

BOURNEMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY
DESIGN PROJECT WITHIN EAST BOSCOMBE AND POKESDOWN:
TO DETERMINE THE MOST SUITABLE PLANNING CHARACTERISATION
CRITERIA IN THESE AREAS

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Executive Summary

In Summer 2008 members of Bournemouth Civic Society, Ken Mantock Chairman and John Soane Built Environment Officer, met with Bournemouth Council's Chair of Planning Board Cllr John Beesley and Planning, Conservation & Design Manager Phil Robinson in order to discuss how the Civic Society might further support the Council, primarily through the evolution of its Local Development Framework, create more locally responsive planning policies and accommodate the levels of development envisaged in the Regional Spatial Strategy. It was agreed that the Civic Society would commission and undertake a characterisation study in the East Boscombe and Pokesdown area of the town with a view to assessing the potential of the secondary retail areas and the adjoining residential communities for accepting further development. The purpose of this study, that may inform the production of others across further areas of the town, is to assist the Council in ensuring that the allocation of areas for increased levels of development in the Local Development Core Strategy are proposed in the most suitable locations within the town and take place in an appropriate built form.

Following the agreement of the principles and extent of the design project the Study has been progressed with John Soane undertaking a thorough survey and evaluation of the roads and properties within the defined area. Data collection sheets were created and populated with information gathered from visits to the roads and photographs were taken to augment the written text. Regular meetings took place between Ken Mantock and John Soane during the production of the report and its first

draft was presented to the Civic Society's Executive Committee at its August meeting where it was agreed in principle. It was then sent to two local residents groups for comment - Pamela Ruthven of the Pokesdown South Residents Association based in Harcourt Road and Rob Saunders of Wheaton Road. The comments received from these community representatives have been incorporated, together with minor amendments suggested by Civic Society members Jean Bird, John Barker and Ken Mantock, who were authorised by the Executive Committee to approve and submit to Bournemouth Council the final version of the study, which we now do in October 2009.

The conclusion of this study is that the existing townscape within the study survey area is, generally speaking, a very precisely laid out series of mainly high density, residential neighbourhoods that more or less still fulfil their original purpose – that is the provision of relatively affordable homes for families and single people of modest or average means.

With the exception of the “villa” properties in the survey (south of Christchurch Road and west of Parkwood Road) none of the buildings in the area exhibit a particular level of high architectural refinement. However, ranges of property in the general vicinity of what may be considered popular amenities or being positioned in environmentally positive locations, could appear more visually distinctive than other areas of the survey.

However, irrespective of differing standards of visual presentation, the greater proportion of the roads present a very precisely integrated series of residential neighbourhoods in which to a reasonable degree, good patterns of communal life are still apparent – as for example quite well kept private areas between many houses and the road and a general absence of public untidiness and litter. The best kept roads generally coincide where a majority of houses of better appearance still tend to be kept as private residences.

The majority of roads of more utilitarian guise can be divided into two principal categories: -

- a)** utilitarian properties (usually terraced or semi-detached) which continue to be used mainly as private residences because the exceptionally high density and resulting complex property rights of the small plots precludes any kind of major redevelopment.

- b)** more spacious utilitarian detached and semi-detached properties mainly in the general vicinity of Christchurch, Ashley and Seabourne Roads. Although a fair number of houses are well maintained, because of the greater convenience of these areas to other parts of the resort, a growing proportion of properties are already used as HMOs or as flats. Thus in several roads, the balance between the character of these neighbourhoods becoming more commercial and therefore prone to increasing restructuring or remaining a more viable community is quite narrow.

This study was originally commissioned largely to consider how a more intense level of residential use, forced on the town by the Regional Spatial Strategy, might be accommodated within the survey area. However in attempting to designate what existing sites within the study survey would be suitable for redevelopment is not so easy and indeed the detailed work in creating this report has highlighted huge difficulties in doing so. Regardless of what level and form of development may take place we suggest that the social usage and visual appearance of the more neglected roads could be greatly improved by new infrastructures and street furniture – similar to what was carried out in Hamilton, Walpole and St. Clements Roads during the 1980's and 1990's. This

approach of urban improvement should be adopted by the Council alongside other initiatives.

Well over half of all the neighbourhoods surveyed are quite flourishing entities that in general terms should be left well alone. This leaves the peripheral/central sectors and the single, centrally positioned sector as the only part of the study survey where some re-development might take place but this must not be allowed if it is detrimental to the area. There is huge potential to create spacious quality residential accommodation in the non or under-used areas above shops in Christchurch Road on its north side between Ashley Road and Pokesdown Station and on the south side between Parkwood Road and Pokesdown Station. There is also a clear case to review the shopping core areas and where commercial uses have long gone encourage not just the upper floors but the ground floors of shops and commercial uses to be converted/redeveloped to residential use.

In roads where there exists a balance between the continued majority use of properties as private residences or as commercial accommodation, a decision will have to be made as to whether new blocks of moderately sized, linear shaped family homes and flats will preserve the original domestic use of the particular location or create a better social environment. Furthermore, if it is the general intention of Bournemouth Council to preserve the existing residential character of the greater part of the study survey area which is the surveys hope – however much parts of it might eventually be physically altered – then the size, shape and extent of any proposed new developments must be severely circumscribed.

If it is also accepted that the existing long, low, horizontal perspectives of the roads in the study survey should, in general, be preserved, then we feel that any new residential development should be placed at one or other end of particular streets – thus giving a point of focus for a new piece of townscape. The regrettable break in the

sequence of houses created by the construction of a new block of flats in Portman Road makes this point clear. The general shape of any new residential development if constructed, should be constrained by the existing narrow variation of the existing plot ratios and the existing architectural treatment of the area. Any new properties should be no more than two to three storeys high; they should have integrated facades and if somewhat larger than the surrounding buildings, should be so designed to appear as a well rounded focal point for the road (or roads) in question.

Except in particular instances such as Haviland Road, we think that only between 3% and 5% of the existing plots in any road should be redeveloped. We also think that if a general improvement takes place in some of the more_rundown roads – with or without redevelopment schemes – then the implementation of a major town scheme to enhance the appearance and social relevance of the rather dilapidated shops and the quality of the existing flats along Christchurch Road – especially between Warwick Road and Pokesdown Station – would also not come amiss. New retail outlets along Darracott Road (in the vicinity of West Road) would in addition be a positive move.

Yet when all is said and done, we feel that there is only a limited amount of scope for restructuring the roads within the study survey, bearing in mind the existing spatial character, visual appearance and social structure of the area.

From what we have learnt from our survey, we are of the opinion that relatively high density neighbourhoods across town like this one can only absorb so much residential re-structuring before being greatly altered both in visual appearance and function. Further, there is no guarantee that if these areas all take the same level of residential redevelopment that is suggested by the Regional Spatial Strategy, the extra residential units thus created will be sufficient to be an effective substitute to replace the demands of future developers, at present more interested in “villa” neighbourhoods such as the Central Cooper Dean Estate, Southbourne, Queens Park, S.W.

Winton/Charminster as well of course as S.W. Boscombe – a portion of which is included in this study survey.

We therefore think that the main conclusion of this extensive survey is to properly demonstrate how complicated it would be to alter – even to a relatively insubstantial extent – well established and still functioning residential neighbourhoods within the core historic areas of Bournemouth. Other neighbourhoods, similar to those encountered in our study survey may come under pressure from the free-for-all redevelopment assault on “villa” townscapes of greater architectural distinction presently made possible by the brownfield site loophole in the present planning laws that makes gardens building land. The current economic downturn has held back the recent year’s development pressures but unless national planning legislation is revised the economic upturn could well see former planning problems return.

