



W O L V E R H A M P T O N

CITY CENTRE

**Conservation Area Appraisal
& Management Proposals**

March 2007

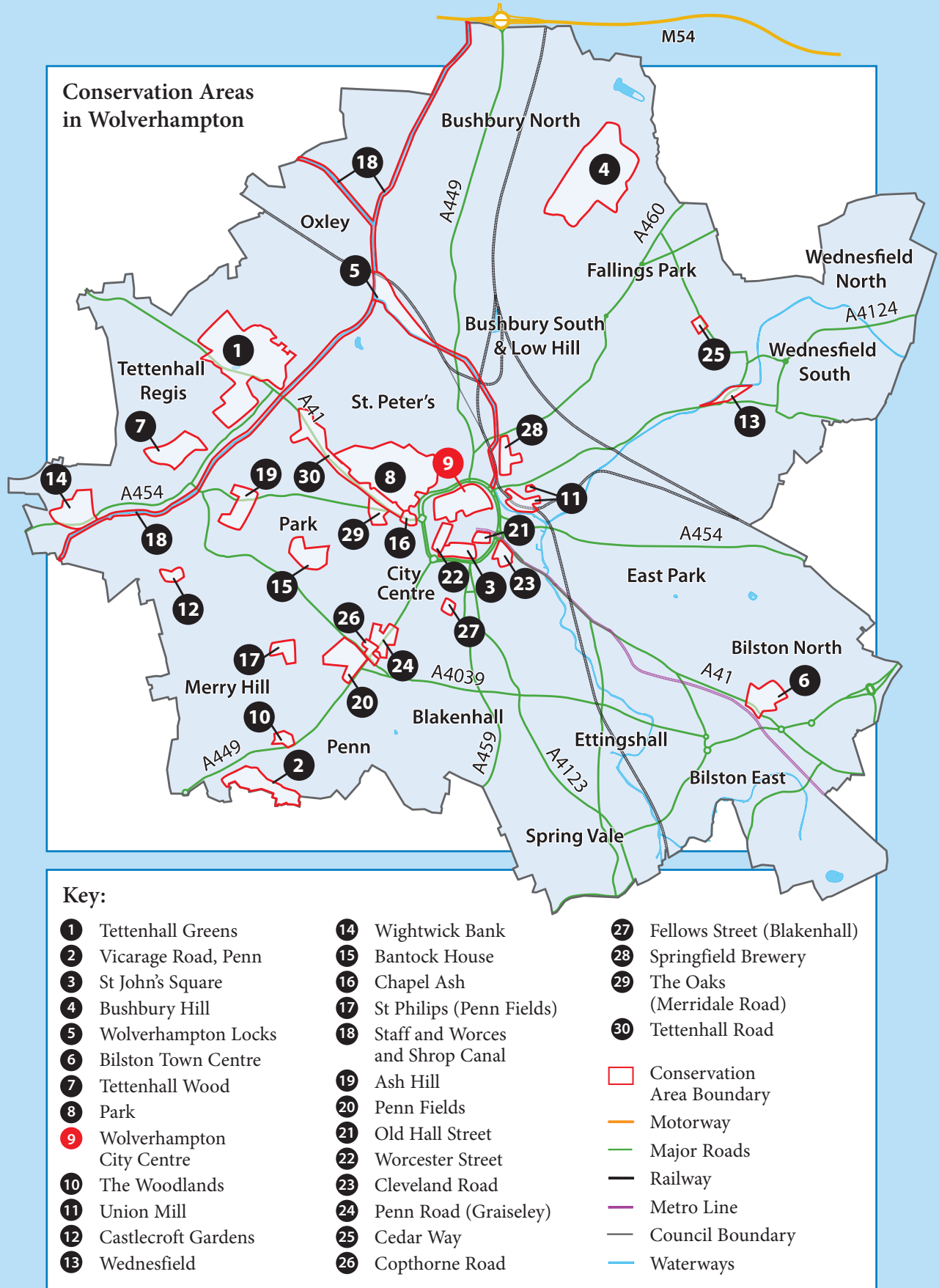
Wolverhampton
City Council



Conservation Area Character Appraisal

This document is the appraisal for the Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area which the Council approved on 14th March 2007.

To find out more about appraisals for other conservation areas in the City see the Council's website at: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/conservationareas



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Above:
Lindy Lou', Victoria Street



Left: *St Peter's Church from Lichfield Street*

1. Introduction

A series of small conservation areas based on Lichfield Street, King Street and Queen Street was designated in the centre of Wolverhampton in the early 1970s. These areas were subsequently joined together to form a consolidated conservation area in 1976 which was then revised and extended in 1991, called the Wolverhampton Town Centre Conservation Area. In 2001 Wolverhampton was granted City Status and in 2005 the opportunity was taken to change the name of the conservation area accordingly. A small extension was also designated in the context of a successful Heritage Lottery Fund application for a Townscape Heritage Initiative in the Broad Street area.

This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This appraisal satisfies the requirements of the legislation and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area can be assessed.

2. Location and Setting

Geographical location

The Wolverhampton Town Centre Conservation Area covers almost the entire northern half of the circular area enclosed by the city's ring road including the city's historic core around St Peter's Church and Queen Square but excluding the Mander Centre and the Wulfrun Centre, two modern shopping malls.

The City of Wolverhampton is located in the West Midlands about 25 kilometres north-west of Birmingham. The city is described in its promotional literature as 'a gateway between the historic Black Country and the beautiful countryside of Shropshire and Staffordshire.' To the north and west lie the agricultural uplands of Staffordshire and Shropshire, the foundation of its medieval prosperity; to the south and east are the coal and iron of the Black Country, the source of its industrial strength.

The city enjoys good transport connections: its train station is on the West Coast Main Line and local train services connect to other Midlands' towns and Wales. The M6 passes 8 kilometres to the east of the city and a number of major roads radiate from the ring road. Midland Metro runs from Wolverhampton City Centre to Birmingham Snow Hill via several Black Country towns.

Topography and landscape setting

St Peter's Church, the historic core of the city and the focus of the conservation area, sits on a low promontory almost 160 metres above sea level. The city centre's hilltop location is one of the reasons why railway and canal do not come closer to the centre. From St Peter's Church the land falls in every direction most steeply to the west where there is a long downhill view along Darlington Street.

Other factual information

The conservation area lies entirely within St. Peter's Ward.



Left: JWM Turner: *High Green* 1795 (Wolverhampton Art Gallery)

Right: *The same view in the late 19th century*



Left: Saxon Cross detail of sculptures

3. History

Archaeology

The Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area includes the historic core

of the settlement of Wolverhampton and the Saxon pillar, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The original settlement grew up around St Peter's church from at least the 10th century and the medieval town included Queen Square (earlier High Green), Dudley Street, Victoria Street (earlier Cock Street), Lichfield Street (earlier Kemp Street) and Stafford Street. Archaeological deposits dating to this period may survive below ground and need to be protected from destruction by development, or, where this is unavoidable, recorded ahead of destruction ('preservation by record'). Archaeological deposits from later periods may also be of value where they record a particular industry or activity or where they are particularly well preserved.

Origins

Wolverhampton is first recorded in 985 when 'Heantun' (High Town) was granted by King Ethelred to Lady Wulfrun, a Mercian noblewoman. In 994 she endowed a minster church which stood on the site of the present St Peter's church. Gradually the settlement around the church grew into a hill-top town. A market is recorded from the 12th century and in the mid-13th century the Dean of Wolverhampton secured the grant of a borough charter recognising the town's status.

Historical development of the conservation area

Wolverhampton flourished in the Middle Ages as a result of the wool trade. The wealth amassed by some of the local families from the wool trade resulted in a major reconstruction programme for St. Peter's church. There were apparently 1440

houses and 7454 people in Wolverhampton in 1750. The streets were unpaved and unlit, drains or sewers did not exist and the water supply was inadequate. No person or official body had the necessary power to improve the situation until in 1777 Parliament passed an Improvement Act for Wolverhampton which appointed 125 Commissioners to run the town.

The Town Commissioners were all local people who owned property worth more than £12 per year and land or goods worth more than £1000. Regular meetings were organised for the Commissioners at the Red Lion Inn (later the site for the Town Hall next to the Civic Hall). The Commissioners did a lot of useful work, including the prohibition of animal slaughtering in the streets, the provision of rudimentary street lighting and the imposition of a duty on householders to clean the street in front of their houses. Water supply was improved by the sinking of ten new wells and the placing of a great water tank in the market place. Policing was improved with the appointment of ten watchmen.

The Town Improvement Act of 1814 banned the use of thatched roofing, although in 1871 the last thatched building in Wolverhampton, a cottage in Canal Street (Broad Street), still stood. The main roads into the town in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were turnpike roads administered by Turnpike Trusts. The Town Commissioners ordered the construction of Darlington Street, a new westward route to a toll gate at Chapel Ash, completed in 1823.

After the 1832 Reform Act Wolverhampton sent two Members of Parliament to Westminster for the first time. In 1848 Wolverhampton was granted a Charter and officially became a borough. The first elected mayor was an ironmaster, Mr. G.B. Thorneycroft. Wolverhampton, like

many other towns, erected a statue in honour of Queen Victoria's late husband, Prince Albert. Surprisingly, Queen Victoria accepted an invitation to unveil the sculpture and visited the town in November 1866. The visit marked possibly her first public appearance after the death of her husband.

The industrial revolution and Wolverhampton's proximity to coal and iron resulted in a rapid expansion as the town became engaged in various metalware industries, including lockmaking. This expansion was assisted by new roads, new canals (Birmingham Canal 1772, Wyrley and Essington Canal 1797) and new railways which arrived at the edge of town in the 1850s. Although industry became the major part of the town's economy, it still maintained a thriving market function, serving the needs of the town and a wide agricultural hinterland well into the 20th century.

Later, the economic base of the town moved from small scale engineering to heavier engineering, including the manufacture of bicycles, motorcycles, cars, lorries, buses and aeroplanes.

Following Borough status in 1848, the newly elected Borough Council took over the functions of the Town Commissioners and became the leading local government body. Piped water, gas and electricity gradually became available. The town's road network was upgraded and transport within the town was improved by buses and trams. In the last quarter of the 19th century, sub-standard housing in the Stafford Street area was removed and Lichfield Street was re-built as a showpiece shopping area to rival Birmingham's Corporation Street.

After the First World War expansion continued, especially into the western suburbs. The town

suffered from the Great Depression but remained relatively prosperous. The period 1965-1985 saw many changes in the town notably the construction of the ring road and two shopping centres (Mander and Wulfrun). Large areas of the centre were demolished, leading to massive changes in the town's landscape. During this time, many of Wolverhampton's older properties were lost.



Above: Timber framed building in Lichfield Street before redevelopment in 1880

The town was badly hit by the industrial depression of the eighties, with factories closing and unemployment high. In the 1990s the town gained some share of new industries and grew as a centre for entertainment. The University of Wolverhampton gained its university status in 1992 and is currently carrying out a seven-year plan of extensive rebuilding and rationalization, much of it within the conservation area.

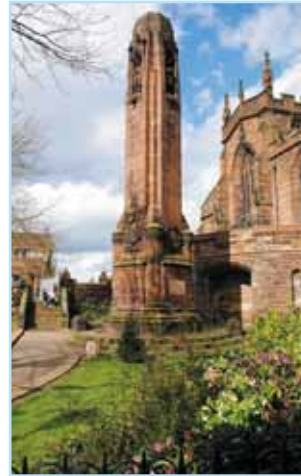
During the twentieth century Wolverhampton continued to grow both in population and in size. The census of 1901 showed the town's population to be 94,187 and by 1951 the figure was 162,672. Today it is over a quarter of a million. In 2001 the town was granted City Status.

4. Character and Appearance

General description and summary

The special character and appearance of the Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- The city's early origins as displayed in the Saxon Cross Shaft;
- The hilltop setting of St Peter's church;
- The city's remaining historic street pattern;
- The architectural and historic quality of the area's buildings;
- The architectural unity of the late 19th century re-development of the Lichfield Street and Stafford Street areas;
- Individual key buildings of note i.e. St Peter's church, Grand Theatre, Church of SS Peter and Paul, Art Gallery, Old County Court, Methodist Church;
- Queen Square, once the historic market place now the city's core and showpiece;
- St Peter's Gardens, the most significant open space within the entire city centre;
- The use of terracotta detailing in Victorian and Edwardian buildings;
- Side alleys, known as 'folds';
- The presence of the University of Wolverhampton;
- Compact collection of public buildings north of Queen Square;
- Smell from Banks's Brewery;
- Local historic associations as recorded by Civic Society plaques;
- Items of sculpture and public art, including the war memorials;
- Traditional cast-iron 'Lucy Boxes', part of the old tram electrical supply.



Left: War memorial, St Peter's Gardens.



Present character: activities and uses

The city centre, i.e. the whole of the area encircled by the ring road, is a focus for shopping, leisure, employment and civic functions. The conservation area, which forms nearly half of this area, hosts all of these uses but contains a disproportionate amount of leisure, cultural and civic facilities, a large number of financial and professional services and the majority of the city centre's secondary commercial frontages.

The conservation area contains the traditional primary shopping streets but the modern focus of the city's shopping area is in the Mander and Wulfrun Centres which are not included in the conservation area.

There are no significant industrial uses within the conservation area. The Chubb Building, once a factory for producing safes and locks, is now a media centre. On certain days the smell of brewing from Banks's Brewery permeates the city.

Residential use is minimal, confined to flats, 'living over the shop' and a terrace of dwellings in Thornley Street. However, residential use is growing in the area helped in part by the implementation of a successful scheme to develop a number of good quality property refurbishments.

Notably, the conservation area contains almost all the city's cultural quarter. The following galleries and theatres lie within the conservation area: Art Gallery, Lichfield Street; The Grand Theatre, Lichfield Street; Arena Theatre, Wulfruna Street; Light House, Fryer Street; Civic and Wulfrun Halls, North Street.

