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Description of the New CBD area

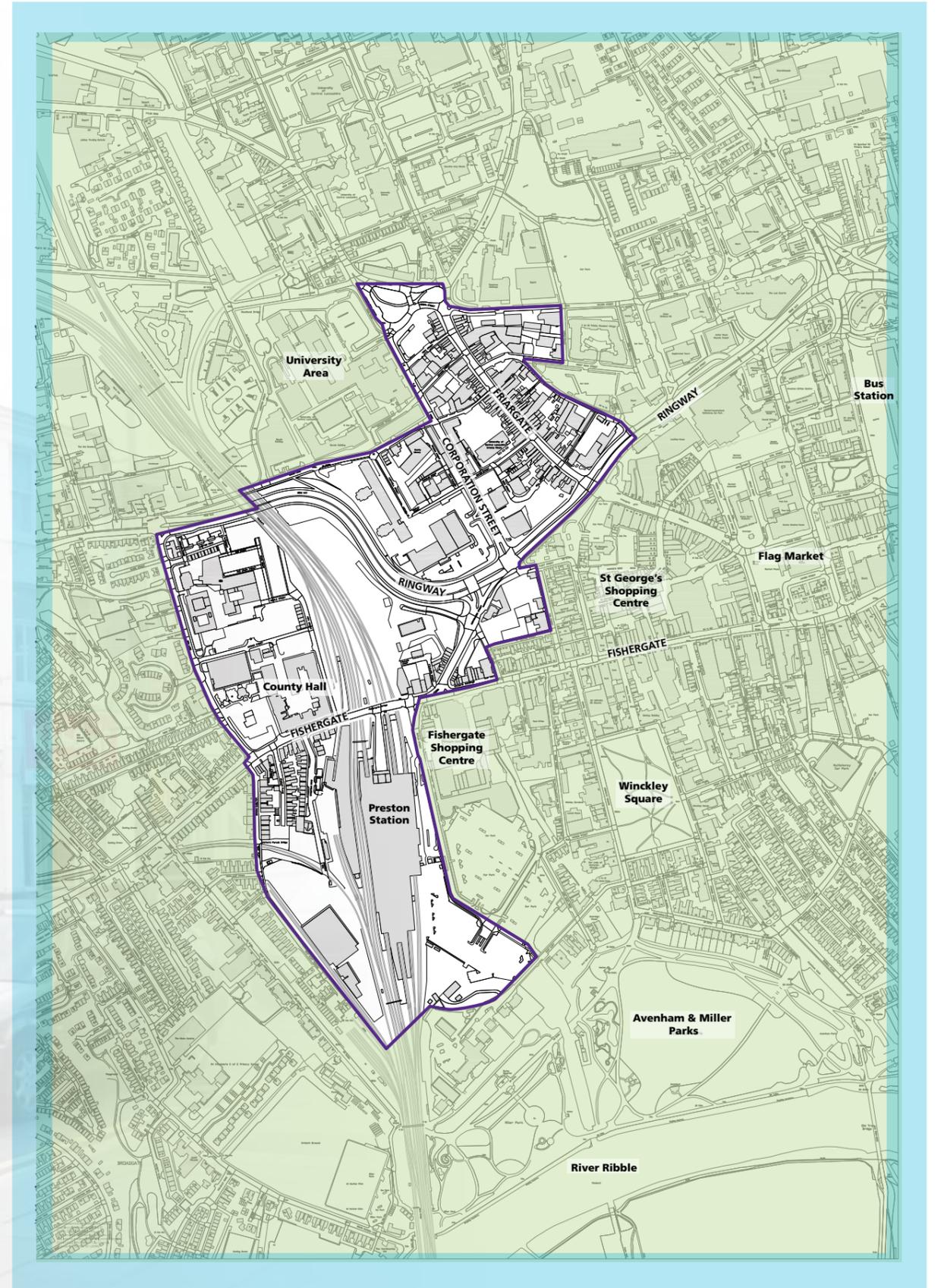


Fig 3 New Central Business District Boundary Plan



Fig 4 Aerial Context Plan

2.1 Location

The proposed new CBD covers a gross area of approximately 36 hectares occupying a pivotal location covering the western and north-western sides of the city centre.