If the Bournemouth and similar well designed, residential towns in southern England wish to have the right to make a meaningful distinction between those areas which should be generally conserved and those roads were a greater degree of positive redevelopment should be allowed (Scenario 4 in the Bournemouth Characterization Study); and also be in position to have absolute control over how many houses in their respective domains should be build, where they should be built, for whom and what architectural shape these developments should enjoy – then there is only one solution. The existing Planning Laws MUST be changed at the very highest legislative level. This study survey has convinced us that any other way forward is but an inadequate substitute.

Preamble

This piece of research, undertaken on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Bournemouth Civic Society, is to ascertain which parts of the project area might be

suitable for increased levels of residential and/or commercial development according to the Bournemouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy. The character of the townscape will be analysed in order to work out reliable aesthetic and social yardsticks that would suggest either the retention or removal of particular portions of the built environment under review. Where re-development is recommended, suggestions will be put forward as to the general size, appearance and usage of new projects whether residential or commercial.

The need for such a survey that can be used as a blueprint for defining the relative general worth of other neighbourhoods of the town of similar structure and in relation to yet other residential areas of different morphological character has become more urgent in recent years. This is because many of the older established residential neighbourhoods in Bournemouth have become threatened increasingly due to national planning policies by an unplanned, uncoordinated, redevelopment free-for-all made possible by the exploitation of a significant loop hole in the existing planning laws. Well established older houses and gardens are designated as so called brownfield sites; a status which allows any building developer the right of redevelopment – usually in the form of flats and generally of other non-commercial considerations.

It is to be hoped that the findings of this study survey for the Bournemouth Civic Society – together with other initiatives such as the Bournemouth Characterization Study 2007 (Bournemouth Borough Council) and the Residential Design Guides 2008 (Bournemouth Borough Council) will all eventually be used to formulate within the Local Core Strategy prioritization planning policies. The latter better controlling and defining aesthetic, social and economic criteria which will make it possible to protect those parts of residential Bournemouth which merit general conservation and identify other areas which are considered suitable for a permitted level of varied redevelopment.

Basic Presumptions for the Study Survey

- 1) That if as a result of the recommendations of this survey and other pieces of research, developmental pressures still appear excessively intrusive in spite of new planning characterization criteria that may eventually be adopted by the Council in particular residential neighbourhoods; then the only effective solution is a change of national planning policy and is thus a political decision.
- 2) That in accordance with the existing retro-active policy of townscape preservation where ever possible in Bournemouth, any overall planning changes that might be suggested in this study survey should be considered as part of what might be called the “natural evolution” of the area in relation to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- 3) That structural changes and new buildings in respect to the precise locations where they would be placed would be considered as part of a generally organic process of townscape change that would be accepted as reasonable by most people.
- 4) That the above mentioned presumptions should eventually be fully co-ordinated within a viable overall planning scheme for Eastern Bournemouth and also serve as a basis for the future conceptionalisation of other neighbourhoods in the town.

Principal Criteria of the Study Survey

- a) Irrespective of assessing the absolute architectural worth of particular roads, a balance must always be kept between the visual and social sense of place of every neighbourhood and/or group of neighbourhoods within the pilot survey.
- b) Assessments must be made as to whether or not particular structures of relatively insignificant architectural worth can be replaced at a similar or higher density without destroying any existing sense of social cohesion. The extent to which there is sufficient local pressure or need for such changes to take place.
- c) Given the existence of a relatively harmonious series of townscapes within the

study survey, the extent to which any redevelopment can occur without disrupting what might be termed the natural perspective vistas between various roads.

d) The extent to which under particular circumstances, aesthetic, social or transport considerations for redevelopment should be given equal or unequal consideration in deciding on a course of action.

e) Where inharmonious or physically inferior structures in particular neighbourhoods exist, the need to decide whether the visual and social structure of such areas should be improved by an emphasis on new housing, new commercial premises or other forms of redevelopment.

f) Where larger re-development schemes may be needed for social and economic regeneration, it will be essential to ensure that such changes make sense in wider planning terms. That for example, where new, possibly higher density residential, facilities are needed, it will be necessary to decide to what extent the new structures should or should not be compatible with the surrounding townscape.

g) The social and planning considerations that would have to be dealt with if new housing developments are to be introduced into parts of the study area should be seen as a template for similar operations if they become necessary in other, relatively high density residential areas of Bournemouth.

h) It must be accepted that certain, more spacious forms of flatted residential re-development – hitherto usually accommodated within “villa” neighbourhoods of some architectural distinction – might not be so easily placed within higher density residential neighbourhoods such as Boscombe or Pokesdown but a well designed development resembling other houses locally accommodating a small number of flats with communal gardens and adequate parking would not look out of place or be the cause of unrest.

i) It therefore follows that whereas in higher density neighbourhoods, there might be a greater scope for the re-structuring of considerable pieces of townscape; in lower

density “villa” neighbourhoods, the emphasis will be on the preservation or otherwise of particular houses on individual sites.

j) A calculation will have to be made in respect to particular categories of planning characterisation criteria as to what proportion of total new housing needs can be finitely accommodated in higher density residential areas and what proportion could still be accommodated in low density villa neighbourhoods. A final decision will have to be reached as to whether there is an absolute limit on aesthetic and social grounds to the limits of re-development in all the residential neighbourhoods of differing density that were constructed in Bournemouth between c.1890 and 1939.

Contextual Considerations

1) From the surveys carried out in respect to the study areas in Boscombe and Pokesdown the generally integrated units of townscape that generally exist across these neighbourhoods are home to a considerable number of people, many quite young, who have found a place there at a not too excessive price.

2) In the majority of roads within the study area there exists a varying balance of roads where the houses are generally used – either as stable family residences or in a more commercial fashion – as small cheap flats or as houses of multi-occupation.

3) Therefore given the relatively unchanging character of a fair number of roads in the survey, the prospect of any new and considerable, residential or other re-development must take into account the following factors:

a) The degree of visual balance and social equanimity in any particular area that can be directly related to the extent to which the existing communal viability might be destroyed if excessive redevelopment takes place.

b) How would the new residents that would be expected to take up the accommodation in any new development be characterized? How quickly, if at all,

would they be expected to make a new and integrate with the existing community? What sort of demand for free market housing and for social housing could be expected if development went ahead? We consulted members of the Pokesdown South Residents Association on the first draft of this report and incorporated their observations. On this point they said "How long does it take for integration to take place. In our experience and we have a good example in Jasmin Court, a mix of one and two bed flats, the answer is, it doesn't. Tenants come and go on a regular basis. Here are some of the reasons: Most have cars with no-where to park. Washing is hung outside windows because there is no outside space for a washing line. There is hardly enough room for one waste bin let alone another for recycling material and it only takes one person in a block of ten flats not to recycle their rubbish, put the wrong waste in the communal recycling bin for the whole system to break down. Outgoing tenants leave their old furniture and mattresses behind, the incoming tenant dumps it by the bins and so it goes round and round". However, nearby " an example of what can be achieved on a small plot is the new development in Hannington Place, a row of 2 bed cottages, with small gardens and their own parking spaces....people living there are very happy to have found something they could afford".

c) The extent to which the type of new property deemed appropriate to such high density residential areas would a visual and economic substitute to what is now built by developers amidst detached houses in lower density neighbourhoods; the latter being the very sort of residential area in which the Council wishes to preserve a considerable proportion of the original townscape.

d) The problems involved in being able to persuade potential developers to consider switching a fair tranche of their operations from "villa" districts to "semi-detached/terrace" districts. The extent to which such a change would involve general alterations in the design of future projects.

4) The form of built structural changes that would be likely to come to the area of the study survey and similar neighbourhoods must be a compromise between what is eventually considered appropriate in relation to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the sort of new residential projects that would be considered economically and socially acceptable there by potential developers as a substitute for greater restraint in building activity within lower density “villa” neighbourhoods.