Also within the conservation area are significant civic and educational buildings - Wolverhampton Civic Centre, the Magistrates' Court and the southern campus of the University of Wolverhampton. The area contains a large number of pubs, restaurants, cafes and three



Above from left to right: Art Gallery, Civic and Wulfrun Halls

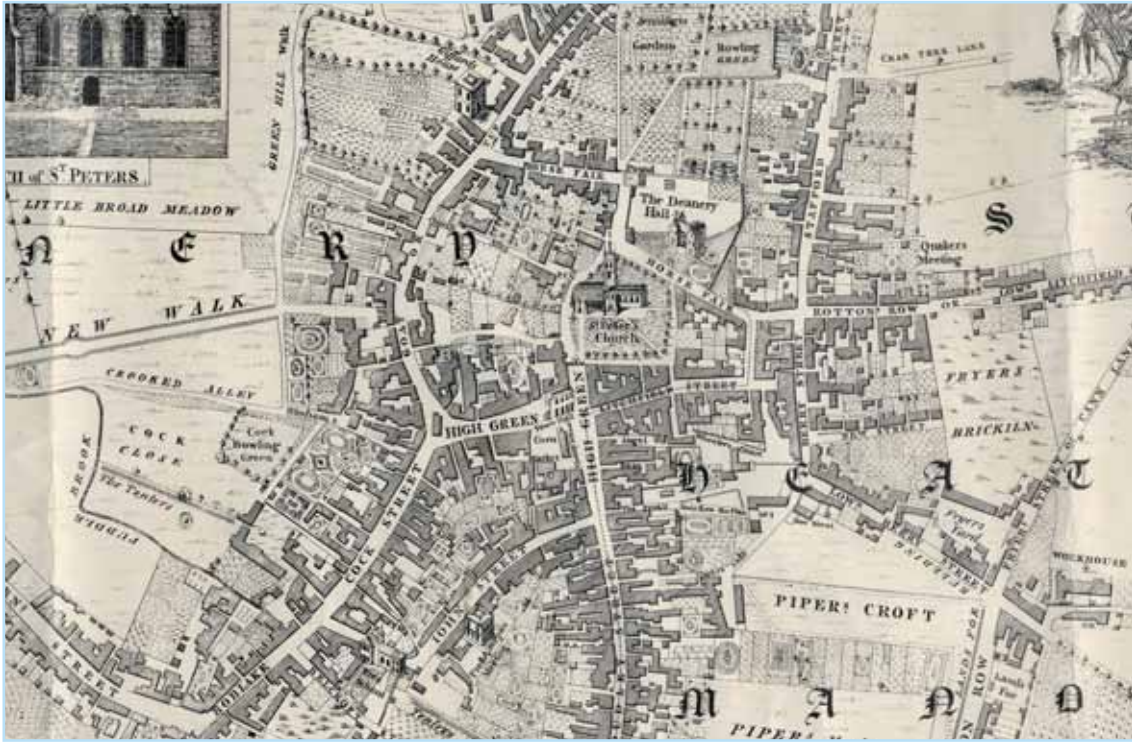
large active places of worship. By day, as befits a regional shopping centre, the main shopping streets are busy. There are large numbers of students (in term time) around the locality of Wulfruna Street and Stafford Street. Waterloo Road and Thornley Street are noticeably quieter streets. By night, the city centre attracts many revellers to the city's 'thriving and eclectic nightlife'.

Dudley Street, King Street and Queen Street (part) are pedestrianised. The ring road carries traffic away from the city centre and the conservation area's streets are relatively free of cars but there is a constant stream of buses attending the numerous bus stops, especially in Lichfield Street and Broad Street.

Development of street pattern

Isaac Taylor's 1750 map of Wolverhampton depicts the mid 18th century street pattern of the town before it expanded beyond its medieval boundaries. The historic focus and raison d'être of the town was the 14th century collegiate church of St Peter. By the beginning of the 16th century the central meeting point of the town was High Green, renamed Queen Square after the visit of Queen Victoria in 1866. This was the site of a market place from which streets led to the surrounding countryside and other local towns.





Above: Issac Taylor map of 1750

Below: Map from Smart's Trade Directory of 1827

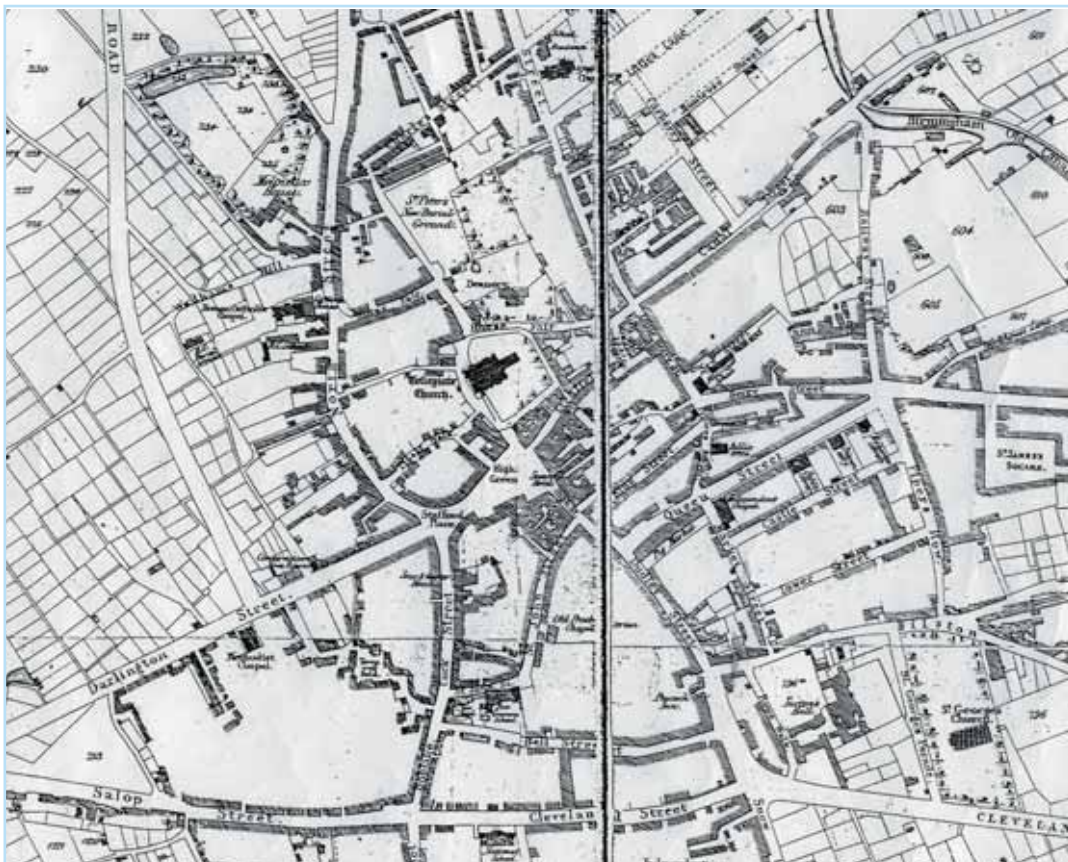


At the western end of High Green, Taylor's map shows Cock Street, today's Victoria Street, which led towards Worcester. The continuation northwards of Cock Street was Goat or Tup Street, today's North Street, leading to Stafford.

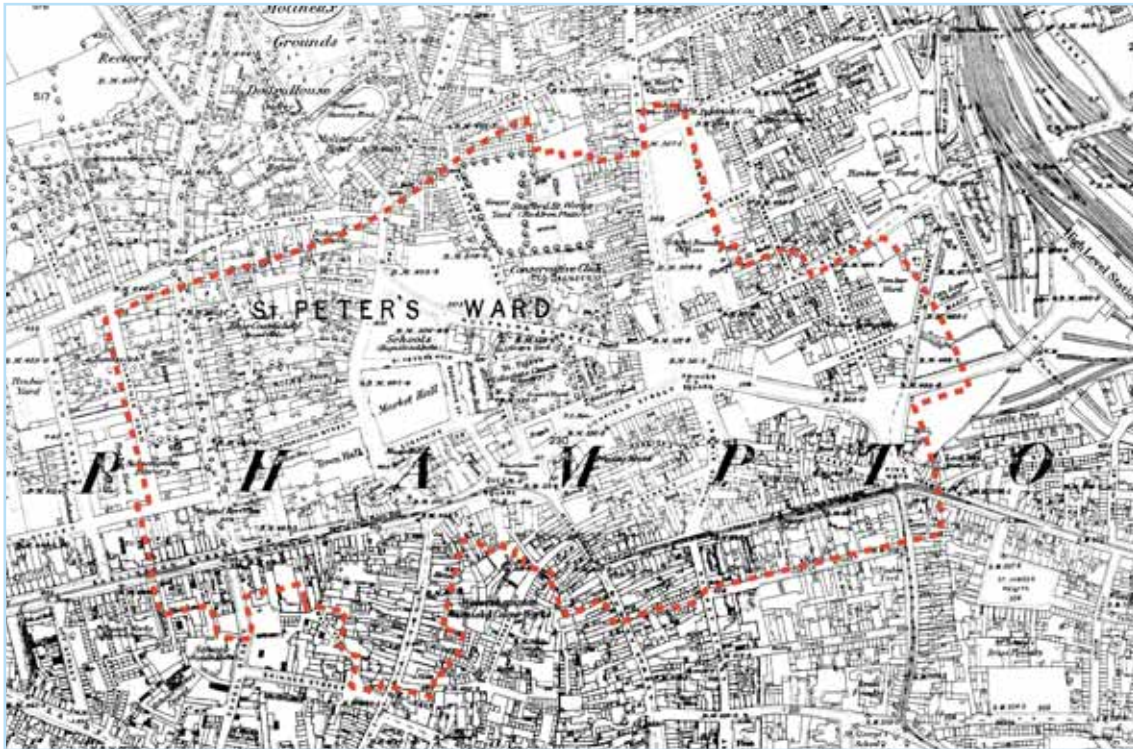
At the eastern end of High Green, two more ancient streets are illustrated: Dudley Street led over Snow Hill to the rival market town of Dudley; Litchfield (sic) Street, led circuitously by way of Rotton (sic) Row (today's Broad Street) to Lichfield. Another important street on Taylor's map is Lower Berry Street which was then the main approach to the town centre on its eastern side. This is today's Berry Street, no longer with the importance it once had. A zig-zag street

named Horsefair ran along the north side of the church precinct; on its north side was the 17th century Deanery, now demolished.

Nearly 80 years later, a map in Smart's Trade Directory for 1827 shows many changes. King Street, Queen Street and Princess Street (following part of the route of the aforementioned Lower Berry Street) have been laid out to the east of the town. Darlington Street, a planned new street leading west, is complete. By the time of the 1842 Tithe Map, Queen Street had become the most prestigious street in the town. A new road leading north from Darlington Street was called Wellington Street, today's Waterloo Road.

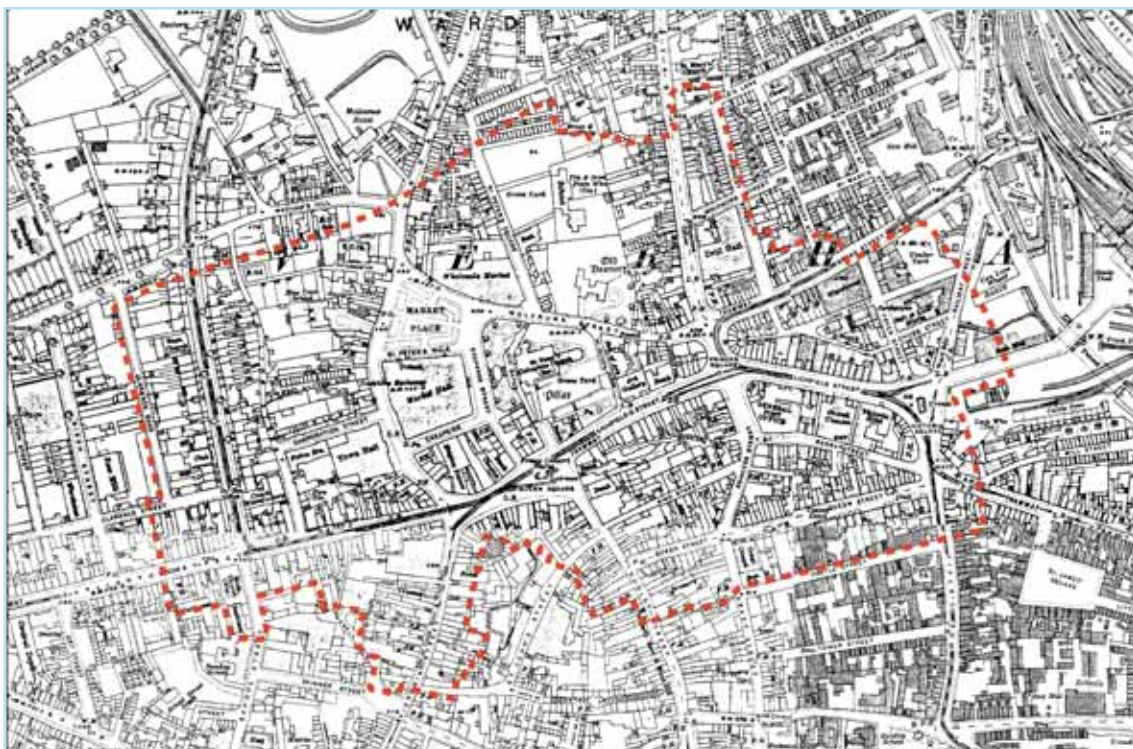


Below: Extract from the 1842 Tithe Map



Above: Extract from 1884 Ordnance Survey Map

Below: Extract from 1914 Ordnance Survey Map



The next major alteration to the street pattern came after c1880 when there was a massive programme of demolition and reconstruction in the Lichfield Street and Stafford Street area. Lichfield Street was widened, rebuilt and extended. At the same time, low quality housing in the Stafford Street/Broad Street area was demolished and the whole district re-developed.

Whilst there was a certain amount of infilling and rebuilding in the first half of the 20th century, the street pattern was not significantly altered again until the building of the ring road (1961-85) and the construction of the Mander and Wulfrun Centres and the Civic Offices in St Peter's Square. The ring road forms the northern boundary of the conservation area. The ring road's impact on street pattern in the conservation area has been the demolition of the lower end of Darlington Street and the blocking of Wulfruna Street, North Street and Red Lion Street.

Despite these changes, the town's historic street pattern can still be traced. Even small alleys such as Wheeler's Fold and Blossom's Fold, shown on Taylor's 1750 map, can still be found, though not always with any notable historic character or appearance.

Architectural and historic character

The principal architectural features are:

- Historic street pattern of ancient roads leading from medieval church and market place;
- Saxon Cross;
- Medieval St Peter's church, restored in mid 19th century;
- Two timber-framed late 16th century buildings: 19 Victoria Street and part of 43 and 44 Queen Square;
- Giffard House (1726) and adjoining Catholic Church of SS Peter and Paul (1826);

- Georgian houses in King Street;
- Early 19th century houses and civic buildings in Queen Street;
- Victorian town houses in Waterloo Road; terraced houses in Thornley Street.
- Large scale late Victorian/Edwardian civic and commercial buildings in Queen Square and Lichfield Street;
- Methodist Church, Darlington Street (1900-01) by Arthur Marshall;
- Compact area of late 19th century development in Stafford Street and Broad Street;
- Buildings designed to take advantage of prominent corner locations;
- Well designed individual buildings from the 1920s and 1930s including the grade II listed Civic Hall and two locally listed buildings (Staffordshire Building Society HQ, Princess Street and Clock Chambers, Darlington Street);
- Notable buildings by local architects such as Edward Banks (Queen's Building), Thomas Fleeming (1849-1935) (Barclays Bank, Queen Square), Richard Twentyman (1903-1979) (Clock Chambers, Darlington Street) and Frederick Beck (Synagogue and St Peter's Gardens).

