



CHAPEL ASH

Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Proposals

March 2007

Wolverhampton
City Council



Conservation Area Character Appraisal

This document is the appraisal for the Chapel Ash 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



Key:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ① Tettenhall Greens | ⑭ Wightwick Bank | ⑳ Fellows Street (Blakenhall) |
| ② Vicarage Road, Penn | ⑮ Bantock House | ㉑ Springfield Brewery |
| ③ St John's Square | ⑯ Chapel Ash | ㉒ The Oaks (Merridale Road) |
| ④ Bushbury Hill | ⑰ St Philips (Penn Fields) | ㉓ Tettenhall Road |
| ⑤ Wolverhampton Locks | ⑱ Ash Hill | □ Conservation Area Boundary |
| ⑥ Bilston Town Centre | ⑲ Penn Fields | — Motorway |
| ⑦ Tettenhall Wood | ㉑ Old Hall Street | — Major Roads |
| ⑧ Park | ㉒ Worcester Street | — Railway |
| ⑨ Wolverhampton City Centre | ㉓ Cleveland Road | — Metro Line |
| ⑩ The Woodlands | ㉔ Penn Road (Graiseley) | — Council Boundary |
| ⑪ Union Mill | ㉕ Cedar Way | — Waterways |
| ⑫ Castlecroft Gardens | ㉖ Copthorne Road | |
| ⑬ Wednesfield | | |

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Above: Chapel Ash (north side)

1. Introduction

The Chapel Ash Conservation Area was designated by the former Wolverhampton Borough Council on 11 April 1991.

This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Chapel Ash 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 Chapel Ash Conservation Area can be assessed.

2. Location and Setting

The Chapel Ash Conservation Area lies to the west of Wolverhampton City Centre on either side of one of the main arterial road (A41) leading from the ring road out of the city towards Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury.

The conservation area (2.6 hectares) lies on level ground at the foot of the low promontory upon which the historic core of Wolverhampton (approximately 160 metres above sea level) is located. It is within a wholly urban setting, devoid of any green surroundings although West Park, a large landscaped urban park, is situated only a few hundred metres to the north.

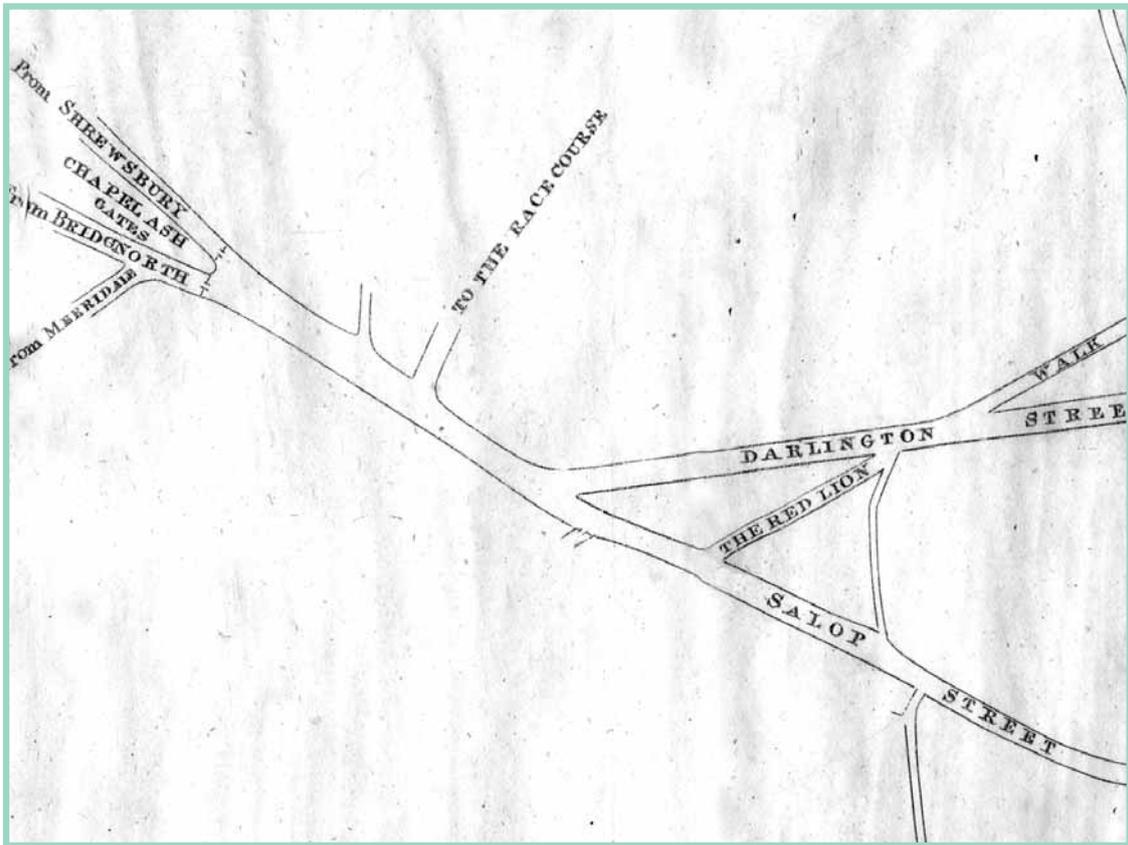
The Chapel Ash Conservation Area straddles the boundary between Park Ward and Graiseley Ward.