5) Depending on what proportion of the existing townscape of the study survey might eventually be considered suitable for re-structuring, the resulting new development could be relatively low rise (two or three storeys) and arranged more or less in a similar design to the mass and proportion of the present buildings in the study area.

6) On the other hand if a relatively higher proportion of new residential units are eventually allowed to be built in the study area, the pressure to construct more massive, square or rectangular, residential blocks could result in a completely different spatial relationship between built and unbuilt space in comparison with what now exists. The original chequerboard road pattern could alternate with more self contained pockets of “modernist” blocks.

7) How to be certain that areas of residential townscape within the study survey area which are in need of replacements, will be achieved when a general lack of concern for the appearance of many other houses and where an increasing number are being used as HMO's have so degraded a particular portion of a townscape so as to render it beyond revival. This is the point at which the basic built framework of the area in question can no longer guarantee the original or continuing usage of the properties and radical, but sensitive, regeneration or redevelopment is called for.

8) The final decision on the degree of residential and/or other redevelopment in the study area must be taken – partly in connection with how future applications for new projects are likely to balance out in both high density and low density residential areas

throughout Bournemouth and on the need to synthesise this factor with the ultimate view of the Council as to what proportion and in what form; urban restructuring is considered appropriate for both high and low density residential areas of Bournemouth.

9) It must be remembered that decisions made to alter the existing, probably relatively viable, structure of particular residential neighbourhoods should never be taken lightly – and the reasons to proceed along these lines must be weighed against the risk of a considerable de-stabilisation of the basic socio-spatial structure of the neighbourhood in question.

The Area of the Survey in Detail

The research work was carried out over a considerable portion of Boscombe and Pokesdown, either side of the railway and Christchurch Road. The area comprised the following main sections: -

**1) The following roads between the railway and Christchurch Road: -
Portman Road, Wolverton Road, Gloucester Road, Somerset Road, Warwick Road;
Shelley Road East, Gladstone Road, Haviland Road, Langton Road, Gladstone
Road East, Haviland Road East, Tamworth Road, Wilton Road, York Place,
Hannington Road, Wickham Road.**

The greater part of this area of Bournemouth – which originally belonged to Clingan's Charity in Christchurch – and was originally developed by the South Coast Land Society between 1887 and 1900 as relatively cheap housing for service workers and artisans; increasing numbers of which were needed as Bournemouth expanded faster than any other town in Britain between 1890 and 1910. Building began in the vicinity of Ashley Road and steadily progressed to the vicinity of Pokesdown Station. Over 800 narrow, rectangular plots were arranged in a conventional right angled, chequerboard, street pattern – with under 50% of each plot built over, a considerable

diversity of use was made possible on the remainder.

In general terms, the great majority of the buildings constitute a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses.

In appearance, the majority follow quite closely the standard form of this category of housing which was derived from late nineteenth century London and South East English prototypes. Most street facades are two bays wide, two storeys high with a high proportion having a prominent two storey bay window to the front. In the majority of roads, a certain number of houses have a limited degree of visual distinction in the form of gables – sometimes with ornamental strapwork – over the bay window. However the balance between architectural exclusiveness and utilitarian ordinariness depended entirely on the status of particular roads in relation to the presumed advantages of adjacent areas.

2) The following roads between Christchurch Road and Kings Park:

Rebbeck Road, Leap Hill Road, Roberts Road, Abinger Road, Wheaton Road, Scotter Road, Clarence Park Road, Spurgeon Road.

This quite compact area of approximately 400 rectangular shaped house sites was slowly developed between the 1890's and the early Twentieth Century, probably by the South Coast Land Society and marked the north eastern termination of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century development of north Boscombe. Like the adjacent residential area south of the railway between Ashley Road and Pokesdown Station, this neighbourhood was also built to help accommodate the large number of service and manual workers that were migrating to Bournemouth after 1880. Although not that dissimilar to houses build between Ashley Road and Pokesdown Station, the relatively constrained area of this neighbourhood has resulted in a higher number of semi-detached/terraced residential units – somewhat smaller than those on the other side of the railway and constructed on generally narrower sites.

3) The following roads between the railway and Seabourne Road:

Stourvale Road, Cromwell Road, Stourvale Place, Wyncombe Road.

This easternmost portion of the study survey area is part of an elongated development of semi-detached and terraced houses of similar appearance and status to the urban neighbourhood to the north of the railway opposite, centred on Clarence Park Road. The area was developed by various small builders on a total of 108 rectangular plots which were arranged in a skilful succession of straight roads, cul-de-sacs and serpentine thoroughfares. Not surprisingly, this level of spatial originality in conjunction with the varying gradient of the area has resulted in a greater variety of architectural design along side the more conventional appearance of other properties.

4) The following roads between Christchurch Road, Parkwood Road, Darracott Road and Seabourne Road: -

Colville Close, Colville Road, Queensland Road, Rosebury Road, Morley Road, West Road, Norwood Place, Harvey Road, Pauncefote Road, Harcourt Road, Granville Road.

This considerable area stretching between East Boscombe and Pokesdown was developed during the 1890's on land assembled from various sources, mainly by a freehold development company that was also active in West Boscombe; the Boscombe Conservative, Co-operative Land and Building Society. Although the neighbourhood came into existence – as with the new streets to the north of Christchurch Road – to satisfy the accommodation of ancillary workers and small shop keepers, the near vicinity of the “villa” suburbs of south west Boscombe ensured that the general appearance and usage of parts of this neighbourhood would, in Nineteenth Century terms, be somewhat more “respectable” than property to the north of Christchurch Road. On approximately 600, mainly quite spacious, rectangular plots, long rows of houses were built – well over 70% being detached properties – mainly by various small building firms on speculation.

The resulting townscape if of middling architectural distinction, is competent and of a good standard; consisting – as with similar roads north of Christchurch Road – of two bayed and two storied, brick built properties, most with double bay windows and a fair number with front gables.

5) The following roads between Christchurch Road and Parkwood Road to the west: -

Browning Avenue, Keswick Road, Chessel Avenue, Crabton Close Road, Hawkwood Road.

This residential area is a small part of the extensive, low density “villa” neighbourhoods that began to be constructed on the eastern side of Boscombe Gardens in the mid-1880’s and were finally complete by the appearance of inter-war detached properties in Browning Avenue by the mid 1930’s. The main difference between this area of the study survey and all the remainder is the larger size and less elongated shape of the building plots. It was the intention of the Boscombe Conservative, Co-operative Land and Building Society by which that section of the survey area as far as Crabton Close Road was developed between 1884 and the 1890’s to create a neighbourhood of respectable and spacious residential units for middle class use – in that any property could be easily adapted to holiday, residential or professional purposes depending on the circumstances. The entire development of approximately 180 plots that extended to Sea Road on the west, consisted of substantial, detached villa-structures which occupied between 30 and 50% of each plot. The majority of the properties are of three bays, two storied, and very often with elaborate tile hung or half-timbered gables over the invariable, two storied, double bay windows.

The plot dimensions in Crabton Close Road and the remaining roads in this section of the study survey area are not that different from the others but the properties on these sites differ considerably in style and appearance according to the changes in

architectural fashion that occurred between c.1895 and 1939. Here approximately 264 plots were developed between Fisherman's Walk, Shelley Park and the Boscombe Overcliff on the Boscombe Manor and Portman/Wentworth Estates in a series of parallel roads running north/south.

The family houses erected with their stucco, tile hung walls, prominent hipped roofs and chimney stacks and horizontally orientated bay windows and gables bear the mark of the competent use of Late Arts and Crafts and Late Voyseyesque influences.

Categorization of the Study Survey Area

The above mentioned areas will be divided up and analysed according to particular morphological criteria. It is to be hoped that this procedure will enhance the evolution of the final conclusions of the Study Survey.

