

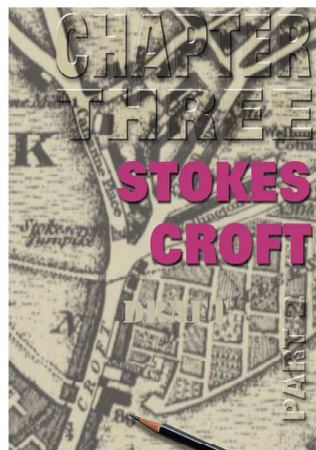
# CHAPTER THREE

## STOKES CROFT

DRAFT

PART 2





## **SAINT PAUL'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **CHAPTER THREE : STOKES CROFT**



# STOKES CROFT

## Gateway Enhancement



*Annie Davenport*

**Stokes Croft is a historic shopping street, 600m long, lined with a mixture of buildings dating from the 18th century to modern day.**

**It is a major arterial transport route into Bristol and an important Gateway both for the City Centre - leading directly into the heart of the Broadmead Shopping Area - and to St. Paul's, forming one edge of the neighbourhood's boundary.**

**The Street has a dual role. It is:**

- 1 a main transport corridor for the city, and**
- 2 a shopping and leisure area**

The first role has, in recent times, taken priority over the second, to the detriment of the street, the businesses, and the local community.

In addition, the street has suffered considerably from economic decline leading to a degraded urban environment and a reputation for crime and anti-social behaviour which has deterred new investment.

Within this Neighbourhood Plan, we show how we need to change this priority to bring vitality and profitability back to the street, to redefine its importance and to support regeneration.

In order to do this we have defined the guiding principles for all future actions in Stokes Croft :

## Guiding Principles

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to renew Stokes Croft as :

A busy and vibrant shopping and entertainment area

A place of independent trade

A unique historic environment preserved and enhanced for the future

An attractive place to live

A mixed community that caters for everyone

In order to bring these principles to life it will be necessary to address a number of Key Issues.

## Key Issues

Socio-Economic Profile

Image and Reputation

Property, Shops and Shopping

Transport

Urban Environment



## Socio-Economic Profile

Stokes Croft should perform its function as the local shopping street for the communities within walking distance on either side. However, it is bound on two sides by neighbourhoods within the lower ranks of multiple deprivation with respect to employment, health, disability and income. This means local households have less disposable income to spend in shops and on services, leisure and entertainment.

There is an insufficient volume of spend from the local area alone to attract the variety and range of shops which the local communities would find useful and beneficial. Conversely, businesses which locate in Stokes Croft cannot rely, for their long-term survival, solely on serving these local communities.



To overcome the constraints posed by the socio-economic profile around this shopping street it will be necessary to:

## ACTIONS

### Increase footfall

#### Diversify the range of shops and businesses to:

- Increase destination shopping
- Encourage different business models
- Market Stokes Croft to a wider audience

### Ease shoppers' car parking regime to encourage visitors

### Develop a more diverse range of housing in the local area

There are many examples which show how this can be done. For example, Stokes Croft can develop a specialism to mark it out as the 'place to go' for a particular type of product, or shopping experience.

In the case of Stokes Croft, an extension of the creative products market which currently exhibits in Park Row and upper Colston Street would be an example of this specialist shopping offer. In addition the capacity of the city to promote and support more distinct ethnic shopping quarters (i.e. St. Marks Road) should be tested.

A regular event such as a weekly street market could also boost the area by attracting outside interest, and diversifying the product range.

In addition, the introduction of a low-cost urban format supermarket such as Lidl or Aldi would gain custom from both the local communities and the growing student population, and hence become an attractor which would then benefit the wider shopping offer.

## Image and Reputation

**For a number of years the reputation of Stokes Croft has been one of an area which did not encourage visitors to linger or walk to and from the clubs, pubs and night spots which make up the evening economy. The street also had a reputation for street drinking and aggressive begging.**

**If Stokes Croft is to thrive, this reputation -and its causes - must be addressed.**

This will mean working closely with the police, the Safer Bristol Partnership and rolling out the Street Safe programme from the city centre. In addition, it will take concerted and continued effort by both the Police and the new PCSOs to enforce the street drinking ban operating in Stokes Croft and to work with land owners to ensure the ban is not circumvented by transference to private property rather than public spaces.

In addition, continued attention to the enforcement of licensing conditions in shops, pubs and clubs will be required.