The new CBD has significant locational advantages in terms of its position between the main rail station, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) campus and the main retail and civic areas of the city centre. This presents an opportunity to link these areas of the city through the development of an identifiable commercial office district containing new high quality public realm areas and supported by a complementary mix of uses such as hotels, small-scale retail and leisure facilities.



2.2 Existing Urban Form and Land Uses



The area contains a contrasting mix of patterns of development reflected in a mixed urban form.

The northern part of the new CBD is characterised by Corporation Street and Friargate which run broadly north-south and create a series of clearly defined blocks between them. These blocks have a fine grain of narrow plots to the Friargate frontage reflecting its historic medieval development with larger plots to Corporation Street, a later 19th Century development. The blocks contain a mix of small-scale retail and business uses together with areas of surface car parking which fracture the built form.

There are various infill buildings and extensions of inappropriate scale and materials. The area's proximity to UCLan has led to the development of student accommodation in this area including new build and the conversion of existing buildings.

Whilst Corporation Street retains some sense of enclosure it lacks the levels of active frontage of Friargate. Combined with higher levels of traffic it results in a poor quality environment for pedestrians.

This pattern of development becomes more fragmented around Ringway. Here the blocks become irregular due partly to the way in which Ringway has cut across the historic grain of the city. The predominant land use here is retail warehousing with areas of surface car parks.

Network Rail own a major site bounded by Ringway, Corporation Street and the West Coast Main Line which is currently in operational use. The Corporation Street frontage to this site is poor in terms of its environmental quality.

This fragmented form of development combined with the visual impact of Ringway itself creates a poor quality environment both for pedestrians and as a gateway into the city centre from the west.

The southern and western parts of the new CBD are dominated by the listed mainline railway station and County Hall with the higher ground of East Cliff forming a natural boundary to the south.

Whilst the railway station is a principal gateway into the city, it lies at a lower level than Fishergate making orientation and way-finding difficult on leaving the station complex. This is an issue that needs to be addressed as part of improving the integration of the station with the new CBD and the rest of the city centre.

The area between Bow Lane, the western edge of the new CBD area, and the West Coast rail line is dominated by the block containing County Hall and an area of surface car parking to the north.

The extent of surface car parking throughout the new CBD area gives rise to a significant amount of underutilised land within the city centre.



2.3 Accessibility and Movement

The new CBD is highly accessible by all modes of transport, including bus, rail, and car. Preston is a compact city and all main services are accessible on foot from the new CBD although some of the routes would benefit from enhancement to make them more attractive.

The railway, whilst providing a major transport link both locally and nationally, does act as a barrier to east–west movement for both vehicles and pedestrians. The immediate area around the station in terms of its accessibility for pedestrians and vehicles, including access to buses, is generally poor.

There are high levels of pedestrian movement north–south along Corporation Street between the station and UCLan and on Friargate between the city centre and UCLan. However it should be noted that the quality and attractiveness of these main pedestrian routes is poor in places and Ringway, whilst providing good vehicular access into the area, is a barrier to pedestrian movement between the city centre and the University. This is particularly evident at the Corporation Street junction.

Buses serving the northern and western sectors of Preston and the majority of South Ribble are accessible on Fishergate and Friargate and the Portway Park and Ride service has a bus-stop on Fishergate. Buses going out of the sub-region towards Southport and Liverpool can also be boarded here.

Corporation Street and Ringway provide the main vehicular access routes into the area with access restrictions in place on Friargate.

Cycle access from the south is good and the new Butler Street – Penwortham Loop Line link will improve access further when it is completed, completion expected Summer 2011.

Car parking is currently concentrated around the station and the Fishergate Shopping centre (surface and multi-storey) with smaller areas of surface car parking, such as the City Council-owned Hill Street Car Park, available off Corporation Street. See Appendix J.