1) So called "peripheral/central" neighbourhoods.

These are groups of roads which abut and are considerably influenced by the character and/or activities of adjacent neighbourhoods and/or particular (usually commercial) main roads. In the study area this category of neighbourhood can be situated either on the edge or more than likely in the centre of the roads under examination.

The common characteristic of these areas is that outside socio-economic pressures are more likely to have a stronger impact on the continuing physical and physiological evolution of the areas than the unchanging general impact of the original urban structure.

It is in such places that visual and social alteration (usually in a negative sense) is more likely to have occurred and where the need for a very careful and balanced assessment as to whether these neighbourhoods are going to benefit from either small or large scale redevelopment. In relative terms detailed investigation has found that the

townscape in these peripheral/central areas tend to be more utilitarian than in other parts of the survey area.

The following groups of roads are in this category: -

- a) All roads east of Portman Road, along Haviland Road East across to Wilton Road/part of York Place, down Warwick Road, along Wickham Road and back to Christchurch Road.**
 - b) From Christchurch Road along Clarence Park Road to Scotter Road, along Scotter Road and back via Spurgeon to Christchurch Road.**
 - c) Roads south of Christchurch Road bounded by Queensland Road, Harcourt Road and Seabourne Road. Also Parkwood Road – east side – as far as St. James Square.**
- 2) So called “cull-de-sac” neighbourhoods**

These are areas which on account of their distinctive location, are less influenced by the general socio-economic influences of adjoining neighbourhoods or main commercial thoroughfares. These groups of roads tend to be situated either at some distance from an important shopping centre, not directly accessible from the latter, in the near vicinity of a neighbourhood of good standing or very close to an impenetrable barrier such as the railway or an open space. The survey has shown that such areas are likely to develop a greater level of relative communal stability which tends to be reinforced by a sprucer, visual image. In such circumstances, the original structure and, to a considerable degree the social intentions of the originators of this townscape, are still generally more significant in upholding the morphological status quo than outside pressure for changing it.

The following groups of roads are in this category;

- a) All roads east of Portman Road and north of Haviland Road East, across to Wilton Road and part of York Place, east of Warwick Road and north of Wickham**

Road.

- b) All roads from Wheaton Road and Scotter Road northwards to Kings Park.**
- c) All roads east of Seabourne Road and south of the Railway.**
- d) The area south of Christchurch Road and bounded by St. James Square (excluding Parkwood Road), Colville Close, Colville Road and Harvey Road.**

3) So called “centrally positioned” Neighbourhoods, completely surrounded by other residential neighbourhoods of similar or different spatial structure.

There is one area of this kind within the study survey and it is so designated because it is situated at the intersection of several other residential groups of roads of varying character. In such a situation, the area in question is subject to inward socio-economic pressures from adjacent neighbourhoods and yet at the same time the very centrality of the area gives it a reasonable level of morphological stability. Consequently it is possible for certain roads here to remain more or less unchanged – visually and socially – while other nearby roads can be more influenced by the natural pressure to adapt to the accumulated needs of the surrounding areas. Under such circumstances, any projected re-development must be carefully positioned – mainly in relation to roads already in flux – so to preserve the *raison d’être* of lesser threatened neighbourhoods.

The only group of roads that fit this category is bounded by Darracott Road, Pauncefote Road, Harcourt Road and Seabourne Road.

4) So called “villa” neighbourhoods west of the higher density roads of the survey area.

This south west corner of the study is quite different from all the other neighbourhoods under review. Because it consists of more square shaped, relatively spacious and individualised plots; because the landscaped amenities of this group of roads are decidedly more in evidence here than the other neighbourhoods and because

the general shape of the townscape does not encourage a particular sense of relative community – it is much easier for individual elements of the built environment to be, metaphorically speaking, removed and then replaced at will.

Consequently, it is residential areas such as these that have been the most popular amongst developers who are keen to replace substantial late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses with stylistically ersatz blocks of flats in recent years. Therefore theoretically, over time, under present circumstances it would be possible for virtually every house in such villa neighbourhoods to be replaced by a non-original building. Therefore any decision as to the level of re-development or non-development that would eventually be permitted in such areas could be directly effected by what degree of re-development is considered necessary in higher density, more integrated groups of roads in districts similar in urban character to what exists in the remainder of the survey area.

The following groups of roads are in this category: -

Browning Avenue, Keswick Road, Chessel Avenue, Crabton Close Road, Hawkwood Road.

CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, SEABOURNE ROAD

General Significance

The principal thoroughfares that bisect the study area are Christchurch Road and Seabourne Road – the latter joining Christchurch Road at Pokesdown Station.

Christchurch Road was for centuries the principal link between Christchurch and Poole across Bourne Heath. However with the rapid development of Boscombe in the 1890's, parades of shops were rapidly constructed all the way along Christchurch Road from Boscombe Crescent to Pokesdown Station.

The principal shopping area between Palmerston and Ashley Roads is outside the survey area, but east of Ashley Road – except for a considerable break at Fisherman's Walk – shop frontages together with occasional non-commercial buildings are continuous to Pokesdown Station.

There has always been a problem as to whether or not the long commercialised stretch of Christchurch Road through Boscombe and Pokesdown – over one and a half miles long – contains too many shops, even for a highly consumer orientated resort such as Bournemouth. Thus while the majority of the retail premises on the south side of Old Christchurch consists of purpose build shopping parades, the majority of retail outlets on the north side (certainly as far as Warwick Road) are later adaptations of buildings which were obviously put up with a possible full residential use in mind. Indeed in 1912, there was a court case between Sainsbury's and one Sobey in which the latter unsuccessfully challenged the right of the national grocery firm to use a building in Christchurch Road, Boscombe in an area that originally had been designated for residential use.

Consequently, except for the very centre of Boscombe, the pressures for residential use along Christchurch Road against excessive commercialisation have always been quite strong and have steadily increased towards Pokesdown in recent

years.

However this being said; the many retail and service outlets that do exist in dozens of commercial facilities between Ashley Road and Seabourne Road have ensured that many of the residential roads leading directly north and south from Christchurch Road, provide a convenient lodging for many employees in these enterprises.

Generally speaking the relative viability and reasonably well cared for appearance of the shops and other premises along Christchurch Road, gradually decreases the further east one travels towards Pokesdown.

Christchurch Road (section A from Ashley to Wolverton Roads)

This section of Christchurch Road is just east of the main retail sector of Boscombe and there is a considerable contrast between the townscapes on either side of the road. The majority of the property on the north side consists of two and a half storey, gabled houses originally built for either retail or domestic use. There are two breaks in this sequence – one interwar and one modernist block – both of poor quality – in the vicinity of Portman Road. This sequence ends at Wolverton Road with an elegant, three storey building in eclectic, neo-Georgian style.

The retail sections on the south side of this section of Christchurch Road were almost completely rebuilt between the two World Wars – as far as Fisherman's Walk.

From Sea Road to Crabton Close Road there is quite an imposing, three storied, construction in the then fashionable neo-Georgian/Art Deco style with an enhanced, wide bay, central section. Beyond is a very striking block in International Moderne Style and finally come two handsome, three storey, neo-Georgian blocks with elaborate corner quoins, that create a grand entrance to Browning Avenue.

The majority of the commercial enterprises in this section provide a whole series

of retails and professional services that are very much dependent on trade generated by the adjacent premises in the centre of Boscombe. There are dress shops, food takeaways, restaurants, travel agents, hairdressers and some discount centres. In view of the essential nature of much of the activity here, this part of Christchurch Road is reasonably well kept, but in view of the number of shops to let, the relatively small profits made by the businesses here could mean that this area could easily go down hill during a severe depression.