The omission of any particular building feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

The conservation area contains buildings from the Middle Ages onwards but there has been much demolition and replacement particularly in the late 19th and 20th centuries. There is no overall prevalent architectural character but a variety of styles and a frequent clash of new and old building. Character areas (see final part of Section 4 below) have differing architectural characters reflecting the piecemeal development of the city.

Lichfield Street, Broad Street and Stafford Street, which have changed little since construction in the period 1880-1910, are the most architecturally cohesive parts of the Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area.

The oldest building in the conservation area is a Saxon cross shaft, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is a sandstone column decorated with acanthus leaves, beasts and birds (much eroded) which probably dates it from the late 9th century. This is the sole reminder of the Anglo-Saxon church which stood on the site of St Peter's Church. The oldest part of today's St. Peter's Church is the base of the tower, dating from the early 13th century, but the main body of the church is late 14th century. The church was restored in 1852-65 by Ewan Christian.

No. 19 Victoria Street ('Lindy Lou's') boasts a date of 1300 but the style of construction with typical closely set vertical timbers suggests that it may date from c1600, perhaps built after a fire recorded in April 1590. The north end of the west elevation of no. 43/44 Queen Square, visible off Exchange Street, has a 16th century timber-framed gable bay.

Little remains in the conservation area from the 17th century - perhaps as a consequence of fires, one of which in 1696 destroyed 'over 60 dwelling houses, besides 60 bays of barns, with stables and outbuildings full of corn'.

There are fine individual buildings and short rows of houses from the 18th century in the Conservation Area notably Giffard House, no. 43/44 Queen Square, and nos. 54-56 St John's Street (Woolpack Alley). There are further good examples of Georgian architecture in King Street, Queen Street and Lichfield Passage. Giffard House, dated 1728, is a typically early Georgian red brick

house of five bays with a hipped roof and symmetrically placed segmental-headed windows. No. 43/44 Queen Square is similar in date and style but is a re-fronting of an earlier building. Nos. 54, 55 and 56 Woolpack Alley (Quicksilver Amusements) is an early 18th century five-bay two-storey stucco house (now shop and office) with rusticated quoins, a cornice over the ground floor and a top entablature with deep frieze.

King Street contains a row of three storey red brick and stucco late 18th century houses. The original houses were exclusively residential but many properties now have shopfronts.

Queen Street is an early 19th century street. The former County Court (no. 50) dates from 1813 and is listed grade II*. It has a stucco façade with stone dressings and a projecting 3 bay colonnade and portico under a central pediment. Nos. 44 and 45 and nos. 47 to 49 are three-storey Georgian houses built with red brick and stone dressings with imposing classical doorcases. Other terraced buildings from this period can be found along Darlington Street. An important building from the early 19th century is the Roman Catholic church of SS Peter and Paul beside Giffard House in North Street, a stucco building in the style of John Soane.



Above:
View towards the former Staffordshire Technical College

There was much re-building in the city centre as Wolverhampton grew prosperous in the 19th century. The rebuilding and extension of Lichfield Street in the 1880s provided the opportunity for the construction of large offices and chambers built in 'revivalist' styles: Gresham Chambers (c1880) is 'Jacobean', the former Midland Bank (c1910) and the Royal London Buildings (1902) are Edwardian 'Baroque'. Buildings in Princes Square might be described as 'Queen Anne Revival' style whose distinctive features include white painted sash windows, 'Dutch' and shaped gables and moulded brickwork or terracotta.

Further re-development took place in the 1920s and 1930s when older buildings were demolished to make way for modern offices (e.g. Clock Chambers, Darlington Street and Express and Star, Queen Street) or shops (e.g. Beatties, Victoria Street and former Co-op Store, 55-77 Lichfield Street). Clock Chambers and the former Staffordshire Building Society Offices in Princess Street are two locally listed 1930s buildings, an indication of the quality of some of the 1930s additions to the townscape.

Building types and prevalent building form

The conservation area has, for the most part, a dense urban grain and buildings form rows or terraces occasionally interrupted by narrow openings to side alleys or passages such as Blossom's Fold, Wheeler's Fold or Lichfield Passage. In the central area around Queen Square four storeys is not uncommon but three storeys is the norm, dropping to two storeys only at the extremity of the conservation area, in Thornley Street for instance.

The Civic Centre and environs (Character Area 2) is the exception to the characteristic dense urban grain. Here there is a number of large

free-standing civic, religious, cultural and educational buildings with significant public spaces between.

In addition to numerous relatively small scale shops and pubs, the conservation area contains a large purpose-built department store (Beatties), the Victoria Hotel at the end of Lichfield Street and several sizeable public houses (e.g. Prince Albert, The Old Still, The Giffard Arms).

Dwellings are uncommon within the conservation area and nearly all the area's buildings have shopfronts or business entrances at the ground floor. Thornley Street is still partly a residential terrace but the original residential use of King Street, Queen Street and Waterloo Road has incrementally changed to office and commercial use.

As well as a number of prestigious bank buildings in Queen Square and Lichfield Street, the conservation area has a large number of late 19th century 'office chambers', tall buildings with many-windowed facades to maximise internal daylight for the many clerks and office workers. These are mostly found in the vicinity of Queen Square and Lichfield Street. Quadrant Chambers and Star Chambers in Princes Square and Gresham Chambers opposite the Art Gallery are good examples.

There are three large churches within the area (St Peter's Church, SS Peter and Paul, Paternoster Row and the Methodist Church, Darlington Street) and a former synagogue in Fryer Street. There are no schools but the University of Wolverhampton has a strong presence in the area, occupying both modern purpose-built buildings west of Stafford Street and re-using older buildings such as the former Wolverhampton and Staffordshire Technical College in Wulfruna Street.

Building materials

With the exception of the stone church, it is likely that most medieval buildings in the conservation area would have been timber-framed for there are plenty of examples of timber-frame construction in Staffordshire. Today there are only two known surviving timber-framed buildings: 19 Victoria Street and part of 43 and 44 Queen Square although both of these are post medieval in date.

Until the arrival of the canal and railway most buildings would have been built with locally available materials predominantly timber framing, although local clay would have been used to produce bricks for higher status buildings. The red bricks of Giffard House are made from the clay dug out during construction of the cellars. Locally quarried stone was of relatively poor quality and therefore stone does not begin to feature as a significant building material until the later 19th century when it is imported into the area and used for banks and civic buildings.

The early 18th century was a time when brick-making techniques were improving and becoming more affordable. Red is the most prevalent colour, exclusively for 18th century brick buildings, but buff or yellow bricks and varieties of red tones begin to appear in the 19th century, transported from further afield by canal or railway. Red bricks can, for example, be found in King Street, Queen Street, Darlington Street and a late 18th century terrace in Lichfield Passage. Unusually, No. 23 and 24 Queen Square is faced with 'white' bricks that from a distance gives the appearance of stone. The Queen's Building is the most prominent buff brick building.

In line with the fashion of the time, stucco, a form of render, is common in some of the conservation area's early 19th century buildings, most notably in Queen Street where there is a collection of stucco

buildings dating from c1825. Darlington Street, developed soon after 1823, contains a mix of brick and stuccoed buildings.

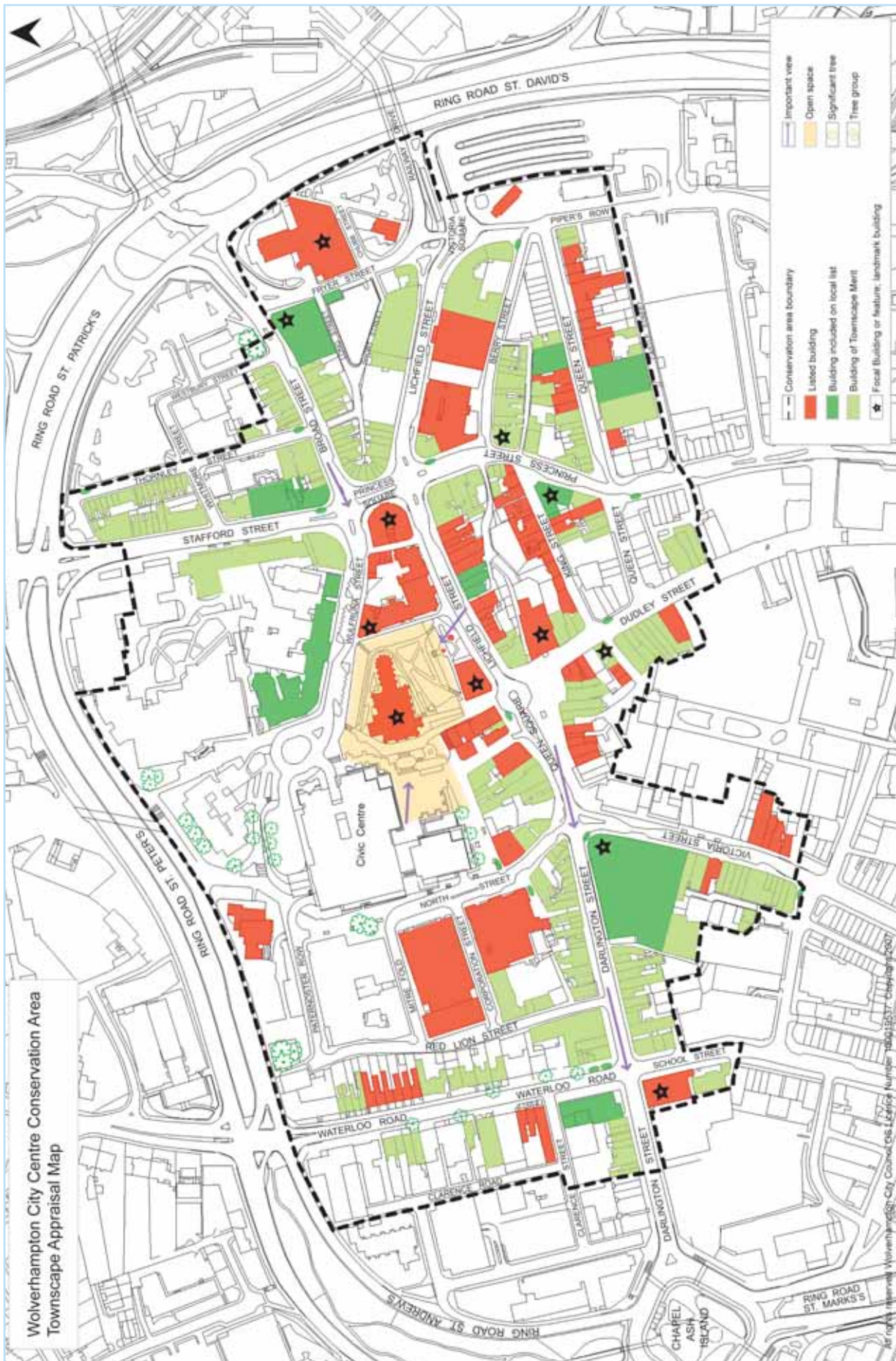
Though 19th century houses and shops in the area are built with brick, stone is the predominant building material for the town's banks and prestigious public buildings including the Town Hall (1867) and Art Gallery (1883-5). The Town Hall (now Magistrates' Courts) has an imposing ashlar frontage. The Art Gallery is built with ashlar stone with some polished granite. Type and colour of stone vary, as can readily be seen in the banks in Queen Square. Clock Chambers, Darlington Street and the Civic Hall are constructed with Portland Stone.

Roofs are commonly covered in Welsh slate, conveyed by canal and railway. Roofs of clay tile are generally to be found on the area's older buildings such as no. 43/44 Queen Square.



Above: *Terracotta detail*

The use of terracotta detailing became popular in the late 19th century and is displayed on many of the buildings in the conservation area, particularly in the redeveloped areas around Lichfield Street and Stafford Street. Red is the most common colour but buff terracotta is combined with a dark red brick on the façade of the former Post Office. Faience (a glazed form of terracotta) is used at The Posada and there is blue and buff glazed terracotta over the entrance to the Royal London Buildings Lichfield Street. The former Co-op Department Store in Lichfield Street is an example of use of white faience tiles on a 20th century façade.



Timber sliding sash windows came to prominence from the Georgian period onwards and as the majority of the conservation area's buildings are 18th century and later, this is the characteristic type of window, of varying size and pattern of glazing but generally recessed in the brick or stonework and with a strong vertical emphasis. At the end of the 19th century, as various 'revival' styles became popular, there was greater use of casements, leaded lights and less rectilinear patterns of glazing.

Listed buildings

A listed building is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from the City Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out. Listed buildings are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map.

Locally listed buildings

As well as listed buildings, Government guidance on the protection of the historic environment (Planning Policy Guidance 15) makes provision for planning authorities 'to draw up lists of locally important buildings, and to formulate local plan policies for their protection, through normal development control procedures'. Works that require planning permission to a building included in the City of Wolverhampton Local List will be expected to take into account the special architectural and historic interest of the property. Locally listed buildings are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map.

Buildings of Townscape Merit

Many unlisted buildings have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being 'Buildings of Townscape Merit'.

Buildings identified as having 'townscape merit' will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impracticable, they are excluded.

With listed and locally listed buildings, Buildings of Townscape Merit help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Historic shopfronts and door surrounds

There is a number of historic shopfronts within the conservation area but almost all, especially in the primary shopping streets, have been severely altered or replaced. There is a plain but unaltered mid 19th century shopfront at 27 Queen Street and good period shopfronts at 44 Lichfield Street, 21a Darlington Street and 76 Darlington Street. Three excellent relatively unaltered examples of pub facades are The Posada in Lichfield Street, the Old Still Inn in King Street and the Giffard Arms in Victoria Street. Elsewhere there are the vestiges of historic pilasters and corbels: some examples being timber at nos. 93/94 Darlington Street, stone at nos. 4-14 Broad Street and adjacent to the former fire station, Red Lion Street.

Most shopfronts date from the last 30 years. Some are in a traditional style, installed since the Council adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for shopfront design in 1996.

Of equal interest are the ornate 19th century door surrounds to offices and chambers. Good examples are at nos. 16 and 21a Darlington Street and the entrances to Lichfield and Quadrant Chambers in Princes Square.

Focal points, vistas and views

The conservation area is an intensely urban area with little open space and there are few views or vistas of note. The area's most prominent vista is westwards along Darlington Street towards the spire of St Mark's Church (1848) in Chapel Ash. The church spire was deliberately located to align with Darlington Street but one of the complaints of the time was that although the view from Queen Square was impressive, the church and spire blocked out the vista of the Clee Hills and Shropshire beyond.