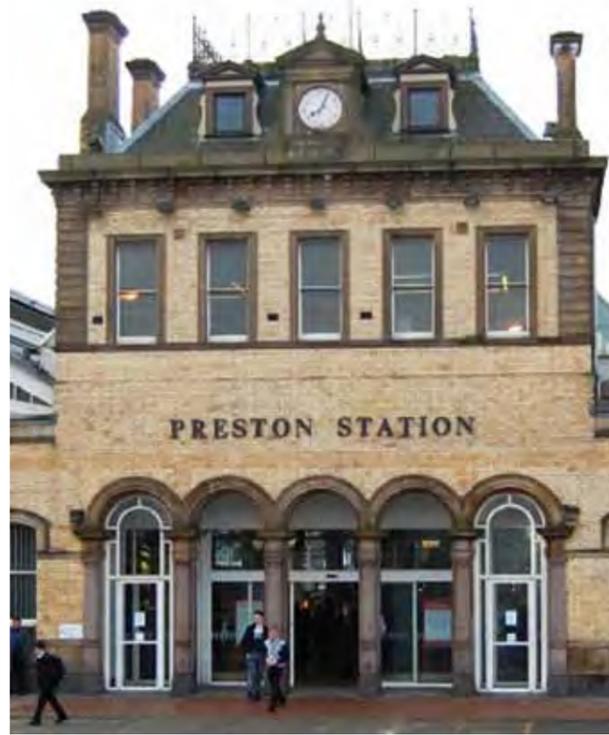
2.4 Historic Character and Interest

The new CBD and the areas immediately adjacent to it have a number of significant designated and non-designated heritage assets (3) that must be taken account of in any redevelopment proposals. These assets make a major contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area and, unless there are overwhelming reasons to the contrary, should be retained and enhanced. Other heritage assets, including buried remains, will be dealt with on their merits but may have implications for development and early consultation is recommended.

The key heritage assets within and adjacent to the new CBD are shown on Figure 5.

In terms of the area's historical development there are two distinct patterns.

First is the medieval and pre-industrial development which is still evident on Friargate. This was followed by the impact of the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th Centuries in the form of the Lancaster Canal which terminated on the retail site currently housing Aldi, Blockbusters and other users and the development of the railway. The area to the west of Corporation Street and around the station itself was dominated by railway sidings and depots. This is shown clearly on the 1911 Ordnance Survey plan (see Appendix C).



In terms of its designated heritage assets the new CBD contains a number of listed buildings and is covered in part by the Fishergate Hill and Winckley Square Conservation Areas. There are also a number of listed buildings that lie outside the new CBD boundary whose setting would need to be considered in relation to any development proposals which must preserve or enhance the setting of those listed buildings.

Friargate, through the retention of its historic form and scale, has a high townscape value as well as an archaeological significance. Therefore it is seen as an area that has significant heritage value. Any redevelopment proposals will be required to be sympathetic to this character whilst contributing to its physical and economic regeneration.

(3) 'Designated heritage assets' is a term used in PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment. With relevance to the New CBD area, designated heritage assets comprise Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Non-designated heritage assets are those elements of the historic environment that are not listed or within a Conservation Area but are nonetheless considered by the Local Authority as valued components of the historic environment.