1) Christchurch Road (Section A)

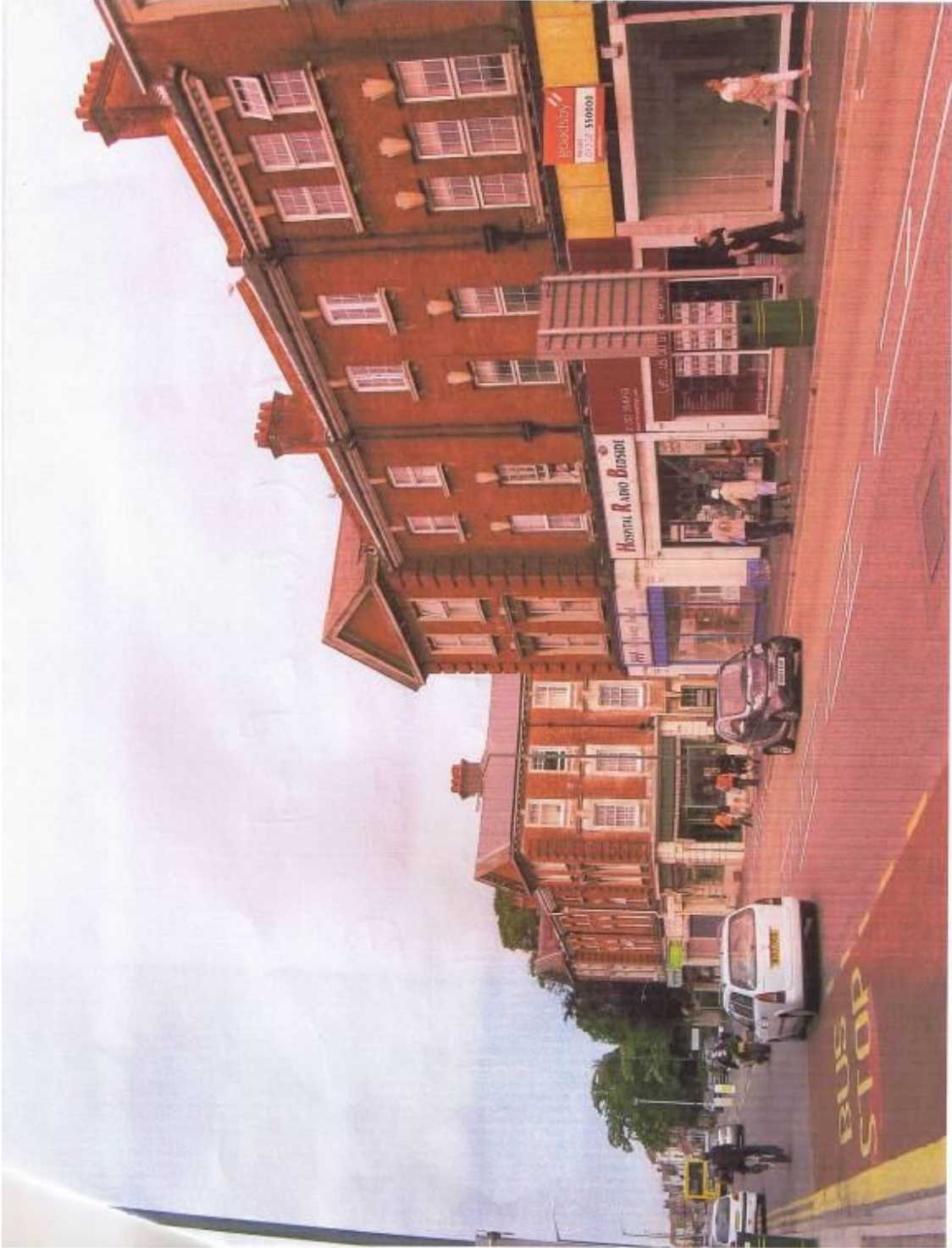
**From Ashley Road to Wolverton
Road**

2) Christchurch Road (Section A)

**Entrance to Browning and Chessel
Avenues**



1)



2)

Finally, in view of the poor architectural quality and rather unenhancing visual appearance of the greater part of the north side of this part of Christchurch Road, the section between Ashley Road and Wolverton Road might be the right place for substantial redevelopment in the future. Most of the upper floors of this entire section of Christchurch Road are generally used as flats and so a greater use of part of this area for residential purposes would be a useful and popular move.

Christchurch Road (section B from Wolverton to Warwick Road – on the north side)

The northern side of this sector has buildings similar in form to that of the northern part of the previous sector. Some of the single bay windows are especially wide and the gables above especially elaborate in the vicinity of Warwick Road.

To the south, beyond a wooded gap filled with the premises of a funeral director and the Corpus Christi School and Church complex, there are original ranges of late nineteenth century shops in vaguely Arts and Crafts Style with prominent, pedimented dormers. The commercial blocks on the corner of Parkwood Road are exceptionally elaborate with pillastered first floor bay windows and spacious attics with huge semi-circular windows and finials above. Beyond Parkwood Road the ranges of shops drop from two/three storeys to two and merge into the more pronounced vernacular, retail townscape of Pokesdown.

This part of Christchurch Road is in economic terms, a transitional area from the more conventional retail outlets and service facilities immediately to the west and the less than viable more socially orientated shops and other businesses further east. Here one begins to find establishments selling antiques, bric-a-brac, records and old musical instruments – also more general corner shops including a tobacconist, wedding dress shop, white goods shop, Indian restaurant, fish and chip shop plus closer to the

railway station a thriving Post Office, coffee shop, pine furniture retailer and art shop. Seabourne's Pub has also been recently refurbished and renamed, formerly The Bell Inn.

In this section of Christchurch Road, most of the concerns are likely to be barely making a profit – with the threat of bankruptcy not far off. It is our opinion that a more efficient use could be made of the residential accommodation on the south side of this section, but on the north side between Gloucester and Somerset Roads some extensive re-development could be possible, as the existing townscape is not of exceptional quality.

1) Christchurch Road (Section B)