The green copper dome of the Methodist Church and the tower of St Peter's church are well known local landmarks. The best views of the St Peter's church are from the Civic Centre or Wulfruna Street and from the west end of Lichfield Street, across the public gardens. From Queen Square and environs, it is not the church but the 1960s multi-storey Mander House that rises above the townscape, although the church can be glimpsed along Lich Gates. Internal and external lighting enhances the appearance of the church at night, especially from a distance.

The conservation area is notable for its prominent corner buildings, deliberately designed and built to take advantage of their corner location. Beatties Department Store, formerly Burton's, (corner of Victoria and Darlington Street), Barclays Bank (corner of Queen Square and Lichfield Street), the former School of Art (Wulfrun Street) and the Royal London Buildings (Princes Square) are the most notable examples but there are other lesser examples from less prominent streets e.g. the

former Staffordshire Building Society HQ (corner of King Street and Princess Street), Clock Chambers (corner of Darlington Street and Waterloo Road) and Amar House (corner of Broad Street and Fryer Street). These and other important corner buildings are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map.



Left: Clock Chambers, corner of Darlington Street and Waterloo Road

Historic associations

The Wolverhampton Civic Society has, since 1983, erected over 70 blue plaques commemorating people, places and events of importance in the history of Wolverhampton. Many of these are attached to buildings in the City Centre Conservation Area.

Open spaces, green areas and trees

There are two principal public open spaces in the conservation area: around St Peter's Church and Queen Square.

St Peter's Gardens, beside Lichfield Street, were created in three main phases between 1890 and 1936. The first phase, adjacent to Lichfield Street, incorporated land that became available following the widening and rebuilding of the street and included part of the old churchyard. A second phase was established to the west of the church in 1906/7 on the site of the old corn exchange building and resulted in the creation of the broad paved terrace known as Lich Gates. The final phase followed the closure of the remainder of the churchyard closest to the church in 1936 when headstones and tombs were removed. The Gardens include the Horsman Fountain (1894) and the Harris Memorial (1917-19) and two war memorials. The layout of the gardens has undergone many changes, not all sympathetic, but recent enhancement work grant aided by the Heritage Lottery Fund between 1996 and 2004 has done much to restore the original character and appearance of the landscape. This valuable open space extends around the church and includes the paved forecourt in front of the Civic Centre.

Queen Square, formerly High Green, is the site of a medieval market place. Its layout and floorscape have also undergone many changes. The statue of Prince Albert, first erected in 1866, has been moved several times, most recently as part of a scheme completed in 1991. At the time of writing (2005), there are proposals to remove the Queen Square traffic island and remodel the space.

This is an urban area and there are few trees. Significant trees stand in St Peter's Gardens and in two small green areas beside Broad Street

(former Quaker burial ground) and Paternoster Row (former Roman Catholic churchyard). There are important mature roadside trees in Waterloo Road and young trees planted as part of public realm enhancement schemes beside the Civic Centre, Cheapside, Lichfield Street and elsewhere. Significant trees are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map - lack of a specific reference does not imply that any other tree is not of value.

Public realm

There is little remaining of what would once have been a widespread historic floorscape of stone kerbs, setts and cobbles and other street furniture. This is due to highway alterations of the 20th century including pedestrianisation, the re-design of Queen Square and new developments like the Civic Hall and Civic Centre. The rarity gives added significance to remaining areas of historic paving, notably in side alleys and passages.



Above: *Traditional paving detail in Princess Alley*

Good examples of historic floorscape, though not necessarily all 'original', are the stone setts and cast iron kerbs in Princess Alley, blue bricks in Townwell Fold, stone paving in Lich Gates and Lichfield Passage and the alley between King Street and Wheeler's Fold. Intermittent lengths of stone kerbs still exist, many re-set after road works, for example along the east side of Queen Street and in the vicinity of the Chubb building. Pavement cellar lights such as in Lichfield Street add to the conservation area's special floorscape.

Street lighting and street furniture in the area are modern but there are two original street light columns outside the old Town Hall. Many of the large number of modern bollards in the area are embossed with the city's crest. There is a Victorian pillar box in Queen Street and a King George VI pillar box in Waterloo Road. Throughout the area there is a number of traditional cast-iron electricity distribution cabinets or 'Lucy Boxes' bearing the Wolverhampton coat of arms, originally part of the electrical power supply for the tram system. These and other historic elements of the streetscape should be preserved.

Local identity

One of the characteristics of the conservation area is the small alleys between streets. Blossom's Fold, Mitre Fold, Townwell Fold, Farmer's Fold and Wheeler's Fold are small side streets, sometimes accessed through an archway. The name 'fold' is derived from the time of Wolverhampton's wool trade when sheep were penned in folds.

The conservation area displays an unusual number of clocks. At the north end of Victoria Street is a clock poised on a short column but many clocks are part of the architectural composition of the façade as at the Town Hall (Magistrates' Court), Clock Chambers, Darlington Street and former Staffordshire Building Society HQ, Princess Street. Others are attached to buildings such as the Express and Star, Queen Street and no. 4 Dudley Street.



Clock chimes, especially in the vicinity of St Peter's church, are a distinctive element within the conservation area.

Sculpture and ornamentation are also characteristic of the area, perhaps because of the presence of the School of Art (now part of the university). For example, the statue of Prince Albert is a well known feature of Queen Square and the Harris Memorial, a bust of a First World War sailor, stands in St Peter's Gardens. 'Lady Wulfrun' (1974), outside St Peter's, is a bronze statue on a marble base. 'Ionic Order' (1991) is a modern sculpture outside the Queen's Building. Ornate terracotta details are characteristic of many 19th century buildings and decorative carved panels are an element in the ornamentation on the Art Gallery, Lloyds Bank and the Express and Star building.

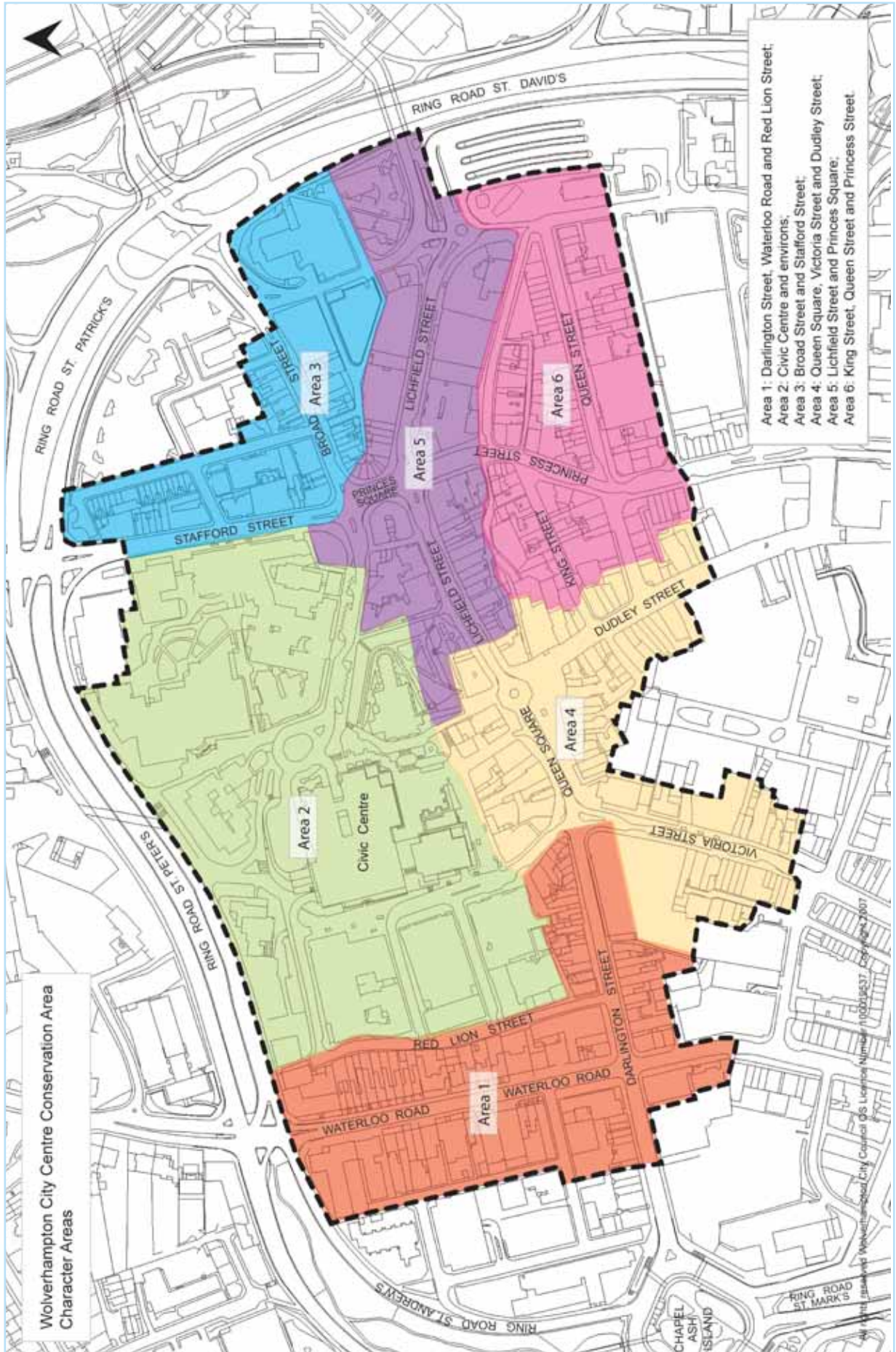
Above:

Express and Star clock, Queen Street

Below:

Carved panel showing rural scene on Lloyd's Bank





Introduction to character areas

The Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area can be divided into six 'character areas', connected by a similarity of history, use or architectural character. The character areas are defined broadly and may overlap. This section briefly considers their historical development, architectural and historic interest and summarises their principal features.

The six character areas are:

- **Area 1: Darlington Street, Waterloo Road and Red Lion Street;**
Part of the early 19th century planned expansion of the town.
- **Area 2: Civic Centre and environs;**
This area contains an interesting collection of highly individual old and new public buildings and offices beside St Peter's church.
- **Area 3: Broad Street and Stafford Street;**
An architecturally cohesive area where almost all the buildings date from the late 19th century slum clearance programme.
- **Area 4: Queen Square, Victoria Street and Dudley Street;**
The historic core of the city containing primary shopping frontage and commercial buildings in an historic environment.
- **Area 5: Lichfield Street and Princes Square;**
An area of impressive Victorian and Edwardian buildings alongside Lichfield Street and environs, re-built as a showpiece shopping area to rival Birmingham's Corporation Street in 1880-1910.
- **Area 6: King Street, Queen Street and Princess Street.**
An area of Georgian and later architecture in the first streets to extend beyond the city's medieval boundaries.

Area 1: Darlington Street, Waterloo Road and Red Lion Street

Principal features

- Darlington Street - a planned early 19th century road authorised by the Town Commissioners;
- Waterloo Road - a former mid 19th century residential street now mostly in use as offices and flats;
- Red Lion Street - an old route given a new use as a service road to the rear of Waterloo Road;
- Vista to St Mark's Church;
- Methodist Church - a significant landmark building (grade II*);
- Two mid 19th century listed terraces in Waterloo Road (grade II);
- Mature street trees in Waterloo Road;
- Locally listed 'Clock Chambers' in key corner location.

Location and topography

This L-shaped character area lies in the west of the conservation area. It comprises three streets, Darlington Street, Waterloo Road and Red Lion Street. Darlington Street leads from Queen Square westwards and downhill to one of the ring road's largest roundabouts. Its lower end is not in the conservation area. Waterloo Road branches from Darlington Street at a right-angled road junction and proceeds northwards to the ring road. Red Lion Street runs roughly parallel to Waterloo Road but in contrast to Waterloo Road's straight, wide and level course, Red Lion Street is narrow with a noticeable rise and bend.



Left: *Darlington Street in the late 19th century*



Right: *The same view today*

Historical development

Darlington Street (named after Lord Darlington who sold the land to the Town Commissioners) was cut through from High Green to join an already existing historic westward route out of the town. It was completed in 1823 and became a major route, lined with shops, to the affluent middle class suburbs in the west of the town.

Waterloo Road, once known as Wellington Road, was laid out c1830 following the construction of Darlington Street. In the 1842 Wolverhampton Tithing Map it is shown with fields on either side. It was developed with detached and terraced houses on either side from about 1850 onwards.

Red Lion Street is named after the Red Lion Inn which was demolished c1870 to make way for the Town Hall (now the Magistrates' Courts). The bends in the street suggests that it is an old route, possibly a footpath to Wadham's Hill, 'upgraded' to a rear service road for Waterloo Road in the early 19th century. Map evidence shows that as late as 1871 the area between Red Lion Street and North Street now occupied by the Civic Hall was cultivated open space. The northward course of Red Lion Street was blocked by the ring road in the 1980s.

Uses

Darlington Street is a busy city centre street on the fringe of the central shopping area.

All premises have ground floor shopfronts and the street is linked visually and commercially with the city centre. Buses frequently travel up and down the street. It is the sole western approach to the city centre.

Waterloo Road, though once a prosperous residential street, is now mainly an office district, particularly financial and professional services. The street's overall character is not one of busy commerce. The road is used only by local traffic or for access and has a generally quiet and unhurried atmosphere. Red Lion Street is also relatively quiet and free of commerce.

Townscape and architectural character

Darlington Street contains a mix of two- and three-storey buildings forming a series of terraces with narrow openings to Blossom's Fold (north side) and Townwell Fold (south side). Red brick, roughcast and stucco are common and many buildings have a gabled roof concealed behind a parapet. The street's early 19th century origins are apparent in three-storey red brick buildings like nos. 20 and 21 but later replacement and infill

e.g. no. 16 (c1890), nos. 85/86 (1912) and no. 19 (c1930) have diluted the original historic appearance of the street.

The 1920s façade of Beatties dominates the upper part of Darlington Street. On the same side of the street, further west, stands the imposing Methodist Church (c1900) built in an Edwardian Baroque Style on a prominent corner site, its dome and twin façade turrets enliven the conservation area's roofscape. Old buildings west of the Methodist Chapel were demolished during construction of the ring road. Opposite, on the south side of the Waterloo Road junction, is a locally listed former showrooms and offices built by local architects Lavender and Twentyman in 1938.

Waterloo Road, in which there are only a few commercial premises at the southern end, has a completely different character to Darlington Street and the city centre's busy streets. In the second half of the 20th century, many of the old houses have either been replaced with modern offices or converted into flats or offices. The architecture is therefore quite different to Darlington Street's purpose built shops and office chambers.

Because of the westerly fall in the land, buildings on the east side are set higher than those on the west side. Properties are set back from the road, some are approached by a number of steps and the older buildings have vestiges of a low wall and railings beside the pavement. Historic buildings are either two or three-storey but modern developments are out of scale being mostly four storey, their flat roofs rising above the ridgeline of the older buildings. Buildings are either detached or in short rows; there are only narrow gaps between buildings. At the north end of the street, nos. 14 to 40 (even) form a length of historic buildings, including Claremont Terrace (nos. 22-32) which is listed grade II.