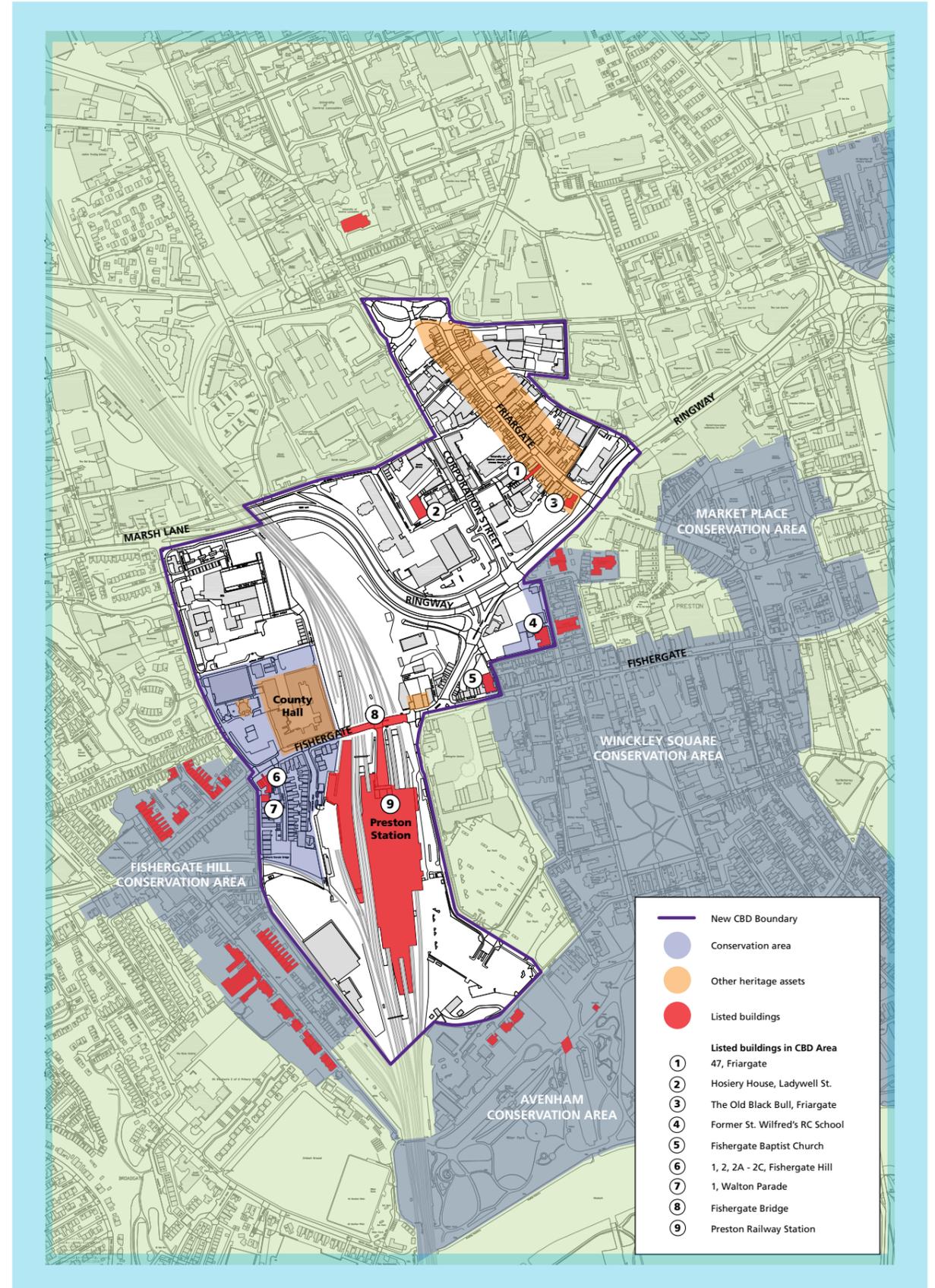


Fig 5: New CBD Heritage Assets



2.5 Views and Landmarks

Within the vicinity of the new CBD there are a variety of landmark buildings which range in both scale and quality. The higher quality buildings are generally historic and of relatively modest scale. The poor quality 'landmarks' are more recent developments, predominantly from the latter half of the twentieth century. These are generally along Ringway to the east of the new CBD boundary and include Marshall House and Lowthian House.

The northern part of the new CBD is within the area defined in the Preston Local Plan (Policy D5 – see Appendix D) as being suitable for tall buildings.

Policy D6 (Appendix D) sets out key views and vistas that should be protected from adverse impacts. Of relevance to the new CBD the key views that should be safeguarded are those of St Walburge's Church from Friargate and from Corporation Street.



2.6 Physical Constraints

The new CBD is generally free from significant physical constraints but those that may influence development are:

- its topography with some significant changes in level across parts of the area;
- the infrastructure relating to the West Coast Main Line; and
- Ringway

In terms of the area's topography there is a significant change of level from Fishergate to Ringway. From Ringway the land then rises again along Corporation Street and Friargate. There are also changes in level east-west with the ground falling from Friargate down to Ringway/Marsh Lane.

Any development proposals adjacent to the West Coast Main Line and the Station will need to take account of any technical issues that may arise in terms of protecting the operational, maintenance and safety requirements connected to the railway.

In addition to Ringway acting as a barrier to pedestrian movement its role as a major traffic corridor will also need to be taken into account by any new development proposals.

2.7 Land Ownership

The main land ownerships, both public and private sector, are shown in Appendix E.

The public sector partners recognise the important contribution that their assets can give to facilitating development in the new CBD and are willing to work closely with private sector partners to deliver this.