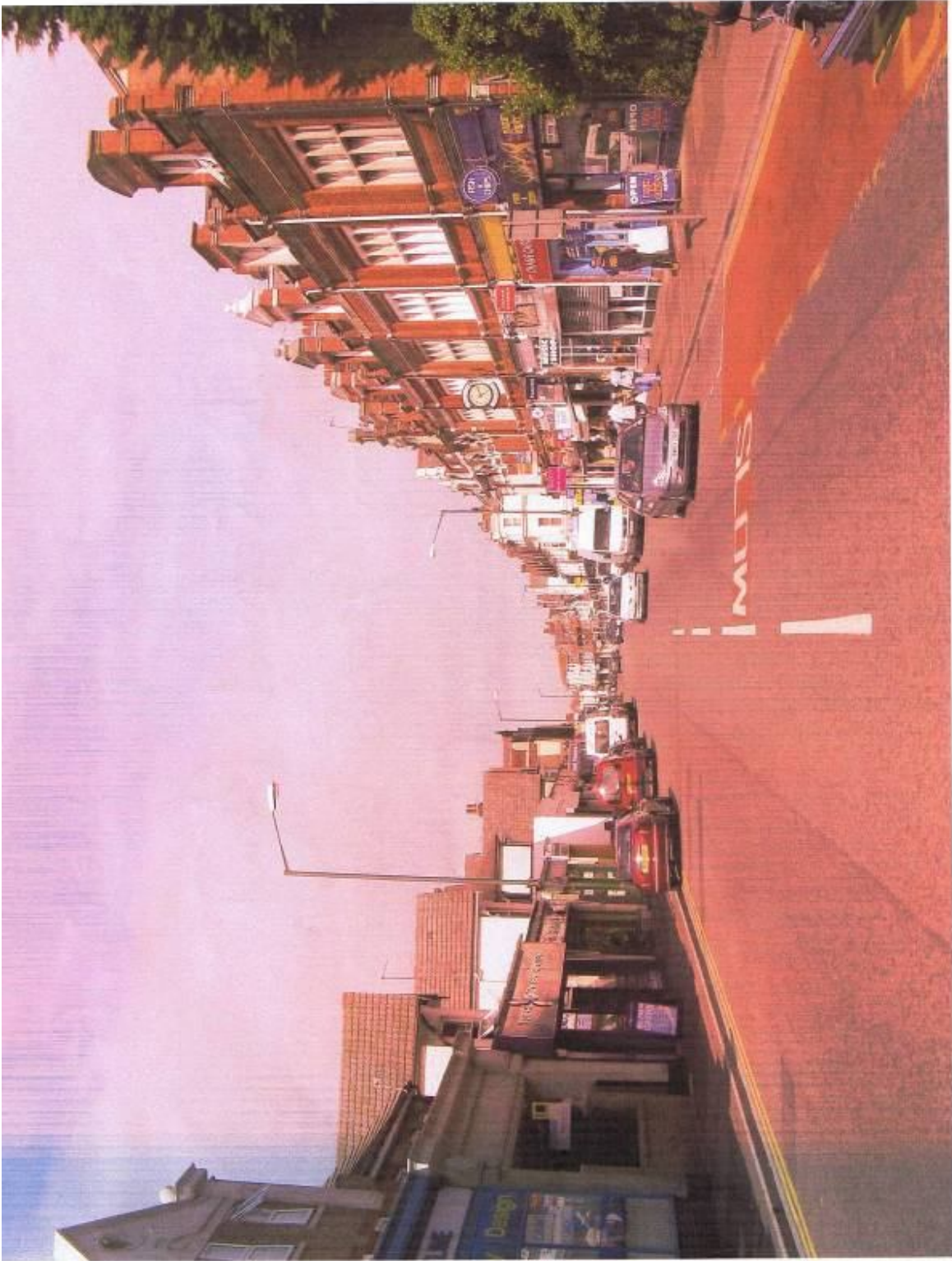
**From Wolverton Road to Warwick
Road**

2) Christchurch Road (Section B)

**From Gloucester Road to Warwick
Road**



1)



2)

Christchurch Road (section C Warwick Road to Pokesdown Station)

Apart from gabled properties to the north which go almost to the station, there is a considerable variety of two storied, gabled retail property on the south side. There are two intrusions of one block of three storey bay windowed shops and flats and an interwar, neoclassical rebuild just beyond Queensland Road.

This portion of Christchurch Road is the least visibly presentable and the most economically distressed of the entire retail section of the pilot survey.

The presence of cafes, shops that can appear mere distribution points for discounted goods, and other premises which are probably put to an improper use, reflect the very difficult situation of this part of Pokesdown.

With negligible parking facilities and being situated a considerable distance from the main shopping centres of Boscombe and Southbourne – in addition to being faced with the existence of a considerable superfluity of small, unmodernised and not especially relevant retail outlets – it is little wonder that so many shops are either to let or have simply been abandoned as normal trading units.

In addition to these problems, many shop units have been extended to the rear to make extra, smaller flats at higher densities; thereby making the front shopping areas too small and unviable.

Consequently this part of Christchurch Road needs urgent attention to prevent it falling into even further dereliction. Most importantly, the Borough Council should encourage a general modernisation of the existing retail premises so that more essential consumer facilities are provided as a positive force for the eventual revival of the relatively neglected roads immediately to the south of this portion of Christchurch Road (Queensbury to Morely Roads).

Secondly, the further conversion and extension of domestic accommodation of these buildings should be far better regulated. In particular, ground floor flats should

extend across the whole area of the former shop area to the street. This procedure has been successfully carried out in Belle Vue Road and in Holdenhurst Road.

- 1) Christchurch Road (Section C)**
Warwick Road to Pokesdown Station

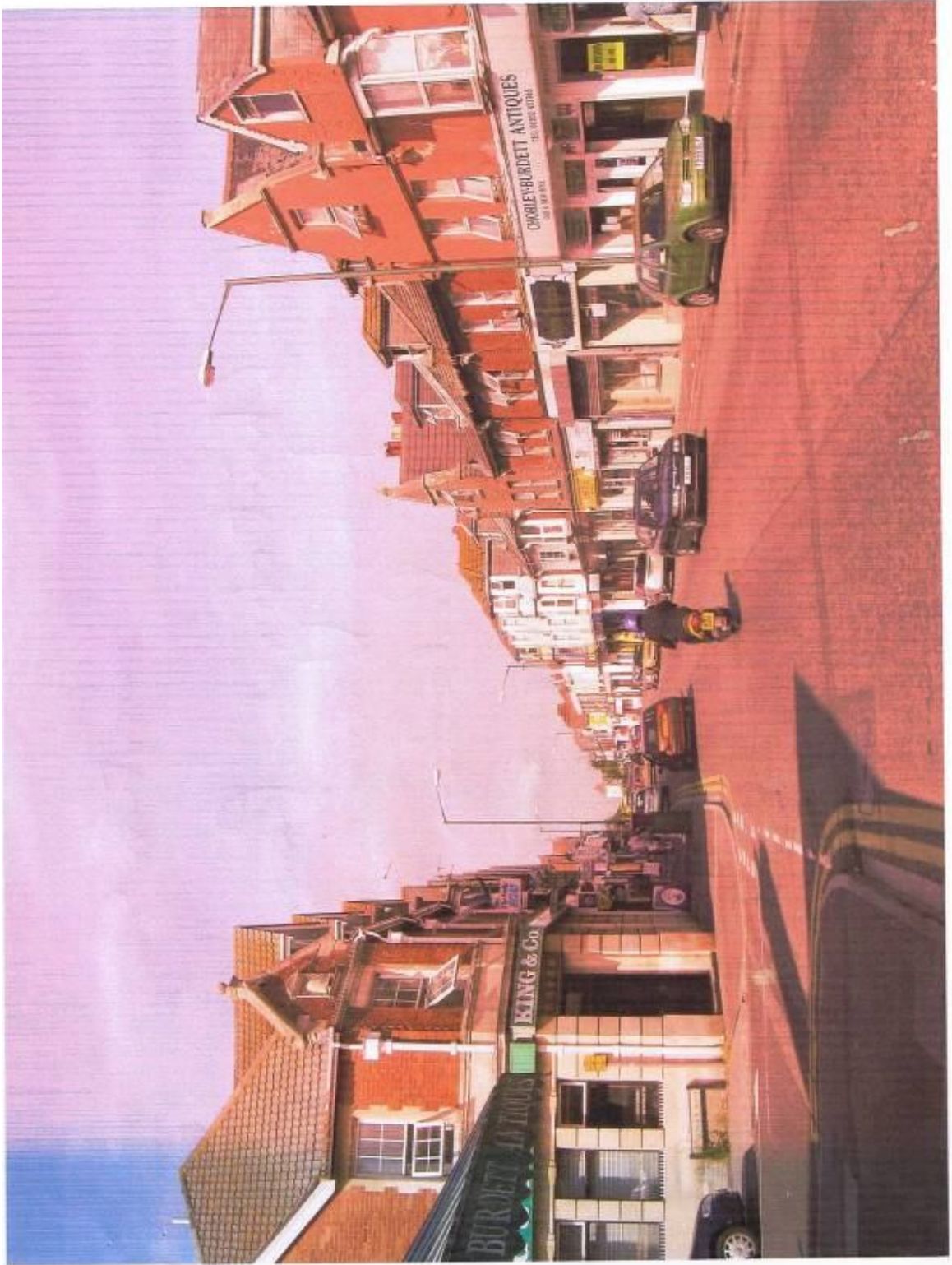
- 2) Christchurch Road (Section C)**
Warwick Road to Pokesdown Station –
south side