Above: Listed buildings at 22-32 Waterloo Road

The dome and cupolas of the Methodist Church are landmarks locally and from further afield. The northern end of Waterloo Road, where two modern offices stand beside the ring road intersection, lacks historic character.

Local features

- Historic cast-iron balconies to nos. 5/7 and nos. 22 to 32 Waterloo Road;
- Tiled street name sign at Darlington Street/Waterloo Road junction (east side);
- Historic railings in Waterloo Road;
- Townwell Fold and Blossom's Fold;
- GR VI red post box in Waterloo Road;
- Stone paved alley between 75 and 77 Darlington Street;
- Lucy boxes on corner of Darlington Street and Waterloo Road;
- Historic shopfronts at 21a and 76 Darlington Street.

Negative features

- Obtrusive signs and advertising;
- Out-of-scale modern development;
- Low quality concrete paving slabs;
- Loss of architectural details (windows, doors and roof materials);
- Vacant, boarded up property in Red Lion Street.

Area 2: Civic Centre and environs, including St Peter's Church

Principal features

- St Peter's Church;
- Collection of public buildings around modern Civic Centre;
- Giffard House and Church of SS Peter and Paul;
- Civic Hall;
- Large buildings in public spaces;
- Upward views of St Peter's Church;
- Paved public open space in front of Civic Centre;
- Lich Gates walkway;
- Walls, railings, gates and gate piers at St Peter's Church;
- Terrace walls, steps and War memorial gardens;
- University of Wolverhampton;
- Trees and soft landscaping;
- Predominantly a pedestrian area.

Location and topography

This large character area lies in the northern half of the conservation area bounded by the ring road, Red Lion Street, Stafford Street, Queen Square and Lichfield Street. The disparate elements of this area are connected by their close proximity and public use: religious, administrative, cultural and educational. The area feels cut off from the nearby busy shopping area because of the screening effect of the tall buildings on the west side of Queen Square. St Peter's Church stands on a promontory from which the land falls away northwards and westwards towards the ring road. In certain areas, the changes in level are accommodated by steps, especially around the church and Civic Centre.

Historical development

Being immediately adjacent to the medieval church, the area has been the location of building activity for over 600 years and is a site of archaeological interest. Within the vicinity were The Deanery and the Prebend Houses of Wobaston, Monmore and Willenhall. It has been suggested that, in the 15th century, the area may have had the appearance of an ecclesiastical close but there are no visible reminders of that period. The Prebend Houses in North Street and The Deanery were demolished in the 1920s.



Left: North Street in the late 19th century

Right: The same view today



Left: The old open air market on the site of the modern Civic Centre

The area has undergone many changes during two major phases of reconstruction: at the end of the 19th century when the Town Hall (1869), Market Hall (1851), Exchange (1852) and Wholesale Market (1902) were built and a new open air Market Place was established; and at the end of the 20th century when the ring road was constructed and the above mentioned Market Hall, Market Place and Wholesale Market were demolished and replaced by today's Civic Centre.

North Street, which is hardly a street at all any more, is shown on Isaac Taylor's map of 1750. It was then one of the major routes to the north but the ring road has blocked its passage northwards, leaving Giffard House (1726) without its historic context and divorced from the Molineux Hotel, a Georgian house of similar quality, now on the other side of the ring road. The few shops, small hotels and school that stood on the western side of North Street were demolished to make way for the Civic Hall in the 1930s. Opposite this row was the Market Hall, first used in 1853, which stood where the Civic Centre now stands. Between this and the west front of St Peter's was the Exchange (hence Exchange Street) which was demolished in 1898.

Wulfruna Street, now also a cul-de-sac, is the remains of a street shown on Taylor's 1750 map as Horsefair, a zig-zag route that by 1884 had been re-aligned so that Wulfruna Street ran directly into North Street at a junction just south of Giffard House. Here, at least until the 1960s, there was the open air Market Place on the south side (now occupied by the Civic Centre) and the Wholesale Market building on the north side (now occupied by a car park and ring road).

The overall result is that, whilst the area contains some interesting historic buildings, historic street pattern and floorscape have been destroyed and there is no coherent architectural or historic character.

This character area has undergone enormous changes most of which have had an adverse impact on the historic character and appearance of the area. Most unfortunately, Giffard House has lost its historic context and is stranded beside a dual carriageway and the setting of St Peter's Church is compromised by a large 1970s office block (albeit replacing an earlier Victorian Market Hall).

Uses

The area contains buildings of the University of Wolverhampton, offices, the Magistrates' Court, the Civic Hall and two churches. By day the area is frequented by students and those working or visiting the other buildings. By night, when the offices and courts are closed, there is much activity in the vicinity of the Civic Hall, great or small depending on the event. There are no shops and no significant residential uses within this area.



Left: *Giffard House*

Eight large individual buildings and a car park surround the central hub of the Civic Centre. In clockwise direction these are: the Magistrates' Court, the Civic Hall, a modern office block, Giffard House and church, a modern car park, the new University of Wolverhampton buildings, the former Technical College, St Peter's Church and the block of building between Exchange Street and North Street.

Townscape and architectural character

St Peter's Church is the tallest building in the area, standing upon a promontory. Nevertheless, within this character area, it is often the monolithic presence of the Civic Centre with its strong horizontal emphasis that stands out. The area is characterised by large buildings standing in an expanse of modern hard and soft landscaping. Despite the area's obvious historic origins, adjacent to a medieval church, the area has lost much of its historic character but four significant listed buildings contribute to a historic appearance, albeit jeopardised by obtrusive modern development. These are St Peter's Church (grade I), the Civic Hall (grade II), Giffard House (grade II*) and the Magistrates' Court (grade II).

The passage known as Lich Gates forms a raised walkway along the west front of the church and there are two flights of steps down to the open paved concourse in front of the Civic Centre.

The Magistrates' Court and Giffard House have impressive and attractive symmetrical facades, the former is built in a late 19th century Baronial style, the latter with a distinctly Georgian early 18th century appearance, but it is difficult to view these without the distraction of less attractive architecture and other modern accretions. Noise from the ring road is prominent.

To the west of the area is a row of three massive side-by-side buildings: The Magistrates' Court is housed in the c1869 Town Hall (grade II). It has a fifteen bay stone frontage and a roof reminiscent of a French chateau; The Civic Hall (and Wulfrun Hall at the rear) was built in the late 1930s by Lyons and Israel. It has an eight column loggia and is in a moderne classical style inspired by Tengborn's Stockholm Concert Hall; the adjacent 1970s office block is bland and unremarkable. Corporation Street and Mitre Fold are undistinguished side roads that separate these large buildings, running downhill to Red Lion Street. Mitre Fold is a remnant of an older street. Neither street, nor Paternoster Row, has any historic character.

Giffard House (1726) stands on the fringe of the conservation area, concealed behind the 1970s office buildings, although the attached Roman Catholic Church can be viewed along North Street. The house was built as a Mass House and priest's residence and contains the earliest remaining post-Reformation public urban chapel. Adjoining Giffard House is SS Peter and Paul's Church, built in 1826-28 with later additions. It was financed by Bishop Milner, an important figure in the Catholic Church in the early 19th century who lived at Giffard House from 1804 until his death in 1826.

East of Giffard House, on the other side of a car park and entrance to an underpass, is a recently completed (2002) modern building with an exciting façade of brick and glass. This is an extension to the Harrison Learning Centre, part of the University of Wolverhampton's City Campus. Beside the new university building, on a corner site on the north side of Wulfruna Street, is a locally listed building, the former Wolverhampton and Staffordshire Technical College. It opened in 1932 replacing a 17th century Deanery.

The spaces in between these eight large buildings are predominantly prioritised for pedestrians but also provide access for cars and service vehicles. With the exceptions of high quality natural stone paving to the forecourts of the old Town Hall and Civic Hall, this character area is paved in a monotonous regular pattern with machine-made grey concrete paving slabs and brick or concrete pavements. The paved area at the foot of the church steps is enhanced with a 'crossed key' motif in the paving but, elsewhere, variations in colour and pattern of the pavements is unsuccessful in its attempt to enliven the area's wide thoroughfares.

Areas of soft landscaping help to soften the large areas of paving. There is a number of trees in the area and disparate small, contained areas of soft landscaping, either grassed areas or beds of low lying shrubs, which appear secondary to the requirements of car parking and pedestrian circulation.

Local features

- War Memorial;
- Old graveyard at end of Paternoster Row;
- Lady Wulfrun statue;
- Old lampposts outside former Town Hall.

Negative features

- Poor townscape;
- Loss of historic identity;
- Overbearing presence of Civic Centre;
- Poor setting of Giffard House;
- Insensitive repairs to paving;
- Lack of enclosure beside ring road;
- 'Barrier effect' of ring road;
- Large number of different bollards.

Area 3: Broad Street and Stafford Street

Principal features

- Cohesive architecture dating from 1880-1910;
- Architectural style characterised by orange brickwork, decorative terracotta, timber detailing, and stone banding and dressings;
- Built form little altered since c1900;
- Gateway to approach from west and north;
- Significant corner buildings: Amar House, The Hogshead, nos. 1-3 Princes Square;
- View of St Peter's Church tower;
- Chubb building - a landmark and part of the city's industrial history;
- Former Synagogue.

Location and topography

This area lies in the eastern part of the Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area just to the north of Lichfield Street and separated from the Civic Centre area by 20th century university buildings on the west side of Stafford Street. The focus of the area is the L-shaped urban development alongside Stafford Street and Broad Street, nearly all of which was built in the 1880s and 1890s. It also includes Thornley Street, Short Street and Long Street, and the former Synagogue and Chubb Building (now Light House) on Fryer Street.



Left: No. 176-180 Stafford Street



Right: *Caribee Island* - slum dwellings east of Stafford Street before re-development in the 1880s.

Historical development

Isaac Taylor's map of 1750 shows Stafford Street on its modern alignment. Broad Street is represented by Rotton (sic) Row. Development stops abruptly at the rear of plot boundaries on the Stafford Street and Rotton Row frontages. Taylor records 'Quaker's Meeting' close to the position of today's Westbury Chapel on the corner of Broad Street and Westbury Street.

By the time of Smart's Trade Directory map of 1827 Rotton Row has been renamed Canal Street, leading to a bridge over the recently completed Birmingham Canal. Over 40 years later, Steen and Blakett's map of 1871 shows that the area east of Stafford Street has been intensively built up with backland residential courts. By this time, the area is known as 'Caribee Island' and has gained the reputation of an unsavoury slum.

The 1875 Artisans Dwellings Act enabled the compulsory purchase of buildings by the local council with the aim of removing sub-standard housing. Wolverhampton's first development under this Act was the demolition of Caribee Island and the complete re-development of the Stafford Street and Broad Street area. Only two buildings in this character area pre-date the 1880s re-development: nos. 1-3 and nos. 17-19 Broad Street. All the other buildings date from the late 19th century re-development or later.

The First Series Ordnance Survey map of 1884-1890 shows the area in the process of this major redevelopment. The east side of Stafford Street has been cleared and contains only one new building the School Board Offices (no. 183 Stafford Street). Thornley Street appears for the first time but the Thornley Street Iron Works are the only buildings in the street (the site of today's no. 22 Thornley Street and Planet night club). A synagogue is identified in Fryer Street.

By the time of the 1902 OS map the re-development has progressed but is not yet complete. Canal Street (i.e. today's Broad Street) has been widened and re-aligned and the south side has been re-developed. An inn, today's Hogshead pub, has been built and a large Drill Hall has been constructed between The Hogshead and the School Board offices. The sites of nos. 21-35 Broad Street and nos. 171-175 Stafford Street are still empty.

The Third Series OS map (1914-24) shows the process of re-development complete. All frontages have been built up and Canal Street now bears its modern name - Broad Street. What is now called Amar House is marked as 'warehouse'. The building on the site of the Thornley Street Iron Works is identified as 'cinema' and the site formed by Long Street, Short Street and Fryer Street is largely occupied by a brewery.

There has been relatively little change to the built fabric of this character area since the early 20th century. The ring road has sliced through Stafford Street. The Thornley Street wing of the former Drill Hall has been demolished and replaced with the Good Shepherd Centre. The former cinema is now Planet night club. The Long Street brewery site has been cleared for car parking leaving the former Synagogue in an isolated position.

In recent times the area has gone into decline and many buildings are in need of substantial repairs as well as routine maintenance to prevent further decay. There have been publicised complaints about vagrancy, litter, illegally parked cars and the 'shameful' appearance of Broad Street.

Uses

This area is on the fringe of the City Centre, away from the principal shopping streets. Retail vitality appears low with several shops being vacant and many upper floors with a neglected appearance. There are several fast-food takeaways and three 'adult' shops in Broad Street and three night clubs in, or near, the area. Some upper floors are converted to flats but many are vacant.

The University of Wolverhampton occupies nos. 183 and 184 Stafford Street. The Hogshead pub on the corner of Stafford Street and Broad Street has recently been refurbished, having been in office use for some years.

There are daily flows of students and staff along Stafford Street, where there is also a number of bus stops. The paucity of shops (and night time uses) means that the streets are not busy during the daytime. By night the local nightclubs, restaurants and fast food outlets are well used and Broad Street is sometimes the focus of anti-social behaviour.

P3, no. 27 Thornley Street, formerly The Good Shepherd Centre, is a 54 bed direct access hostel for homeless men. The former Chubb Building has been converted into a media centre and the former Synagogue is currently vacant and in a poor state of repair.

Townscape and architectural character

Stafford Street and Broad Street are two of the main entrances to the north-east of the city centre from the ring road. The focal point of their junction is the ornate stone cupola on the Royal London Buildings, Princes Square.

With the exception of the west side of Thornley Street and the university buildings on the east side of Stafford Street (former offices and drill hall), all ground floors are occupied by shops, with a minimum of two floors above.

Stafford Street is a wide, straight and level road leading northward to the ring road. The width of Stafford Street together with the lack of enclosure at the ring road intersection gives the street an open, spacious feeling. The east side of the street, between Whitmore Street and the ring road is made up of three blocks (nos. 167-170, nos. 171-175, and nos. 176-180) which form a long three storey terrace with ground floor shopfronts. Nos. 176-180 Stafford Street was purpose built in 1891 as a Co-op Headquarters building. It originally had a domed turret on the corner with Whitmore Street

No. 183 Stafford Street is dated 1885, the first building on the re-built east side of Stafford Street. It was purpose-built as offices for the then School Board. In appearance, it is domestic albeit on a large scale. No. 184 Stafford Street was built as a Drill Hall for the South Staffordshire regiment.