Those services which provide support for individuals with alcohol or drug dependency, homelessness and mental health issues will need to ensure that their client management policies do not impact adversely on the area.

**To make Stokes Croft a place one wants to spend time in, it will be necessary to:**

## **ACTIONS**

**Improve the cleansing regime in public streets and spaces**

**Control anti-social behaviour**

**Reduce crime and fear of crime**

## **Property, Shops and Shopping**

**Please refer to map**

An important element of the viability of the street rests with the profile of street level property usage. In Stokes Croft, **25%** of street level property is in **retail use**, **34%** are **restaurants, cafes, bars and clubs**, and **15%** **financial and other professional services, including support services, solicitors and advice centres.**

**22% of ground floor shops are vacant**

We need to get these shops back into active use. One of the difficulties is locating current building owners, encouraging them to lease or let their properties and attracting businesses which provide a secure, long-term tenancy which encourages investment.

There is a concentration of poor quality buildings on the east side between Ashley Rd and City Road. A lack of investment over a considerable period, together with the poor image of the street reinforces the spiral of neglect and dereliction. Property in Stokes Croft attracts low rents due to their condition and location, resulting in low values, reinforced by short insecure lease arrangements which deter owners from investing. This then leads to high turnover.

**Low rent = no investment = progressive deterioration = less rent**

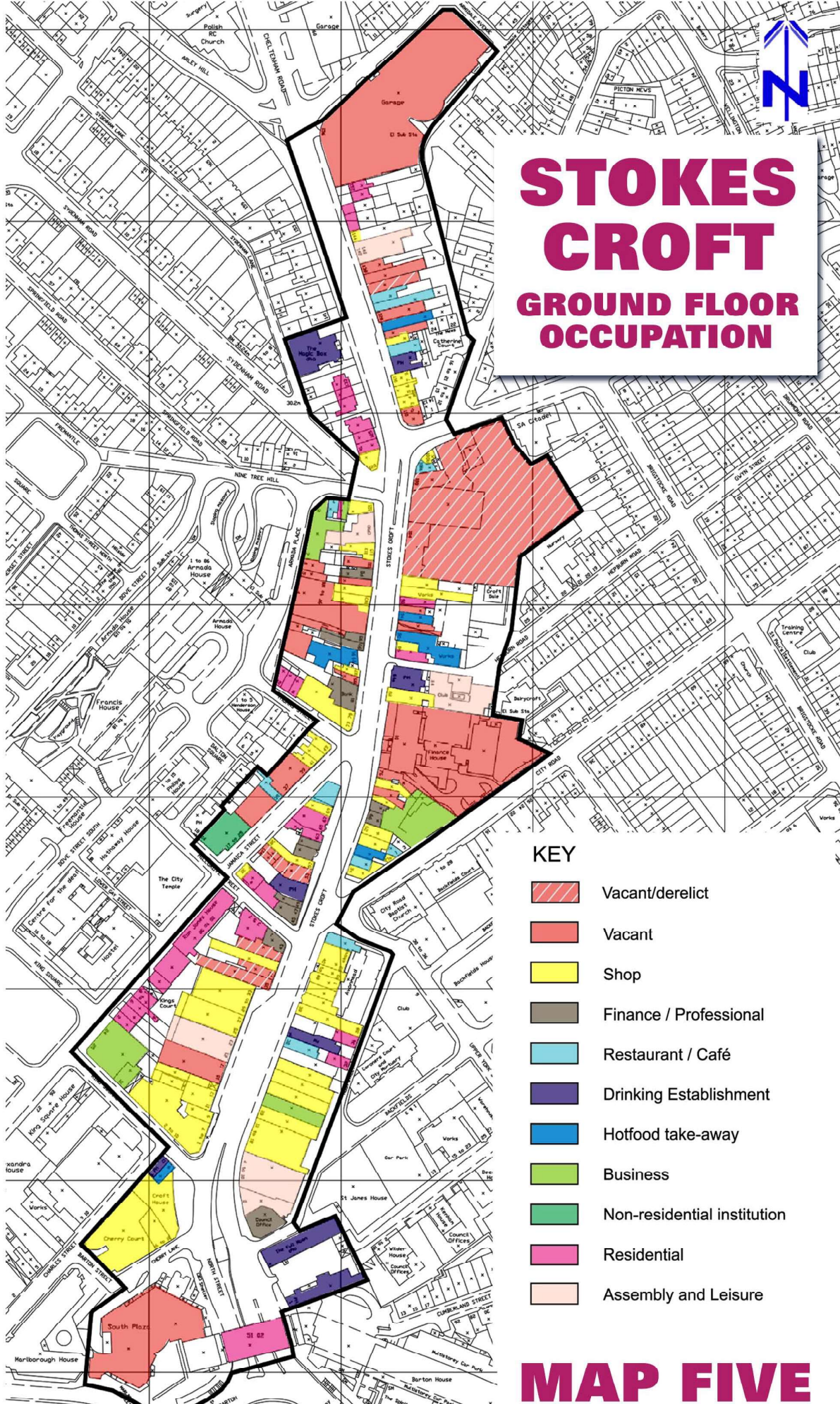
### **Business Support**

Bristol East Side Traders (BEST) are a business support agency working primarily in inner city Bristol. With a speciality in retail businesses, BEST aims to create a thriving small business community in inner Bristol through:

- **Tackling the physical and environmental barriers to business growth**
- **Encouraging enterprise and supporting sustainable businesses**







