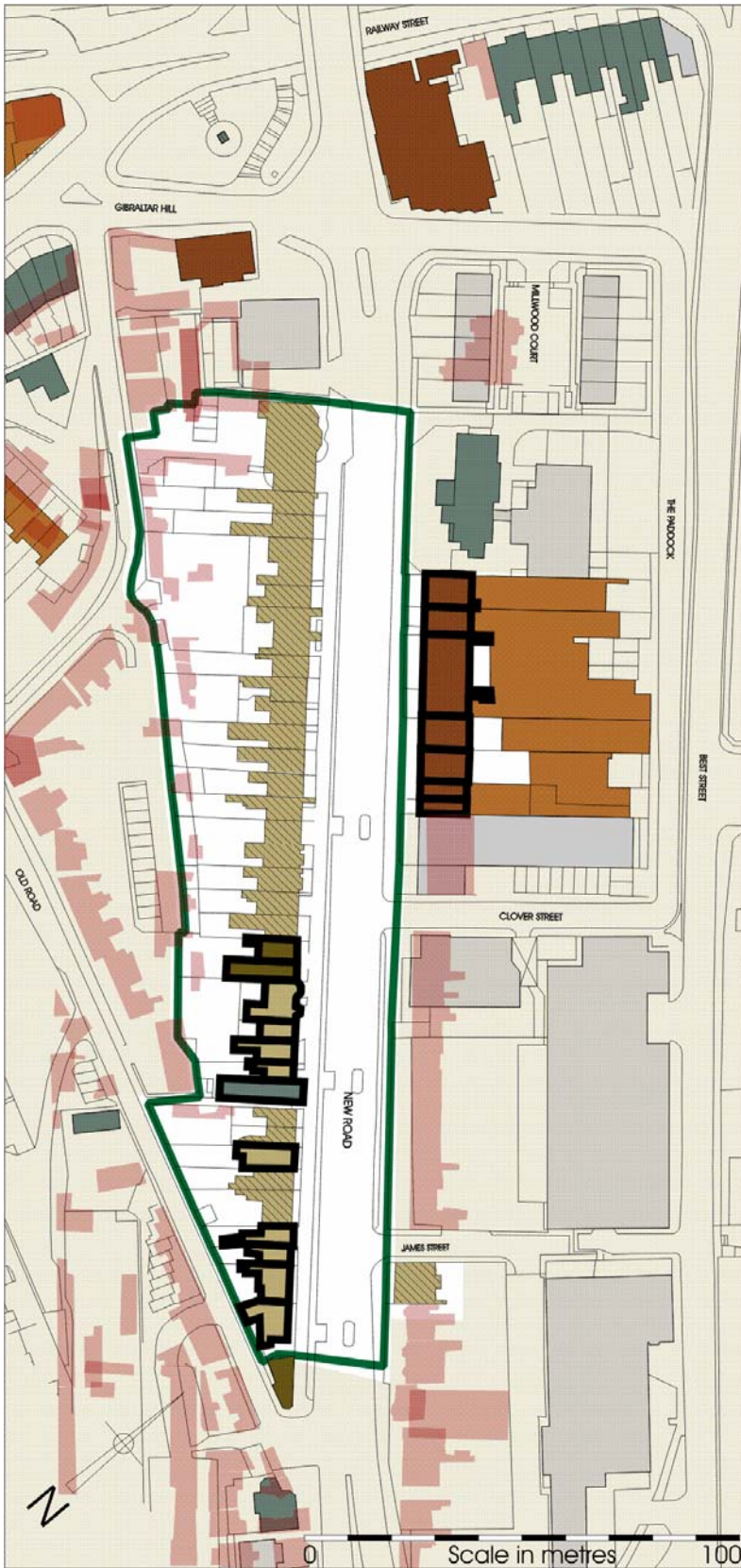
**LISTED BUILDINGS**

2-38 New Road  
52-54 New Road  
58-60 New Road

*Appendix 2*

**BUILDINGS IN THE CONSERVATION AREA**

2-68 (evens) inclusive, New Road

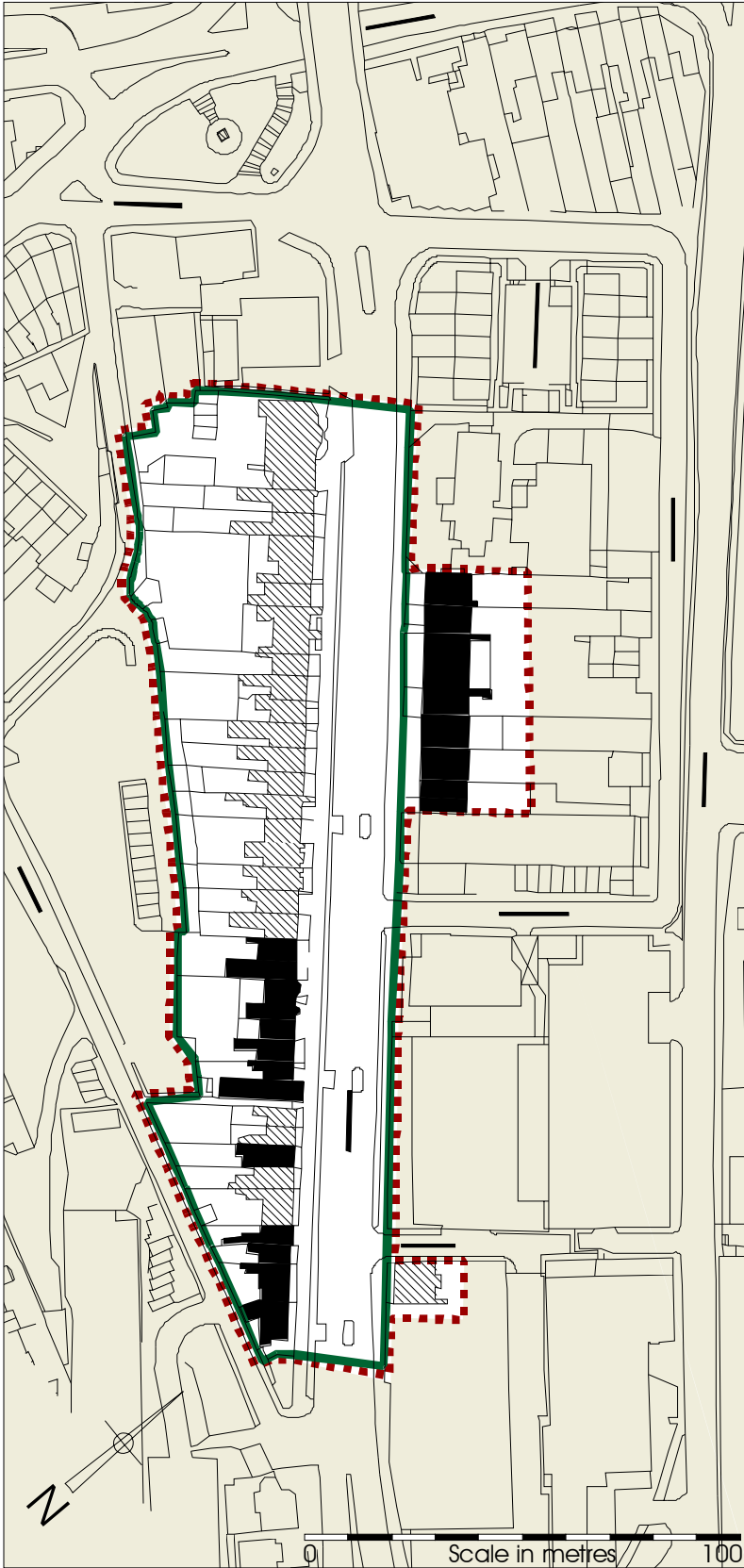


## NEW ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

- Building Age**
- 1793-1812
  - 1842-1866
  - 1866-1898
  - 1898-1909
  - 1909-1932
  - Post 1970
- Conservation area boundary**
- Listed Building**
- "Good" Building**
- Demolished Building**



NEW ROAD  
CONSERVATION AREA  
PROPOSALS MAP



-  Listed Building
-  Proposed Article 4 Building
-  Proposed Conservation area boundary
-  Conservation area boundary