Above: *Amar House, Broad Street*

The Hogshead (formerly The Vine Inn, c 1885) turns the corner from Stafford Street to Broad Street and makes a valuable contribution to the architectural character of Princes Square. It is a locally listed building and has some fine terracotta details.

Broad Street falls eastwards from its junction with Stafford Road. Looking westwards, uphill, the tower of St Peter's Church can be seen. Three storey buildings step down on either side of the road. The turret of Amar House is a distinctive gateway feature in the eastern approach.

The north side of Broad Street contains the only two pre-1880 buildings in the area (nos. 1-3 and nos. 17-19) and two blocks of building, nos 5-15 which reads as a single building and nos. 21-35, the last block to be built c1905. On the opposite (south) is Amar House and two further blocks nos. 4-14 and nos. 16-30.

Nos. 31-48 Thornley Street is a terrace of typical 19th century two-storey terraced houses built in brick with slate roofs. No. 31 on the corner with Whitmore Street is in a very poor state of repair. No. 22 Thornley Street was originally the purpose-built office block of the Thornley Street Iron Works.

The Chubb Building in Fryer Street, refurbished in the 1990s and now known as Light House, contains a cinema, restaurant and pub and offices. It was built in 1898-9 as the headquarters of Chubb's Locks and Safes and is an important landmark building viewed from the ring road and within the conservation area. It is also an important building in the city's history of lock and safe making.

Also in Fryer Street, in the shadow of Amar House and the Chubb Building, is a small synagogue with a foundation stone of 1858 but partially rebuilt in 1903 to the designs of local architect Frederick Beck. It has an elaborate façade and a relatively intact fine interior but is currently in a poor state of repair.

Long Street and Short Street are creations of the 19th century re-development and they retain broad stone kerbs. The western end of Long Street at the rear of Princes Square has some of its original floorscape of stone cobbles and kerbs, albeit obscured by tarmac and refuse bins and gated for security. There are two cast-iron green-painted 'Lucy Boxes' bearing the Wolverhampton Arms, originally part of the electrical power supply for the tramway system.

Trees and grass on a raised site at the junction of Broad Street and Westbury Street help to soften the urban character of the area. The site was formerly a Quaker Burial Ground given to the Town Council in 1908 for use as an open space.

Local features

- Decorative terracotta details especially on Amar House, Broad Street and the Hogshead, 186 Stafford Street;
- Historic stone kerbs and setts, especially in Long Street, Short Street and Fryer Street;
- Grassed area and trees in area of former Quaker burial ground;
- Lucy Boxes.

Negative features

- Vacant properties;
- Low retail vitality;
- Poor state of repair of buildings, especially nos. 22 and 31 Thornley Street;
- Disreputable image arising from sex shops and incidents of anti-social behaviour;
- Potentially intimidating alley between Broad Street and Long Street;
- NCP car park off Fryer Street is an eyesore;
- Poor connectivity to city centre;
- Litter and untidiness;
- Loss of architectural details;
- Insensitive alterations to historic buildings;
- Boisterous nighttime activity.

Area 4: Queen Square, Victoria Street and Dudley Street

Principal features

- Group of buildings of high architectural quality surrounding Queen Square;
- Large Victorian/Edwardian banks in Queen Square;
- Public open space in Queen Square;
- Two timber-framed buildings;
- 1930s stores in Dudley Street and Victoria Street, especially Beatties Department Store;
- Pedestrianised shopping streets;
- Views of Mander House;
- Bustling commercial centre;
- View along Darlington Street to spire of St Mark's Church;
- Traces of St John Street, an ancient street destroyed in the 1960s.

Location and topography;

Queen Square, the site of the town's historic market place, has long been at the heart of the city and is the core, and showpiece, of the City Centre Conservation Area. This character area is centred on Queen Square and includes Victoria Street and Dudley Street, two ancient routes leading south from opposite ends of the Square. Victoria Street branches in a south westerly direction, and downhill, from the lower (western) end of Queen Square and Dudley Street branches in a south easterly direction on a more level course from the upper end of Queen Square. Mander House and The Mander Centre, which stand on the route of St John Street between Victoria Street and Dudley Street, are modern developments that are not included in the conservation area.



Left: *Victoria Street in the late 19th century*

Right: *The same view today*

Historical development

The medieval focus of the town was High Green, renamed Queen Square after the visit of Queen Victoria in 1866. High Green was larger than the present Queen Square and Isaac Taylor's 1750 map shows two buildings at the east end: the Town Hall (c1703) and the Charity School (c1710). These were demolished at the behest of the Town Commissioners in the late 18th century in order to enlarge the Market Place and improve circulation through the town centre. Taylor's map also records a building at the west end of High Green beside the junction with Cock Street (now Victoria Street) called the Roundabout, this too was demolished by the Town Commissioners c1820 to make way for Darlington Street.

Cock Street was renamed Victoria Street after Queen Victoria's visit in 1866. Before the 17th century, the street was known as Tunwalle Street (referring to a town well not a town wall). The name is perpetuated in Townwell Fold, an alley which ran between Victoria Street and Darlington Street of which only Victoria Passage off Victoria

Street and Townwell Fold, a cul-de-sac alley off Darlington Street, remain.

Dudley Street was an ancient route over Snow Hill to Dudley. Taylor's map shows a dog-legged street linking Dudley Street to Victoria Street. This was St John Street which has been all but obliterated by the Mander Centre. Woolpack Street, off Dudley Street, and St John Street/Arcade, off Victoria Street, are the only remaining segments of St John Street.

Uses

This area contains part of the city's primary shopping frontage. It includes Beatties, a large locally well-known department store, the Tourist Information Centre, outlets of several well known chain stores and entrances to the Mander Centre, a modern shopping mall. There is also a number of pubs and cafes and a significant number of banks and professional services. Dudley Street is pedestrianised. Many buses pass through Queen Square but the ring road and traffic restrictions limit other vehicles.

Townscape and architectural character

The buildings that surround Queen Square date mainly from the late 19th century when, as Wolverhampton prospered and expanded, the town became endowed with a set of prestigious public buildings amongst which are the nearby Town Hall (1867) and the Art Gallery (1883-5). The Square, however, is characterised by large banks and offices - symbols of Wolverhampton's wealth and trade.



Above: *Lloyds Bank, Queen Square*

The square is enclosed by a large number of historic buildings, nine of which are listed. Three impressive stone banks testify to the commerce of the late 19th century in Wolverhampton: the High

Victorian Gothic Barclays Bank (1876) on the corner of Lichfield Street, unfortunately obscuring a view of St Peter's Church; the Italianate Lloyds Bank (1878) with relief panels illustrating coal-mining, agriculture and engineering; and the National Westminster Bank of 1905 built in an Edwardian baroque style. The other listed buildings are nos. 43 and 44 (c1726 - the oldest building facing the square) and five late 19th century buildings: nos. 12 and 13, 20 and 21, 22, 23 and 24, 41. These and the other historic buildings in the Square form an important group that typifies the prestigious late Victorian and Edwardian development of the city centre. There are two late 20th century buildings in the area: a side extension to Lloyds Bank and no. 34 Queen Square, the building that replaced the Hippodrome which burned down 1956, now occupied by Yates.

The square itself is now a predominantly pedestrian open space divided by an east-west vehicular route. The southern part is paved and contains an uncoordinated collection of benches, bollards, flower beds and litter bins.

Victoria Street has one of the city's oldest buildings, no. 19 ('Lindy Lou's'), which is a late 16th century or early 17th century timber-framed house restored in 1979-81 (grade II). Beside it are another two grade II listed buildings, nos. 17 and 18, but their appearance is marred by inappropriate shopfronts. On the other side of the street, the Giffard Arms is a good example of a 1920s rendering of a Gothic façade with well carved details, also listed grade II.

Despite the presence of these buildings, the street has a predominantly modern appearance and even the view northwards is closed by no. 34 Queen Square, an unremarkable modern five-storey building. The east side of Victoria Street steps up from Farmers Fold to Queen Square in a series of

late 20th century developments ending in a low, recessed and very weak corner which at least has the merit of giving prominence to the impressive Beatties Department Store (c1920, locally listed) which rounds the corner with Darlington Street with tall first floor pilasters with extraordinary art deco elephant-head capitals, in the house style of Burton's who previously owned the building. The façades of the building extend for a long way down both Victoria Street and Darlington Street influencing the character and appearance of both streets.

Though following the course of an ancient route, Dudley Street has a modern appearance due mainly to pedestrianisation and a modern floorscape, contemporary shopfronts and window displays, and late 20th century development on the corners of King Street and Queen Street. No. 57 is a curious late 19th century red brick corner buildings rising to five storeys. Nos. 47 and 48 are listed grade II and date from the mid 19th century. These two are almost the only pre-1900 survivors in a much altered street where, in addition to recent changes, many stores were modernised in the 1930s and, above ground floor, have a restrained art deco appearance.

Local features;

- Elephant heads on Beatties Store;
- Clock at north end of Victoria Street;
- Prince Albert statue;
- Street sign and metal corner bollards in Victoria Passage.

Negative features;

- Queen Square in need of refurbishment;
- Insensitive modern developments.

Area 5: Lichfield Street and Princes Square

Principal features

- Architectural cohesion of buildings in Lichfield Street dating from 1880-1910;
- Good examples of late Victorian and Edwardian architecture;
- Large scale buildings;
- Prince Albert, a free-standing purpose built pub close to the railway station;
- Princes Square, an intersection of many roads;
- Royal London Buildings, a local landmark;
- Well designed corner buildings;
- Late 19th century 'office chambers';
- St Peter's Gardens;
- Key buildings: Grand Theatre and Art Gallery (grade II*).

Location and topography

This area contains Lichfield Street and Princes Square, a part of the medieval town centre that was completely re-developed at the end of the 19th century and contains the city's best late Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Lichfield Street runs from Queen Square to Victoria Square in two distinct sections, one along a slight curve from Queen Square to Princes Square, the other, out of alignment with the first length, from Princes Square to Victoria Square. The former is on the line of the street's historic route but was widened in the 1880s; the latter was a completely new street constructed in the 1880s, hence its straightness.

Princess Street, from the south, and Stafford Street, from the north, also meet at Princes Square, a busy intersection which forms a secondary, traffic-dominated focus of commercial activity in the city. The area is level with a slight downward slope eastwards from Princes Street towards the railway station.



Above left: *Lichfield Street from Princes Square in the late 19th century*

Above right: *The same view today*

Historical development:

Lichfield Street was the medieval 'Kempstrete'. Wool was the source of Wolverhampton's wealth in the Middle Ages and kemp was a term used in woolmaking. Isaac Taylor's 1750 map marks the street as Litchfield Street and the Town Deeds relate to many historic buildings in the street, all demolished in the late 19th century reconstruction. The O.S. map of 1884 illustrates the early stages of the re-development: two banks have been built on either side of the street as it leaves Queen Square; the old street has been widened and the Art Gallery has been completed; Princes Square is incomplete and much of the eastern length of Lichfield Street is vacant; Railway Drive has been re-routed from Queen Street to meet the new length of Lichfield Street at Victoria Square (no Victoria Hotel as yet). By the time of publication of the 1914 O.S. the re-development has been completed. The Grand Theatre and The Prince Albert are open and Lichfield Street forms a prestigious route from the railway station to the town centre.

Uses

Princes Square and the western half of Lichfield Street form part of the secondary shopping frontage of the city but office use becomes more prevalent in the east of the area where there are also university buildings. There are therefore higher levels of pedestrian activity closer to Queen Square. The Art Gallery and the Grand Theatre lie within the area and there are some large and popular pubs and bars. Two premises of the University of Wolverhampton bring students and staff to the area. St Peter's Gardens, on the north side of Lichfield Street, is the only significant open space in the city centre.

Townscape and architectural character

Lichfield Street is bisected by Princess Street. The built form of the western end has hardly changed since the 1880s and is Wolverhampton's finest street. On its north side is St Peter's Gardens, which enable a good view of the church in a green setting.





Left: *The Grand Theatre, Lichfield Street*

Lichfield Passage contains an interesting row of listed late 18th century shops that survived the 1880s re-development. They were renovated in 2003 and make a positive contribution to the conservation area's small stock of Georgian buildings.

The Princes Square area is formed at the conjunction of two crossroads where the north-south route of Stafford Street/Princess Street intersects with Wulfruna Street/Broad Street and Lichfield Street. The area is busy with traffic and there are many highway signs and facilities to assist pedestrians to safely cross the roads. This was the site of England's first automatic traffic lights in 1927.

One of the characteristics of the area is the way in which buildings are architecturally composed to take advantage of their corner sites. The most prominent of these is the Royal London Buildings in Princes Square, one of the last buildings to be built during the re-development of the late 19th century. Opposite, the corner of Broad Street and Lichfield Street is turned on a quadrant by Star Chambers, Lichfield Chambers and Quadrant Chambers, each stepping up in height towards Lichfield Street. The other four corners, occupied by The Varsity, The Hogshead, Princess Chambers and nos. 62-64 Lichfield Street, have all been designed to make the most of their prominent location but none so successfully and ostentatiously as the Royal London Buildings.

The Prince Albert Pub (c1900) and the Victoria Hotel (c1890), at the eastern end of Lichfield Street, have bold east-facing frontages designed to attract passengers arriving by train.

Beside the gardens, the grandeur of the Art Gallery (1883) and former Midland Bank (c1910) express the civic and commercial pride of the Victorian and Edwardian era. The south side of the street is a long, three- and four-storey terrace with offices located above ground floor shops. Gresham Chambers (nos. 6-20) and a terrace of six shops and offices (nos. 34-50) are listed grade II. Both are part of the 1880s reconstruction of this end of the street and both reflect the need of an expanding industrial town for offices for solicitors, accountants and the like.

The eastern end includes the Grand Theatre (1893-4), whose grade II* listing reflects its importance as a piece of theatre architecture, and The Old Post Office (1895) which has one of the city's biggest displays of terracotta detailing.

The architectural quality of the street is somewhat diluted by two unremarkable 1960's replacement buildings, nos. 35-49 and nos. 66-70 (Post Office). Nos. 55-77 (former Co-op Department Store) has a striking 1930s façade of white faience.

Local features

- Saxon cross;
- The Posada pub;
- Lichfield Passage;
- Horsman Fountain, Harris Memorial and crucifix war memorial;
- Stone kerbs;
- Ornate door surrounds;
- Street trees;
- Art Gallery sculptures.

Negative features

- Traffic noise and pollution;
- Out of character shopfronts and advertising in Lichfield Street;
- Vacant upper floor space;
- Difficulty of crossing the road at Princes Square;
- Insensitive modern developments;
- Lack of enclosure at east end of Lichfield Street.

Area 6: King Street, Queen Street and Princess Street

Principal features

- Good row of historic buildings on south side of Queen Street;
- Examples of Georgian building;
- Princess Alley;
- Landmark quality of former Staffordshire Building Society HQ;
- Queen's Building;
- Primary shopping streets;
- Pedestrianised streets.