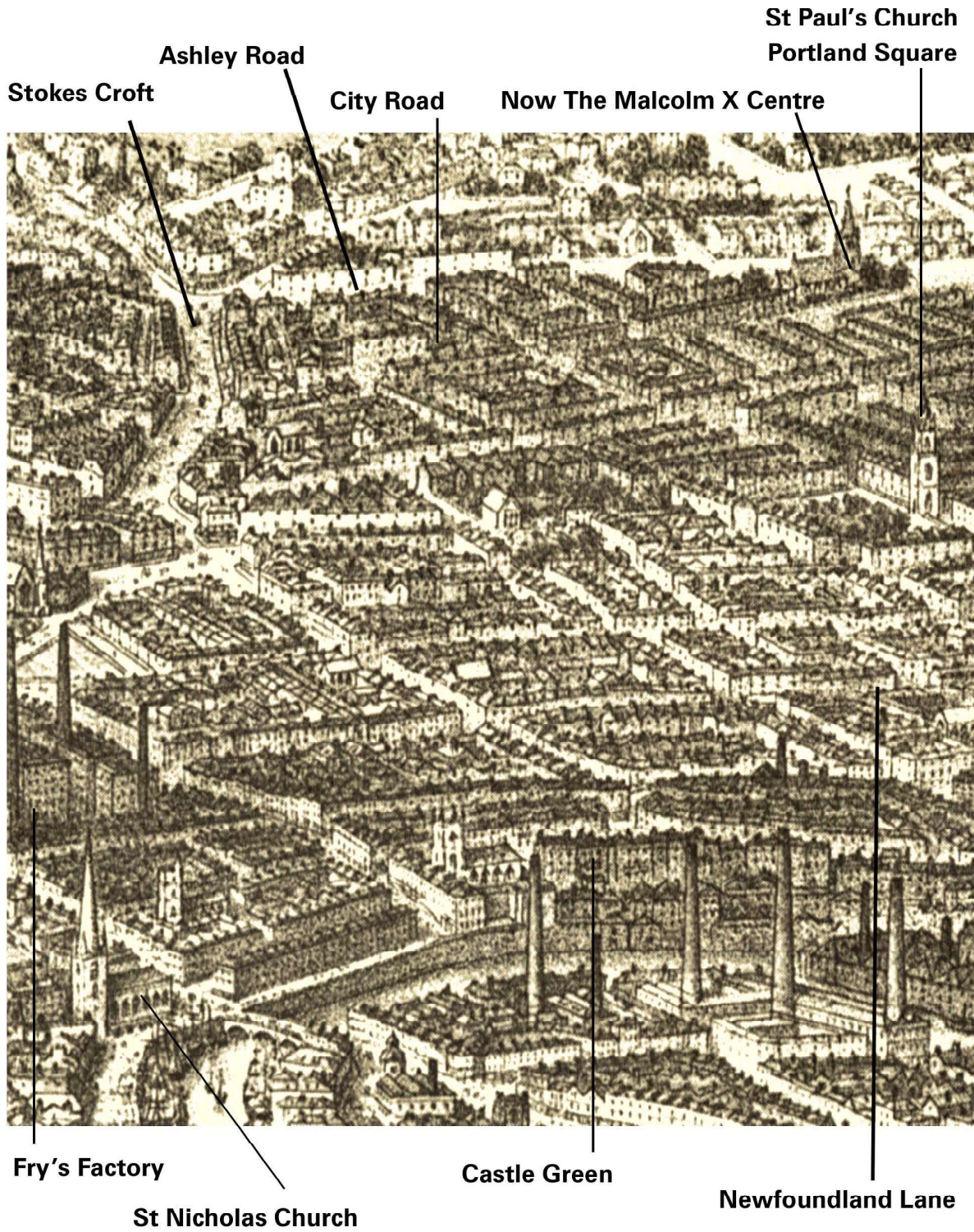
# STOKES CROFT

## GROUND FLOOR OCCUPATION

- KEY**
- Vacant/derelict
  - Vacant
  - Shop
  - Finance / Professional
  - Restaurant / Café
  - Drinking Establishment
  - Hotfood take-away
  - Business
  - Non-residential institution
  - Residential
  - Assembly and Leisure



# Stokes Croft in 1880





● **Challenging the area's negative reputation and celebrating its unique offer**

● **Influencing local and national decision making and policies**

BEST provides one-to-one support and advice to businesses and entrepreneurs to help them start, develop and grow their businesses. This can cover everything from registering a company to writing a business plan, from marketing advice to assistance with cash flows and budgeting.

On Stokes Croft BEST has worked with landlords and owners of empty retail premises to bring these units back into use by finding them tenants. They have helped businesses identify and move into suitable properties, and assisted business and property owners to identify sources of funding that can be used to improve the structure and appearance of their premises.

There is therefore a need to **Trade Up** - that is, change and enhance the range of shops and enable local businesses to attract more customers from further afield.

Additional vitality can be brought to a shopping street through active use of the upper floors of retail premises. In Stokes Croft, **56%** of the upper floors are in residential use, **11%** in business use. A further **20%** are used for storage. However, **12%** is lying vacant.

There are a number of derelict properties and sites in the street, which the owners have displayed no serious interest in addressing. There is therefore both a need and an opportunity for new investment from other quarters.

The biggest asset that Stokes Croft has in terms of the shopping offer is the profile of the street for independent traders, rather than national shopping chains. It is here that collaboration with Broadmead can best work to the advantage of both. Broadmead need not be seen as a competitor - they are different and complementary. Stokes Croft has a valuable role to play as an 'incubator' for new retail businesses, which may grow into larger units within the adjacent shopping centre.