- 3) Christchurch Road (Section C) (north side)**
- immediately east of Warwick Road

- 4) Christchurch Road (Section C) (north side)**
- opposite between Queensland and
Rosebury Roads



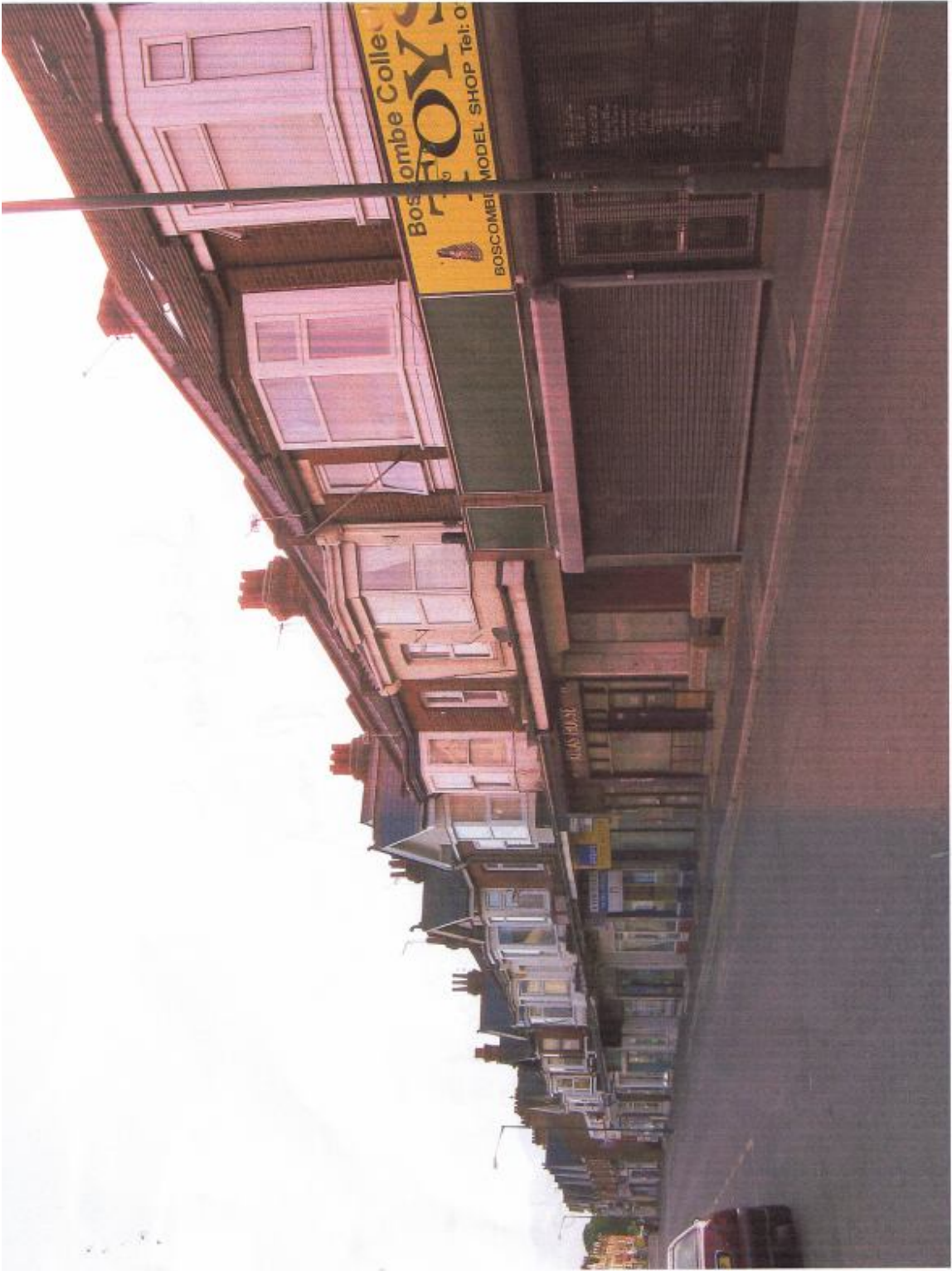
1)



2)



3)



4)

Christchurch Road (beyond Pokesdown Station) and Seabourne Road

The sections of these roads included in the study survey comprise in the main, reasonably well designed, medium sized blocks of flats, recently constructed in a generally restrained, neo-vernacular style. As the tower structure of the residential complex in Christchurch Road near the railway bridge makes clear, it is possible to compliment the adjacent townscape on a somewhat larger scale when building along principal thoroughfares, provided there are few or no original buildings on a smaller scale in the near vicinity.

However, the visual incongruity of the newly completed, modernist block of flats between Morley Close and Seabourne Road, demonstrates very clearly how careful design considerations are essential in the redevelopment of over sized plots in the vicinity of well established urban neighbourhoods of relative high density.

1) Christchurch Road

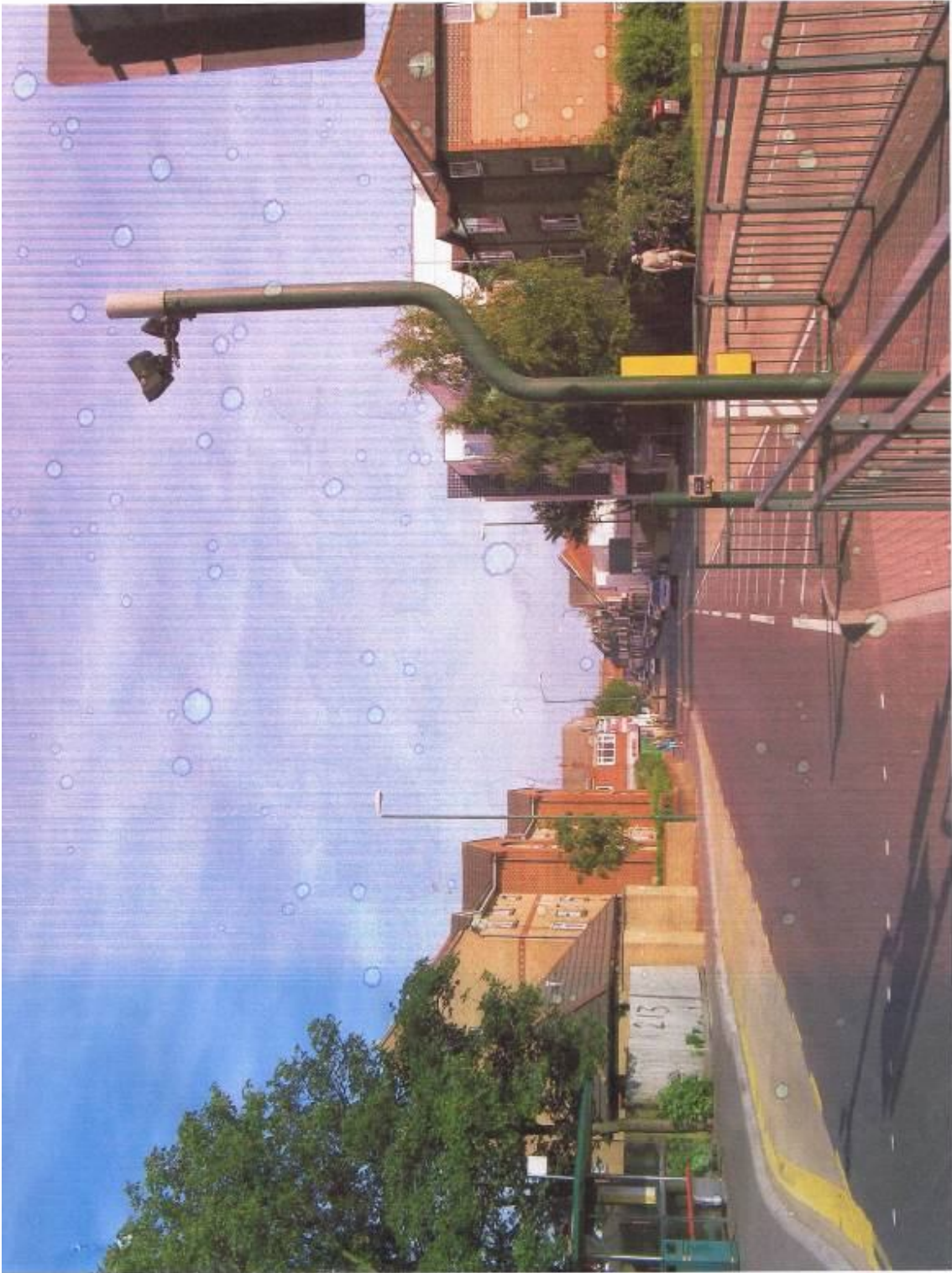
**Between St. James Church and
Pokesdown Station looking west**