Location and topography

This area lies east of Queen Square between Dudley Street and the modern Bus Station, bounded on north and south by Berry Street and Castle Street respectively. King and Queen Street are the first part of the town's expansion beyond its medieval confines, encouraged by industrial growth and the coming of the canals.

Historical development

King Street was laid out in the mid-18th century - it is marked as under construction on Taylor's plan of 1750. A row of houses dating from the late 18th century still survives. At that time, the area to the south-east was an open space known as Piper's Croft - hence Piper's Row, the short length of street west of the Bus Station. The title deeds of nos. 15, 16, and 17 King Street stated that they were to be constructed 'in a direct line and the same in front with the messuages or dwelling houses very lately erected in the said street' - perhaps an early example of town planning before the Town Commissioners laid out Darlington Street in 1823.

Queen Street was laid out soon after King Street, probably at the start of the 19th century since the former County Court dates from 1813. Princess Street is an old road identified on Isaac Taylor's 1750 map. Berry Street, now a back street, was formerly Lower Berry Street, one of the main western approaches to the town.

Queen Street came to house many of the town's most important buildings and in the mid 19th century was regarded as the main street. Visitors arriving by train were directed through the Queen's Building and into Queen Street. It was also the main route for the original tram system.



Above left: *Queen Street in c1900*
Above right: *The same view today*

Uses

The area contains two of the city's primary shopping streets: King Street and Queen Street, which leads directly from the Bus Station to the Mander and Wulfrun Centres. The streets are, however, not as busy as Dudley Street where more of the well-known chain stores have their outlets. The area contains a number of pubs and cafes, a hotel and the headquarters of the Wolverhampton Express and Star, a major city centre employer.

Princess Street, Princess Alley and Berry Street are the basis of a proposed Artists' Quarter where there is opportunity for further artists' workspace, craft workshops or other arts/culture related uses.

Townscape and architectural character

This is a closely knit urban area with no open space or greenery. The land is generally level with an almost imperceptible rise from Dudley Street eastwards. Queen Street is the focus of this small character area. It was described by the architectural historian Pevsner in 1974 as

'the best street of Wolverhampton' but there have been significant changes to the street since then, notably partial pedestrianisation and the demolition of the Congregational Church on the corner of Dudley Street.

The western end of Queen Street, closest to the modern shopping malls, lacks historic character and appearance being pedestrianised with a uniform pattern of red and blue brick pavements in the former carriageway. A modern three-storey yellow brick range of shops and offices, replacing the Congregational Church (1864), lines the southern side of the street but is of no architectural merit. There is also a high proportion of modern development on the north side but nos. 9 to 13 Queen Street is a short row of four-storey 19th century buildings in differing styles just off Princess Street. No. 13 is a grade II listed building, built with red brick in a 'Flemish Renaissance' style with a stepped Dutch gable.

However, the eastern length of Queen Street between Princess Street and Piper's Row, and the south side in particular, has much of historic interest. There is a historically interesting row of buildings between nos. 43 and 50. Here, interspersed with three-storey early 19th century red brick houses with classical doorcases and narrow, recessed sliding sash timber windows, can be found three important listed civic buildings. These are: the former Mechanics Institute (Free Library from 1869, Athenaeum from 1877) which has a stucco façade in a faintly Classical style (1826) - it contained a library, a lecture room and a reading room (grade II); the purpose-built Dispensary which was opened in 1826 and operated there until moving to the Royal Hospital in 1849 (grade II); the old County Court which was originally built by public subscription as a library in 1815 with an assembly room added at first floor in 1829 (grade II*). These buildings, now used for less prestigious purposes, are not only of architectural interest but are of considerable significance in Wolverhampton's social history. The Express and Star offices are a startling 20th century addition to this side of the street.

Historic interest on the other (north) side of the street is diluted by some modern developments and large and garish shopfronts. Nevertheless, there is a short row of listed early 19th century buildings (nos. 25 to 28) and two late 19th century buildings which are undoubtedly out of scale and character with the street but are good examples of Wolverhampton's Victorian expansion, built in brick with terracotta details.

At the western end of Queen Street stands the Queens Building (1849, by Edward Banks), once the entrance gateway to, and booking hall for, the High Level Railway Station. In the 1880s Railway Drive was re-routed to direct visitors to the newly built Lichfield Street, leaving the Queen's Building

stranded and causing a decline in the fortunes of Queen Street. In front of the building is a piece of modern sculpture.

King Street is pedestrianised. Being narrower than Queen Street with a slight curve, it has a more enclosed, human scale enhanced by the neat row of late 18th century houses (north side) which open directly onto the pavement. Some have traditional shopfronts (replacements) with small paned windows and narrow well-proportioned fascia boards but the street was originally residential and the shopfronts are, anyway, later additions.

The south side of King Street is mostly modern with shopfronts that are inappropriate in a historic street. At the eastern end is a locally listed office corner building of the 1930s with landmark quality but an unfortunate plain and dull frontage to King Street. Nos. 25 and 25a King Street is a grade II listed Georgian house squeezed between two bland modern shop/office blocks. Its plight is symbolic of many of Wolverhampton's historic buildings. The fore-shortened south side of the street gives prominence to the last few buildings on the north side, notably The Old Still which has a lively relatively unaltered Victorian frontage. Looking west, the view is terminated by the curious five-storey building, no. 57 Dudley Street.

Berry Street, despite its historic origins, is now a rear service road to a car park and the backs of the large properties that face Lichfield Street (University buildings, Grand Theatre and Victoria Hotel). At its western end (south side) is a short row of late 19th century buildings.

The short length of Princess Street that is included within this character area is no more than a thoroughfare between King Street and Queen Street. The most notable historic building dates from the 1930s but there is a number of 19th century buildings that add to the area's historic character and appearance. In particular, there are two very good corner buildings: the former Staffordshire Building Society HQ with a pagoda-like clock tower and no. 33 Princess Street with a brick tower dated 1889. These help to dispel the adverse impact of no. 15 Queen Street and no. 29 Princess Street, corner buildings which completely fail to take advantage of their corner location.

Princess Alley is a narrow dog-leg passage between Berry Street and Princess Street. It has a strong feeling of enclosure and there is a faintly industrial feel deriving from the historic floorscape of stone setts and engineering bricks and the backstreet character and appearance of the buildings.



Above: 18th century houses in King Street

Local features

- Paving in Princess Alley;
- VR red post box in Queen Street;
- Tiled street name sign in King Street;
- Two good Victorian buildings with terracotta details on north side of Queen Street;
- Passage from King Street to Wheeler's Fold;
- Sculpture on façade of Express and Star building, Queen Street;
- Modern sculpture beside Queen's Building;
- Georgian doorcases in Queen Street;
- Coat of arms on the Old County Court in Queen Street;
- Hanging signs in King Street.

Negative features

- Loss of architectural details e.g. Wulfrun Hotel in Queen Street;
- No. 25 Queen Street (grade II) is empty and in need of maintenance and repair;
- Modern ground floors at 12 and 13 King Street;
- Poorly designed shopfronts;
- Insensitive modern developments.

5. Issues: Positives and Negatives

Positives

- Architectural quality of the area's buildings;
- Historic environment;
- Thriving regional shopping centre;
- Proximity of public car parks;
- Open space and high quality landscaping of St Peter's Gardens;
- Good public transport connections;
- Closely knit cultural quarter;
- Wide pavements and pedestrianised streets;
- Ring road carries traffic away from city centre.

Negatives

- The Stafford Street/Broad Street area suffers from low retail vitality and many buildings are in a poor state of repair;
- A large number of modern shopfronts, roller shutters, fascia and projecting signs are poorly designed and spoil the historic appearance of the host building and the conservation area;
- A small number of vacant shops create a bad impression and spoil the appearance of the conservation area, especially when boarded up;
- Poor state of repair of a small number of historic buildings, most notably nos. 25 and 25a King Street (grade II);

- Adverse visual impact of Mander House which towers above historic buildings of greater architectural merit;
- Generally poor and uncoordinated floorscape;
- Potentially intimidating alleys and side streets;
- Loss of architectural details (e.g. windows, doors and other timber joinery) and loss of original building materials (e.g. slate, terracotta) detracts from the area's historic interest;
- Traffic noise and pollution, particularly in Lichfield Street.
- Insensitive modern developments which are out of scale or character with neighbouring historic properties;
- Vacant properties and vacant upper floor space;
- Poor quality of some of the public realm in vicinity of Civic Centre;
- Loss of historic identity as a result of late 20th century re-development;
- Obtrusive signs and advertising;
- Road signs with no regard to surrounding historic buildings;
- Loss of original historic floorscape.

6. Management Proposals

Conservation area boundary review

One boundary change was recommended in the 2006 review of the area.

In the west of the conservation area, a small rectangular area was de-designated from the conservation area. The area in question had changed in character and appearance since designation of the conservation area as a result of the demolition of a short row of buildings west of the Methodist Church in Darlington Street. The new boundary runs along the west side of the Methodist Church and westwards along the back of Darlington Street pavement.

The revised boundary is illustrated on the Townscape Appraisal map.

Opportunities for enhancement

The following list, drawn out of the list of negatives in Section 5, identifies where, and how, the qualities that provide the special interest of the conservation area can be reinforced:

- The Stafford Street/Broad Street area contains several vacant shops and displays other signs of low retail vitality. Grant aid is needed to assist in the regeneration of the area;
- Side streets and alleys are one of the characteristics of the area but many have become the focus of anti-social behaviour and litter. It is recommended that the current programme of surveillance and/or regular cleaning is extended;
- Review of design and materials of paving/streetscape throughout the area with a view to publication of a streetscape manual setting out principles for public space design.

English Heritage's 'Streets For All' publication sets out general principles for a co-ordinated approach that can help provide an environment that is safe, enjoyable and appropriate to its surroundings;

- Restoration of architectural detail which is essential to the design and character of key historic buildings (where there is firm historical evidence), especially shopfronts, timber windows and doors, terracotta detailing, chimney stacks and original roof coverings;
- Poorly designed shopfronts with little regard for the host building and the streetscene spoil the historic character and appearance of a building or street. New replacement shopfronts and signage should be in accordance with the Council's Shopfront Design Guide SPG No5 (1996);
- Vacant premises and vacant upper floors look unsightly and attract flyposting and graffiti. Quality residential conversions, making use of vacant upper floor space, would bring vacant upper floor space back into use and further enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Other uses, subject to current planning policy, may also be appropriate;
- Small and localised areas of historic floorscape are part of the area's special interest. This appraisal has identified the most important examples of these surfaces which should be protected and repaired as necessary, using traditional techniques and materials. Existing granite kerbs are retained in any scheme of improvement or repair;

- Promotion and encouragement of the structural and external repair, and routine maintenance, of all the conservation area's 'Buildings of Townscape Merit';
- A number of historic buildings, mainly on the fringe of the conservation area, are in a poor state of repair. Grant aid, possibly from the City Council, may be needed to assist repair and restoration of properties where the cost of works is excessive;
- Small historic items such as Lucy Boxes, cellar lights and old lamp-posts add to the conservation area's distinct local identity but may not be statutorily protected from removal or demolition. Owners and those responsible for their upkeep should be informed of each item's importance and an agreed code of conduct for their maintenance drawn up.

Need for investment/grant aid

Some of the above opportunities for enhancement and other recommendations might be assisted by offer of grant aid. Conservation area status gives the potential for external funding from English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Council will take opportunities to apply for external funding to enhance the conservation area when they arise.

Use of Article 4(1) and 4(2) Directions

Certain minor works and alterations to unlisted buildings can be carried out without planning permission from the Council. Development of this kind is called 'Permitted Development' and falls into various classes which are listed in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. These minor alterations can cumulatively have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of a conservation area. Powers exist to the Council, known as Article 4

directions, to withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The following buildings are currently subject to an Article 4 Direction:

- the former Talbot PH (now an Irish pub) corner of Princess St and Queen St - control of painting of the exterior (Approved 14/8/94);
- nos. 22-32 Waterloo Road - control of painting of exterior (26/8/88);
- nos. 31-48 Thornley Street - control of painting of exterior and control of application of render (Approved 26/2/96);
- nos. 52-60 Lichfield Street (Rothwells) - control of painting of exterior (Approved 9/1/04).

It is recommended that any proposals for new development or alterations to existing buildings in the conservation area should be discussed with a planning officer at the Council before commencing work on site. Telephone enquiries should be made to City Direct (01902) 551155.

Local List

Several new sites were added to the Local List in 2007 following public consultation.

- Victorian letter box, Queen Street;

A large cylindrical Victorian letter box painted red with a black base. The main body of the pillar box is inscribed with the scrolled Royal cipher 'VR' and, above, the words POST OFFICE are embossed on either side of the narrow horizontal opening for letters.



Above: Victorian letterbox, Queen Street

In 1840 Rowland Hill suggested the idea of roadside letter boxes for Britain. The first pillar box on the British mainland was erected in 1853 but cylindrical boxes did not appear until 1879. The early boxes had no royal cipher and are known as 'anonymous' boxes. This oversight was corrected from 1887 when the words POST OFFICE were also placed either side of the aperture. This box probably dates from c1890 and has considerable local interest. It makes a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of Queen Street.

- Amar House, Broad Street;

A very large building with three sides facing streets. The Broad Street frontage is the most significant, consisting of two storeys. The building is accessed through two grand entrances, one in the centre of the Broad Street façade and the other around the corner on Fryer Street. The entrance to Fryer Street leads to a tiled hall and stairway which gives access to a very large hall which was once used as the Paloma Banqueting Suite but is currently (2005) used as snooker halls. The corner between Broad and Fryer Streets is articulated by an octagonal turret and spire. The building is marked as a warehouse on the 1912 OS map. A vehicular through-way exists

towards the western end of the building between Broad and Long Streets (not accessible). The Fryer Street elevation has the remains of several large loading bays, apparently modified in size and number at some time, although now mostly bricked up.

Constructed as a major warehouse building during the first decade of the twentieth century, or earlier, in an eclectic style with Queen Anne detailing in faience and terracotta.

The building is notable for its use of terracotta, internally and externally, and has considerable townscape value, being a local landmark beside one of the gateways to the City.

- Former Drill Hall, Stafford Street;

Victorian Gothic territorial army building in two sections. Principal block is of three storeys beneath a pitched roof: first floor single large hall, very finely decorated internally. Seven bay façade; central bay emphasised with an oriel window at first floor and a squat tower and spire over. Four-bay subsidiary block to north matches lower two floors of main block.

The building was built c 1890 as a headquarters building for the South Staffordshire Yeomanry Regiment of the Territorial Army whose device appears in two stone panels on the façade. Originally connected to a drill hall on a site in Thornley Street, now redeveloped.