However, at the moment, only **10%** of shops in Stokes Croft would be considered 'destination shops' - attractive to visitors from beyond the local area. This needs to change.

## **ACTIONS**

**Improve buildings and remove dereliction, through attracting investment and targeting Townscape Heritage Grant funding**

**Use CPO powers to tackle persistent dereliction and neglect**

**Encourage landowners to utilise the whole of their premises to provide more much-needed small business space and/or residential accommodation**

**Work with local enterprise agencies to support existing and new businesses to make the best use of their location**

**Facilitate the local traders association to get the businesses working together to promote and enhance the street**

## **Transport**

**The Joint Transport Plan recognises that**

**“Shortcomings in the design and maintenance of public spaces, public transport infrastructure and walking and cycling facilities affect the public’s perception of personal security. Quality of design and safety is the key aspect of liveability particularly in disadvantaged communities.”**

While Stokes Croft is less than 5 minutes walk from Broadmead and the Bristol Royal Infirmary, the walking environment is hindered by footway pinch points, broken and uneven pavements, semi-derelict and wasted public spaces, litter and inappropriately dumped rubbish. For a retail high street there are insufficient formal crossing places, and the street lighting is tall ‘highway style’ lighting columns

The expansion of the southbound A38 to 4 lanes and the St. James Barton roundabout appears unnecessary, and further erodes the pedestrian environment where it leads to St. James Barton roundabout.

The first phase of the showcase bus route, which was implemented in Stokes Croft and up Gloucester Road, failed to make significant complementary investment in the public realm of Stokes Croft. Funding has been identified under the current transport investment programme to retro-fit some of these environmental enhancements.