2) Seabourne Road

**Between Christchurch Road and Darracott
Road looking south**



1)



2)

THE STUDY

SURVEY AREAS

(1)

PERIPHERAL /

CENTRAL

SECTIONS

1) Gladstone Road and Haviland Road between Portman Road and Ashley Road

In this western peripheral section of the survey area, the greater proportion of mainly two storied, semi-detached and terraced houses present a conventional and relatively utilitarian townscape of mainly two bay houses with little architectural pretention such as prominent bay windows or gables.

A fair number of the properties in these roads are quite well kept as private residences. However because of the convenience of access to Ashley Road – one of the principal feeder roads of the area –and the generally negative impact of the ancillary buildings that serve the shops in Christchurch Road from the south side of Haviland Road, at least over 20 properties each in Gladstone and Haviland Roads are considered to be HMOs and this is borne out by the de-landscaping (for car parks) of the front areas of quite a few properties.

Since it is more than likely that continuing commercial pressures will ensure that some houses will be converted into more affordable flats, it is recommended that probably the best way of reviving a better quality of life in this area would be the erection of no more than seven or eight existing sites of several blocks of low rise, linear shapes flats/condominiums. Further, on grounds of architectural perspective, if these developments take place, they should be sited at the western end of this area, in the near vicinity of the higher density townscape near Ashley Road.

1) Gladstone Road

Looking west, north side

2) Gladstone Road

Looking west, south side

3) Haviland Road

Looking east



1)



2)



3)

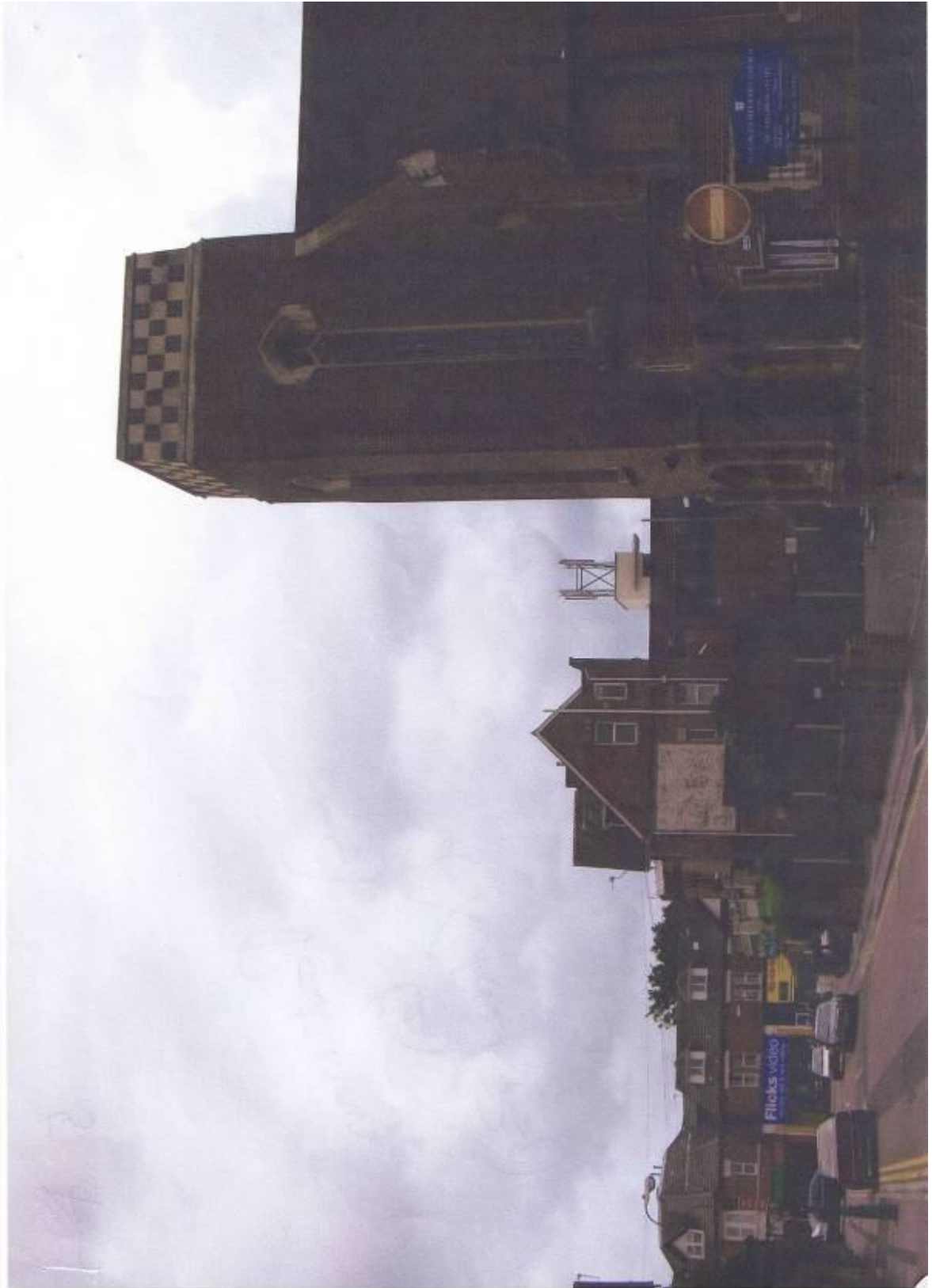
2) Portman Road, Wolverton Road (south of Haviland Road East) and Haviland Road East

The positioning of this area more central to, and more favourably positioned with, the principal retail centre of Boscombe on Christchurch Road – in comparison with Gladstone and Haviland Roads (west of Portman Road) resulted in a better quality of property than in the latter area. Virtually all the houses are detached; in Haviland Road most are of good brick with a fair proportion of prominent gables; while in Portman Road, several houses in the vicinity of Christchurch Road display quite elaborate architectural features including elaborate gable ends and an upper oriel window on a decorated side wall.

In such circumstances and especially since Haviland Road East is less directly accessible from Christchurch Road, disruption caused by the presence of flats is far less – there being just over a dozen houses in multiple occupation in the whole of Haviland Road East. Indeed the latter in still giving the impression of a well established, reasonably integrated community makes it clear that in this area, the enhancement of the existing fabric – except for just one or two sites in Wolverton Road near Christchurch Road – and not more comprehensive residential re-structuring, should be the way forward.

All road sections, south of Wilton Road

- 1) Portman Road, south to Christchurch Road**
- 2) Corner of Portman Road and Christchurch Road**
- 3) Portman Road, north from Christchurch Road**
- 4) Haviland Road East, looking east**
- 5) Haviland Road East – from Wolverton Road**
- 6) Wolverton Road, looking south to Christchurch Road**



1)



2)