Fine Victorian military architecture with an excellent range of interior features extant and notable terracotta details. The first floor mess hall, and the formal stairs and approach to it, are of real quality. A building of architectural, townscape and social history value.

- 14 Electricity Distribution Cabinets (Lucy Boxes) at various locations;

Known locally as ‘Lucy’ boxes these cast iron distribution cabinets became a common feature of the street scene in Wolverhampton during the early 20th century when the electricity network was being established. The first boxes serviced Wolverhampton’s unique ‘Lorain’ system of trams but subsequently cabinets of this type were also used for the general distribution of electricity and street lighting control systems and continued in use for this purpose until relatively recently.

Strictly speaking only those cabinets manufactured by W Lucy and Co Ltd, Oxford should be referred to as ‘Lucy’ boxes although this has been adopted as a generic term to cover all such boxes in the Wolverhampton area in recent years.



Above: Electricity distribution cabinets. Right, early cabinet possibly associated with the Lorain tram system. Left, Margery style cabinet.

The earliest surviving cabinet is probably that near the corner of Darlington Street and Waterloo Road which would originally have stood next to the old tram route to Tettenhall. Measuring 1140mm x 560mm x 400mm, with a decorative crest on the top and old style borough coat of arms, this cabinet is somewhat smaller than the later distribution cabinets.

A majority of those cabinets seen today date from c1930 and could be referred to as ‘Margery’ boxes after the man who designed them, T A G Margery, the then Borough Electrical Engineer. These boxes measure 1370mm x 760mm x 300mm and had access doors on both sides decorated with the Wolverhampton Borough coat of arms and no decorative cresting on top. Eleven such cabinets survive in the Wolverhampton City Centre Conservation Area and where possible these are to be refurbished and used to accommodate modern service equipment, therefore largely retaining their original function. These boxes may have been cast by the Lucy company but their name does not appear on the outside of the cabinets. They also could have been cast by a local foundry. Further research is required to answer this question.

Two other larger cabinets of different design stand in Market Street and Skinner Street.

- Express & Star Building, Queen Street;

Built as head offices for the Express and Star in the 1930s at a time when Malcolm Graham, son of Thomas Graham who founded the Evening Star in 1880 (merged with the Evening Express in 1884), was ‘working tirelessly to drag the Express and Star into the age of modern newspapers, gradually bringing in new production machinery, speeding up printing times and producing a cleaner and more attractive newspaper’ (Express and Star supplement 1999).

The Express and Star building consists of two wings on either side of a stone projecting central bay. Central bay includes a rounded arch rising through three storeys with a high level sculpture of Mercury. The east wing, also built with stone, is a four-storey six bay building with glazed shopfront and channelled ashlar above with a projecting stone string course between floors two and three. The late 20th century west wing is not part of the locally listed building. A plaque commemorates R. J. Emerson, art teacher and sculptor who sculpted Mercury in 1932. The sculpture adds to the variety of public sculptures found on several of Wolverhampton's buildings, possibly as a result of the influence of the Art College in Wulfruna Street. The building is a fine example of architecture of the period with landmark quality and a notable public sculpture.

- Nos. 22-32 Lichfield Street;

Late 19th century office development with shops below. Red brick with stone dressings. Nos. 22-24 Lichfield Street is three storeys with dormers. Modern ground floor. Stone oriel window at first floor and stone banding to second floor. Two hipped dormers. Nos. 26-32 is a six bay asymmetrical design with central brick stack. Ground floor altered but retains elements of original shopfronts and cast iron railings above stone cornice. Timber upper floor windows are sliding sashes with single pane lower sash and multi-paned upper sashes. Balustraded brick parapet with stone coping and three ball finials flanking large gabled dormers.

A good example of late 19th century office building in brick and stone. The building has the qualities of style and materials of adjacent listed buildings and makes a significant contribution to the cohesive late 19th century character and appearance of Lichfield Street which was totally redeveloped in the 1880s. Group value.

- 29-31 Queen Street;

An impressive three storey Edwardian building in a faintly Baroque style. Six bay façade divided into three two-bay sections by four terracotta Corinthian columns. Ornate balustraded parapet topped with four ball finials. The outer sections are gently curved above first floor. Ground floor shopfronts divided by pilasters and continuous fascia interrupted by round arched off-centre doorcase. Classical detailing includes round and triangular pedimented window heads, applied Corinthian columns and festoons above second floor windows.

The building is particularly notable for contrasting red and brownish-red terracotta, a distinctive feature of many of Wolverhampton's late 19th century buildings.

[Additional Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents](#)

Subject to resources being available the Council will

- Update the 'Shopfront Design Guide' SPG (1996) in 2007/2008
- Update the 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs' SPG (1996) and
- Prepare new guidance on Protection of Heritage and Environment after 2009.

These will become Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and will form part of the new Local Development Framework (or LDF) for Wolverhampton.

Subject to resources other historic conservation advisory guidance leaflets will be produced to assist in maintaining high standards of development and workmanship in the conservation area e.g.

Listed building control; Repairs to historic buildings; Development within conservation areas; The use of materials; Article 4 Direction guidance.

7. Issues for the future

Midland Metro

The City Centre conservation area will be affected by the route of proposed extensions to the Midland Metro network in the medium term future.

Centro, the promoter of Midland Metro, has been working in partnership with Wolverhampton City Council and other Black Country authorities to develop a route known as the 5 Ws between Wolverhampton, Wednesfield, Willenhall, Walsall, Darlaston and Wednesbury which will also include additional stops in the City Centre. Following consultation in 2003/2004 a route has been approved for further development. Preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area will be a material consideration during the formulation of proposals for the extended route.

In order to proceed with the route an application has to be made under the Transport and Works Act. This process will include further consultation. It is therefore unlikely the proposals will have an impact on this conservation area within the five year period, after which this appraisal will be reviewed. Anyone wishing to know more about the Metro proposals should visit the following web site www.centro.org.uk/metrofuture

The Wolverhampton Interchange

Proposals for a £176 million comprehensive office led scheme at Wolverhampton Interchange, immediately to the east of the conservation area, are also being developed by the Council in partnership with a developer. The scheme also includes Network Rail, Virgin Trains, British Waterways Board and Centro as partners, and Advantage West Midlands.



Above: *Midland Metro*

As well as a new railway and re-modelled bus station, the Interchange project, which links those two major transport hubs, will also enable the future incorporation of the proposed '5W's Midland Metro line' linking Wolverhampton with Wednesfield, Willenhall, Walsall and Wednesbury. It will feature a four star hotel, restaurants, cafes and bars at the canal basin and some limited retail space. The scheme incorporates 413,000 square feet of office space, 215 residential units, of which 20 per cent will be 'affordable housing', together with 160,000 square feet of public realm. A total of 1,400 car parking spaces, double the current number, will also be available in the scheme, following the demolition of the existing multi storey.

The scheme represents an investment of £176 million, of which £17 million is to be provided by the public sector. A Masterplan for the Interchange will be available for public consultation during 2007 and it is expected that work will start on site in 2008 and that the development will be completed in 2012. See http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/transport_streets/planning/consultation.htm for the latest information on the Interchange project.

Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed every five years in the light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area;
- A photographic record of the conservation area;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements;
- A building condition survey;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action.

8. Implications of conservation area status

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the "preservation and enhancement" of the area. These are as follows:

- The local authority is under a general duty to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area, and has a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as conservation area appraisals or grant schemes) to that end;
- Extra publicity is given to planning applications affecting conservation areas and the Council must take into consideration the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character of the conservation when determining such applications. This is usually achieved through the use of advertising in the local newspaper;
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of most unlisted buildings and boundary walls in a conservation area and the local authority or the Secretary of State may take enforcement action or institute a criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained;
- Written notice must be given to the Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area;
- The display of advertisements may be somewhat more restricted than elsewhere;
- The Council or the Secretary of State may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a conservation area is kept in good repair (similar to the powers which protect listed buildings);

- Limited financial assistance may be available for the upkeep of a building in the conservation area through grant schemes with English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund, (though these are usually targeted to areas of economic deprivation).

The requirements for planning permission in a conservation area.

Certain works to family houses within a conservation area, which are normally considered to be "permitted development", will now require planning approval from the Council. The overall effect of these additional controls is that the amount of building works which can be carried out to a family house or within its grounds without a planning application is substantially smaller in a conservation area than elsewhere.

These are:

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to family houses in conservation areas where they add more than 10 % or 50 cubic metres in volume to the property (whichever is greater). This is a slightly smaller amount than the usual requirement for planning permission which is limited to 15% or 70 cubic metres, except for terraced houses which are also limited to 10% or 50 cubic metres, wherever they are located;
- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to family houses in conservation areas, using stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles. However, cement and pebble dashing is still permitted development following a court case in 1995;
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a family house resulting in a material alteration to its shape, most notably the addition of dormer windows;

- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the curtilage of a family house whose cubic capacity exceeds 10 cubic metres. This is especially important for sheds, garages, and other outbuildings in gardens within conservation areas.

Please note that that commercial properties (such as shops and public houses), and houses which are in multiple occupation (flats) have far fewer permitted development rights and therefore planning permission is already required for many alterations to these buildings.

It is recommended that any proposals for new development or alteration to existing buildings in a conservation area should be discussed with a planning officer at the Council before commencing work on site. Telephone enquiries should be made to City Direct (01902) 551155.

The Unitary Development Plan

The Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UPD) 2001 - 2011 is a planning document which contains policies and proposals for the physical development and use of land including measures for the protection and improvement of the environment. The UDP is used by the Council in reaching decisions on planning applications and proposals, which should be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Chapter 6 of the UPD contains policies for the historic environment including conservation areas.

The adopted UPD can be viewed at the following locations:

- Online by visiting the following website: www.cartoplus.co.uk/wolverhampton_2
- Wolverhampton City Council, Regeneration and Environment (Reception 24, Second Floor), Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton
- Wolverhampton Central Library and branch libraries across Wolverhampton

Copies can be also be purchased from the Planning Policy and Areas Plans team (01902) 555636.

These policies will eventually be superseded by new policies contained in the Local Development Framework work on which is in progress. To keep up to date with the current situation see the Council's website at: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/environment/planning/policy/ldf/introduction.htm

Satellite dishes

The rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly tighter than outside such areas. The number, size and location of proposed installations will be taken into account. Before buying or renting an antenna or satellite dish it is advisable to check with a planning officer at the Council whether planning permission is required. Permission from the owner or landlord of a property may also be required.

Telecommunications masts

The law governing the erection of masts and antennae is complex and, whilst some companies have licences which allow some structures to be put up in conservation areas without planning permission, the legislation does allow for consultation with the local authority concerned before the work is put in hand. Further information can be found in the second edition of PPG8 Telecommunications.

Article 4 Directions

Designation as a conservation area also means that the Council can consider whether serving an Article 4 Direction is appropriate. This brings under planning control a number of changes to unlisted family houses which would normally be considered "permitted development" including the insertion of plastic windows, new front doors, and changing roof materials. There are no Article 4 Directions in the Chapel Ash conservation area as most buildings are in commercial use.

Trees

Within conservation areas, anyone intending lopping or felling a tree the diameter of which is greater than 100 mm. at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served. This protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping. Fruit trees are no longer exempt, although slightly different constraints occur where the tree forms part of a managed forest or is in another agricultural use.

Advertisements

Advertisement controls are tighter in a conservation area. Certain categories of 'deemed consent' advertisements which may have a significant visual impact are not permitted for display without the Council's specific consent.

Bibliography and maps

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- N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Staffordshire, Penguin, 1974
- M. Mills, Mapping the Past: Wolverhampton 1577-1986, 1993
- Wolverhampton History and Heritage Society (WHHS) website 2005: www.localhistory.scit.wlv.ac.uk
- M. Albutt & A. Amison, Victorian Wolverhampton, WHHS website 2005
- Eighth List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, DoE, 1992
- William Yates' Map of the County Of Stafford 1775
- Smart's Trade Directory Map of the Town of Wolverhampton 1827
- Wolverhampton Tithe Map 1842
- Joseph Bridgen's Plan of the Township of Wolverhampton - c1850
- Steen and Blackett's Map of Wolverhampton 1871
- John Steen & Co. map of 1884
- Ordnance Survey Map 1889, 1919, 1938
- Ordnance Survey Map 1889, 1919, 1938
- Conservation Areas: A Brief Guide and List of Conservation Areas in the City of Wolverhampton (copies available from the Conservation & Urban Design Section at the City Council – see above)

Sources of further information

Wolverhampton City Council
Conservation and Urban Design
Regeneration and Environment
Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1RP
Tel: 01902 556556
www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/conservation
For information about conservation areas in Wolverhampton.

English Heritage (West Midlands)
112 Colmore Row
Birmingham, B3 3AG
General enquiries: 0121 625 6820.

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas.

The Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
London, W4 1TT
Tel: 020 8994 1019
For the "Care for Victorian Houses" leaflet, etc.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London, E1 6DY
Tel: 020 7377 1644
For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets.

This document has been written by
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Old photographs are from the Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies collection.



Left to right:
Victoria Street,
Royal London Building c1900,
Detail former Co-op, Lichfield Street.

Sustainability Statement

The Wolverhampton Revised Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out the Council's policies which are used for development control purposes. This plan will be replaced in 2008 by a new kind of policy document called a Local Development Framework (LDF) comprising a number of documents including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) which will provide detailed policies on specific issues. These documents will require sustainability appraisal.

Recent guidance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and English Heritage (2005) indicates that Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs) should not be adopted by local authorities as SPD and therefore do not require sustainability appraisal. CAAs will however be used to support forthcoming SPD on the Historic Environment which will require sustainability appraisal.

By their very nature, focus on the environmental aspects of a historic area but can also acknowledge social or economic problems which have links to environmental conditions. CAAs can highlight issues but cannot guarantee the timing or implementation of solutions.

For example highway issues may depend upon programmes within the West Midlands Transport Plan or the identification of need for significant investment in buildings may rely on securing funding from external sources, the availability of which may be restricted. The identification of the need for investment in the context of a CAA can however be beneficial when bidding for resources or reviewing programmes.

Preparing CAAs can have social and economic benefits. They can renew the interest of local people in heritage and local history and raise awareness of conservation issues. In turn this can help to enhance community identity and encourage participation in the planning process.

Designation or extension of a conservation area can provide an impetus for environmental improvements which in turn can improve the satisfaction of local people with their neighbourhood as a place to live. However, a potentially negative aspect may be the upward influence on house prices in conservation areas which could affect affordability of houses in an area. Economic benefits are likely to accrue in particular where the image of an area is improved as a business location or as a visitor destination, generating local income and employment.

Appraisals help focus attention on the need to maintain and enhance the quality of local landscapes and townscapes and conserve and protect the local historic environment. Protection of trees and green landscapes may protect or provide biodiversity habitats and provide opportunities for people to appreciate wildlife, which is of particular value in metropolitan areas.



Wolverhampton City Council



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