**To address the issues raised by the role Stokes Croft has to play in the transport needs of the city, action will be required to**

### **ACTIONS**

**Widen footpaths**

**Increase pedestrian crossing points**

**Improve and combine bus stop locations**

**Reassess shopping and service parking restrictions**

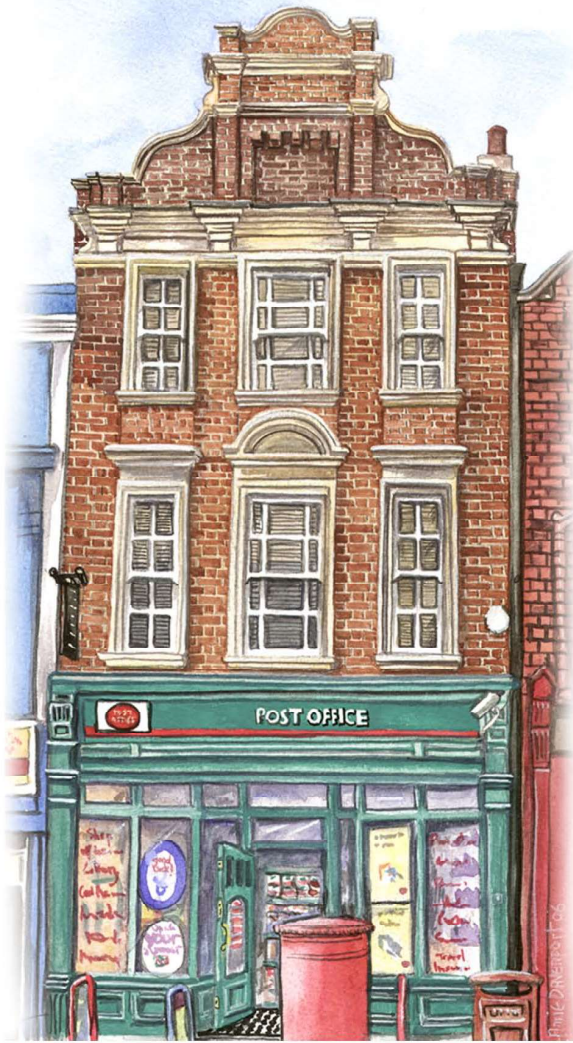
**Investigate potential for rerouting traffic around a one-way system, utilising Jamaica Street, to improve shopping environment, pedestrian and cycling routes.**

**Reassess street lighting**

**Undertake physical improvement to the public realm**



## Quality of the Urban Environment



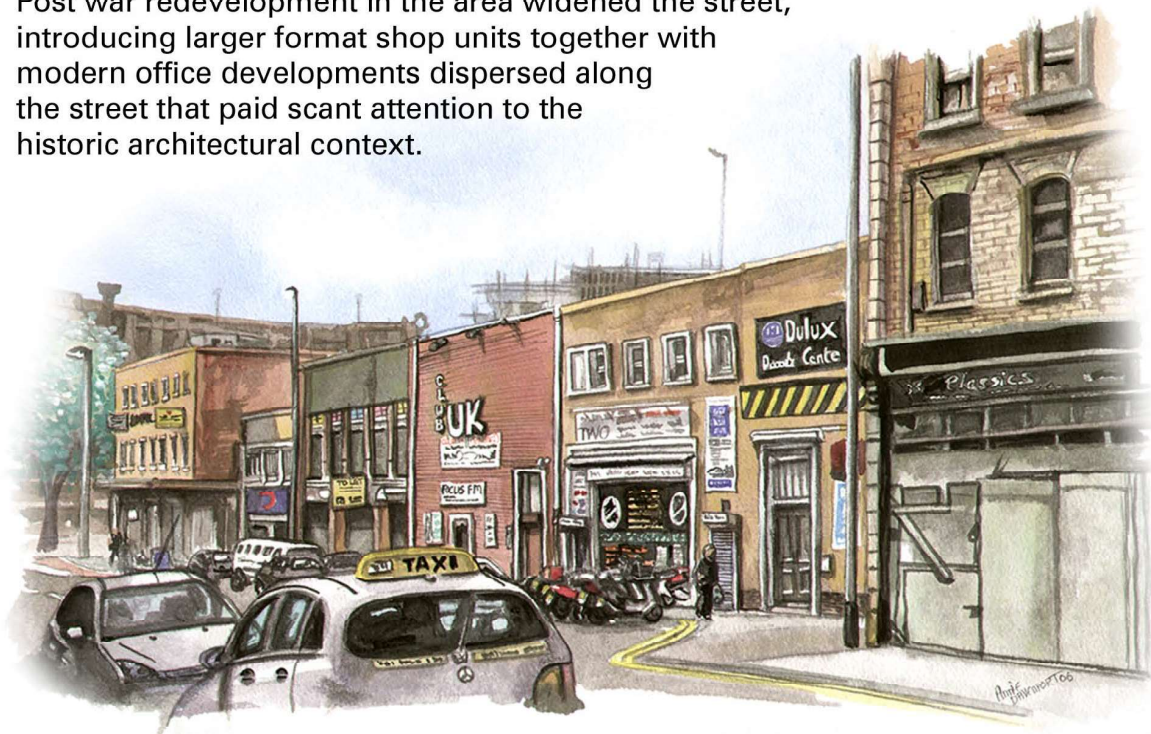
Before 1770 Stokes Croft was a relatively rural environment, the road was a main route to Gloucester and beyond, with turnpike gates erected to control entry and exit. By the 1800s however the street was laid out as a tree-lined residential suburb for the professional and trading classes. Many of the Georgian properties from this period remain.

By the 1900's the surrounding area was fully urbanised with a dense mix of residential and employment uses including breweries, carriage works and stables, a paper factory and many others. The neighbourhood boasted two fine residential squares and a splendid parish church.

The upper end of Stokes Croft has mainly fine grain small scale properties, well proportioned to the street.

Bomb damage from the Second World War devastated the lower end of Stokes Croft.

Post war redevelopment in the area widened the street, introducing larger format shop units together with modern office developments dispersed along the street that paid scant attention to the historic architectural context.





There are a number of issues of urban design and public space that need to be addressed. While there is a diversity of buildings, most of the post-war development is bland, lacking character and context. In addition, a number of the earlier buildings are in a poor state of repair, some abandoned and some with many interesting historic features removed.

A low level of vitality both creates and results from a low quality public realm.

Public space is dominated by highways requirements and the pedestrian environment is degraded through the presence of litter and rubbish, dirty and poorly maintained footpaths, poor shop displays - all contributing to a sense of a down-at-heel area.

Landmark spaces remain poorly landscaped and ill-used.

The creative activity which goes on in and around Stokes Croft lacks visibility and could be showcased on the street

## ACTIONS

**More frequent cleansing, and ongoing targeting of rubbish dumping**

**Work with traders and residents to keep streets cleaner and free from rubbish**

**BCC to roll out agreement over timed collection of trade waste**

**BCC to use powers to enforce waste removal from, and address dereliction of private property**

**Implement a programme of physical enhancement through replacement and refurbishment of footpaths, landscaping of public spaces and added value through public art interventions.**



**Corner of Stokes Croft and City Road. 1880**

*From an engraving by Lavar, 1880 from Bristol and How it Grew, Dorothy Brown, 1981*



To summarise, the action plan priorities for Stokes Croft are:

## **Action Plan Priorities**

- 1.** Make Stokes Croft safer
- 2.** Increase footfall - make it a destination
- 3.** Reduce neglect and the vacancy or turnover of commercial properties
- 4.** Promote enterprise
- 5.** Promote and celebrate area's creativity
- 6.** Facilitate the redevelopment of the major sites
- 7.** Consider a route to community ownership of assets to enable regeneration and ensure the needs of the community are met
- 8.** Secure the preservation of the historic character
- 9.** Tame the traffic
- 10.** Rebalance the housing provision

## **To make it Happen**

**The action plan for Stokes Croft will need dedicated resources in the form of a lead project manager who can facilitate, coordinate and corral the energy and actions of the different players.**

The headline action therefore must be to employ an **Enterprise Manager** on a minimum three, maximum five year contract - to co-ordinate, facilitate and project manage the implementation of the action plan. He/she will work for and with the local traders, clients and the public, advocating for a more joined-up approach to activity and services in and around the Stokes Croft area.

Their duties are outlined below:

## **ENTERPRISE MANAGER**

- 1.** Promote and monitor implementation of the Stokes Croft action plan
- 2.** Co-ordinate the agency response to environment and regulatory services together with the Neighbourhood Renewal Funded Environment officer
- 3.** Support a local traders' organisation (Stokes Croft Action Group)
- 4.** Encourage local traders to enhance their shop layouts and window displays
- 5.** Facilitate investors in finding appropriate property in Stokes Croft, and help landlords to find tenants for vacant properties
- 6.** Promote, support and facilitate creative events, art installations and temporary use of vacant premises
- 7.** Organise marketing events and publicity, attract sponsorship
- 8.** Liaise with Safer Bristol Partnership over street-safe schemes
- 9.** Promote the take-up of restoration grants under the Townscape Heritage Initiative

## **Funding**

Funding for the actions under this heading will need to come from a variety of sources including, but not exclusive to – :

- Developer Contributions in kind and in the form of Section 106 agreements
- Bristol Local Transport Plan
- Economic Regeneration small grants fund for pump-priming
- Arts Development
- Townscape Heritage Initiative
- Local Economic Growth Initiative (LEGI)
- Bids to the Big Lottery, European and other funding streams directed at regeneration, enterprise and growth
- South West Regional Development Agency



# Westmoreland House/The Old Carriage Works

One of the most significant derelict sites in Stokes Croft is the site of Westmoreland House and the Old Carriage Works - 104 - 106 Stokes Croft, and 4 Ashley Road.

The site is of strategic importance to the regeneration of Stokes Croft due to its size, visibility and the prominence of its location. It is also of significant value with regard to its location as an entrance to St. Paul's, a gateway into Bristol City Centre and on route into the heart of the expanding Broadmead Shopping District.



## Site Description

Westmoreland House/Old Carriage Works site is approx. 0.50 Hectares in size and situated 1 km north of the City Centre. Buildings on the site are very prominent being visible from different locations in St Paul's, Montpelier and Kingsdown.

These buildings include:

- Westmoreland House, a 4/6 storey office building of 1960s construction,
- The Old Carriageworks - a Listed Grade II\* Romanesque 3 storey building (1862)
- 4 Ashley Road - a Listed Grade II, two storey, Georgian house.

All properties are derelict – Westmoreland House is a shell, the Old Carriageworks is fire damaged with a temporary roof and a collapsed first floor, and 4 Ashley Road is in ruinous condition. There is also a substantial area of vacant land to the rear. Westmoreland House and the Carriageworks front onto Stokes Croft. 4 Ashley Road is free standing, situated behind a high boundary wall on Ashley Road.

In preparing proposals for the redevelopment of the site, consideration needs to be given to the immediate context of the site, its proximity to adjacent residential and commercial buildings and the historic character of the area.

The City has prepared Informal Planning Guidance to encourage and direct appropriate redevelopment of the site. This guidance indicates that:

- Redevelopment should reflect the diverse mix of uses in the area, while striking a balance between commercial and residential. It should also seek to contribute to the economic viability and vitality of the area.
- Residential development should include a mix of unit sizes and tenures that address housing demand and imbalances that exist in the area.



- **Retail (Class A1 to A3) will be expected along the Stokes Croft frontage, and related employment uses within Class B1 could also be acceptable on ground and upper floors along the Stokes Croft frontage and/or elsewhere within the development site. This could include galleries and display space.**

- **Leisure uses in the form of a small to medium sized multi-functional auditorium and performance space is considered suitable for this site because of its proximity to the City Centre and road network and its strong public transport links.**

#### **In terms of design:**

The whole of the site falls within the Stokes Croft Conservation area. Any development will need to preserve and enhance the character of the area. Design should be sensitive and have regard to the proportion, rhythm and materials of adjoining existing, particularly listed, buildings.

- **The relevant building lines on Stokes Croft and Ashley Road are clearly defined and well established. Building heights along these street elevations should reflect existing building lines and should not exceed the tallest of the existing adjacent properties.**

- **The scale of development should respect the scale of the listed and other historic buildings.**

- **Privacy and amenity of properties on Brigstocke Road, Hepburn Road and Tucketts Building flats should be respected, safeguarded and improved.**

- **Retention and refurbishment of the listed Old Carriage Works building is essential. The replacement roof should replicate the original roof destroyed by fire.**

The city council is working with the current landowner to bring forward a viable development that will meet the needs and expectations of the City and the local community, and to achieve refurbishment of the listed carriage works building. If progress is not made on the part of the owner, then the City Council is prepared to use its Compulsory Purchase powers to seek an alternative route to redevelopment.





# STOKES CROFT - Actions

ACTION	DETAIL	RESPONSIBILITY	COST	TIMESCALE	INDICATOR OF SUCCESS
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Make Stokes Croft Safer</b> Extend NiteSafe project from City Centre into Stokes Croft	Safer Bristol Partnership	<b>£50,000</b> Developers Contributions Home Office License fee contribution	<b>IMMEDIATE</b> 1 - 3 YEARS WITHIN 5 YEARS 5 - 10 YEARS	More visitors, thriving evening economy, reduction in criminal and anti-social behaviour, more people 'feel safe' in Stokes Croft in the evening
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Increase Footfall</b> Streetscape improvements including repair and replace footpaths, improve lighting, landscape gap sites, tree planting and quality street furniture	BCC Landscape Team and Highways Dept	<b>£600,000</b> Bristol Transport Plan Developers Contributions SWRDA Townscape Heritage Initiative	<b>2 - 3 YEARS</b>	50% increase in pedestrian traffic and 100% increase in time spent by individuals in area during weekdays and weekends 50% increase in multiple visits
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Improve Shoppers Parking Accessibility</b>	BCC Highways Dept Private Developer (Hamilton House)	<b>£28,000</b> revenue loss <b>£50,000</b> capital investment	<b>IMMEDIATE</b>	20% increase in trading due to easier access to shops and services by destination shoppers
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Improved Street Cleansing Regime</b>	BCC Waste Services and Street Scene Group	<b>£20,000</b> Mainstream Budget	<b>IMMEDIATE</b>	10% increase in investment from existing and new traders
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Reduce neglect, vacancy &amp; turnover in properties</b> Encourage take-up of Townscape Heritage Grant	Enterprise manager working with BCC Urban Design Team			Improve 15 buildings of historic interest, total private sector investment of £2m Long-term commitment to street by traders and landowners 20% reduction in turnover of businesses in first 5 years
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Use of T&amp;C Planning Act Section 215 power – removal of rubbish and bring about the renewal and refurbishment of neglected and derelict properties</b>	BCC Clean and Green Team, Urban Design Team	Mainstream Budget Townscape Heritage Initiative	<b>1 - 3 YEARS</b>	Environmental improvement leading to more responsible land ownership, increased investment and increased footfall 50% reduction in fly-tipping
<b>3.7</b>	<b>Use of CPO powers to address long derelict properties</b>	BCC Planning and regeneration teams SWRDA	Mainstream budgets working with private sector partners	<b>2 - 3 YEARS</b>	Bring 6 properties back into active use within 3 years Increase private sector investment Nos. 37, 39 & 41 Stokes Croft and Westmoreland House improved/redeveloped
<b>3.8</b>	<b>Promote Enterprise</b> Employ Enterprise Manager	SPUCP BCC BEST SWRDA	<b>£200,000</b>	<b>IMMEDIATE</b>	Reduce turnover of businesses, strengthen traders association, raise profile of street, increase take up of commercial properties, improve retail and commercial offer, increase vitality. 30% increase in retail turnover

# STOKES CROFT - Actions

ACTION	DETAIL	RESPONSIBILITY	COST	TIMESCALE	INDICATOR OF SUCCESS
<b>3.9</b>	<p><b>Facilitate the redevelopment of larger sites</b>                      Clarify development priorities                      Promote high quality development with active ground floor use</p>	SPUCP Planning Sub-group BCC	Mainstream	<p><b>IMMEDIATE</b>  <b>1 - 3 YEARS</b>  <b>WITHIN 5 YEARS</b>  <b>5 - 10 YEARS</b></p> <p><b>WITHIN 5 YEARS</b></p>	<p>Quicker redevelopment and sites and refurbishment of vacant buildings                      Better quality applications, quicker turnaround of planning permissions                      Developments which make a positive contribution to the street</p>
<b>3.10</b>	<p><b>Exploit and Expand creativity of the area</b>                      Progress a programme of visual and performing arts interventions – both temporary and permanent in following locations:                      St. James Barton roundabout                      Footways and courtyard of Full Moon pub                      On lighting Columns in North Street (bottom of Stokes Croft)                      Empty Corner sites (Stokes Croft and City Road, Stoke Croft and Jamaica St, Stokes Croft and Nine Tree Hill)                      Feature Lighting of key building facades</p>	SPUCP Arts and Culture Sub-group (or public art steering group) BCC Arts Development Unit & Public Arts Officer	<b>£20,000 per annum</b> Developers Contributions	<b>WITHIN 5 YEARS</b>	<p>Increase in visitor numbers                      Increase in trading                      Improved opportunities and visibility for creative industries</p>
<b>3.11</b>	<p><b>Tame the Traffic</b>                      Incorporate Key Aspirations into SPUCP and BCC policy documents and work programme, including Transport Plan</p> <p><b>Implement Localised Transport Improvements including:</b>                      Widen footpath and reduce carriageway in front of Full Moon pub                      Provide pedestrian crossings at each arm of junctions                      Extend central reservation in North Street                      Improve bus stop locations and facilities                      Provide advance stopping lines for cycles and cycle lane in Jamaica St                      Provide additional shoppers car parking                      Improve signage</p>	BCC Highways	<b>£300,000</b> Transport Plan and Developer contributions	<b>2 - 3 YEARS</b>	<p>Improve pedestrian environment, increased footfall, improved vitality at street level</p>