3. History

Chapel Ash has long been an important thoroughfare as it lies on the main route from Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Wales. There is a 16th century reference to a chapel and burial ground west of the town centre and this may have given rise to the name 'Chapel Ash'. The name is written on William Yates' 1775 Map of the County of Stafford beside the junction of the roads from Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury, the supposed site of the medieval chapel.

Two events were critical to the 19th century development of Chapel Ash. The first was the creation of Darlington Street which was cut through from High Green (now known as Queen Square) to join the existing historic westward route out of the town, forming part of the Holyhead Road improved by Thomas Telford. This road, completed in 1823 and named after Lord Darlington who sold the land to the Town Commissioners, was a planned route leading directly from the medieval core of the town into open countryside.

The second critical event in the history of Chapel Ash was the construction of St Mark's Church, consecrated in 1849. Steen and Blckett's Guide (1871) observed that "the congregation is large and influential" and also noted the "large attendance of the working classes". This is an indication of the church's close proximity to both affluent middle-class housing along Tettenhall Road (Wolverhampton's first mayor, G.B.Thorneycroft, lived nearby in 1848) and modest working class terraced housing to the south, much of which has now been demolished.



Above: Chapel Ash - Smart's Trade Directory Map of Wolverhampton 1827

Below: Chapel Ash - Joseph Bridgen's Plan of Wolverhampton - c1850



Steen and Blackett's Map of Wolverhampton (1871) shows that the conservation area's street layout was complete and most of the buildings of today's Chapel Ash were in place.

By the late 19th century Chapel Ash had become an important suburban shopping area serving housing that was increasing in density along Brickkiln Street, Merridale Road, Compton Road and Tettenhall Road. In 1871 the east end was served by two hackney cab stands. In 1881 the opening of West Park, on the site of the Broad Meadows racecourse, would have drawn people to the area and increased trade. By 1895 Chapel Ash was connected to the town centre by a horse drawn tram, electrified in 1902.

There has been brewing at the Park Brewery, off Lovatt Street, since 1875. The southern end of Lovatt Street was formerly known as Clarence Place, a cul-de-sac until the 1890s when the street was extended through to Bath Road. More recently, the street has been blocked once again.

The growth of Chapel Ash paralleled the overall development of Wolverhampton during the second half of the 19th century as the town centre grew and became endowed with a set of prestigious public buildings amongst which are the Town Hall (1867), Museum and Art Gallery (1883-5), Grand Theatre (1893-4), Head Post Office (1895) and Public Library (1900-2). The town's population grew from about 50,000 in 1851 to about 94,000 in 1901.

In the first half of the 20th century, Chapel Ash retained its position as a prosperous local shopping centre. Photographs from the 1970s, just before the construction of the Chapel Ash roundabout, show a wide variety of shops. In the following years, three factors contributed to a decline in the conservation area's economic fortunes and ensuing

shop vacancies and neglect of building maintenance: the demolition of nearby terraced housing, the ring road's disconnection of Chapel Ash from the town centre and the town's economic depression in the mid 1980s. Recent improvements in both public and private realms are helping to reverse this decline.

4. Character and Appearance

General description and summary

(Please see Townscape Appraisal map overleaf)

Chapel Ash developed during the second half of the 19th century to become one of Wolverhampton's fashionable shopping streets a short walk, or a tram ride, from the town centre. The Chapel Ash Conservation Area contains almost all the mid/late 19th century development on either side of Chapel Ash between St Mark's Church and Bath Road.

On the south side of Chapel Ash, the conservation area extends from St Mark's Road up to and including no. 35 Chapel Ash, beyond which there is a complex junction, devoid of architectural and historic character, where Tettenhall Road, Compton Road, Merridale Road and Bath Road meet.

On the north side of the street the conservation area includes nos. 18-80 Chapel Ash, beyond which is the Park Conservation Area and Tettenhall Road Conservation Area.

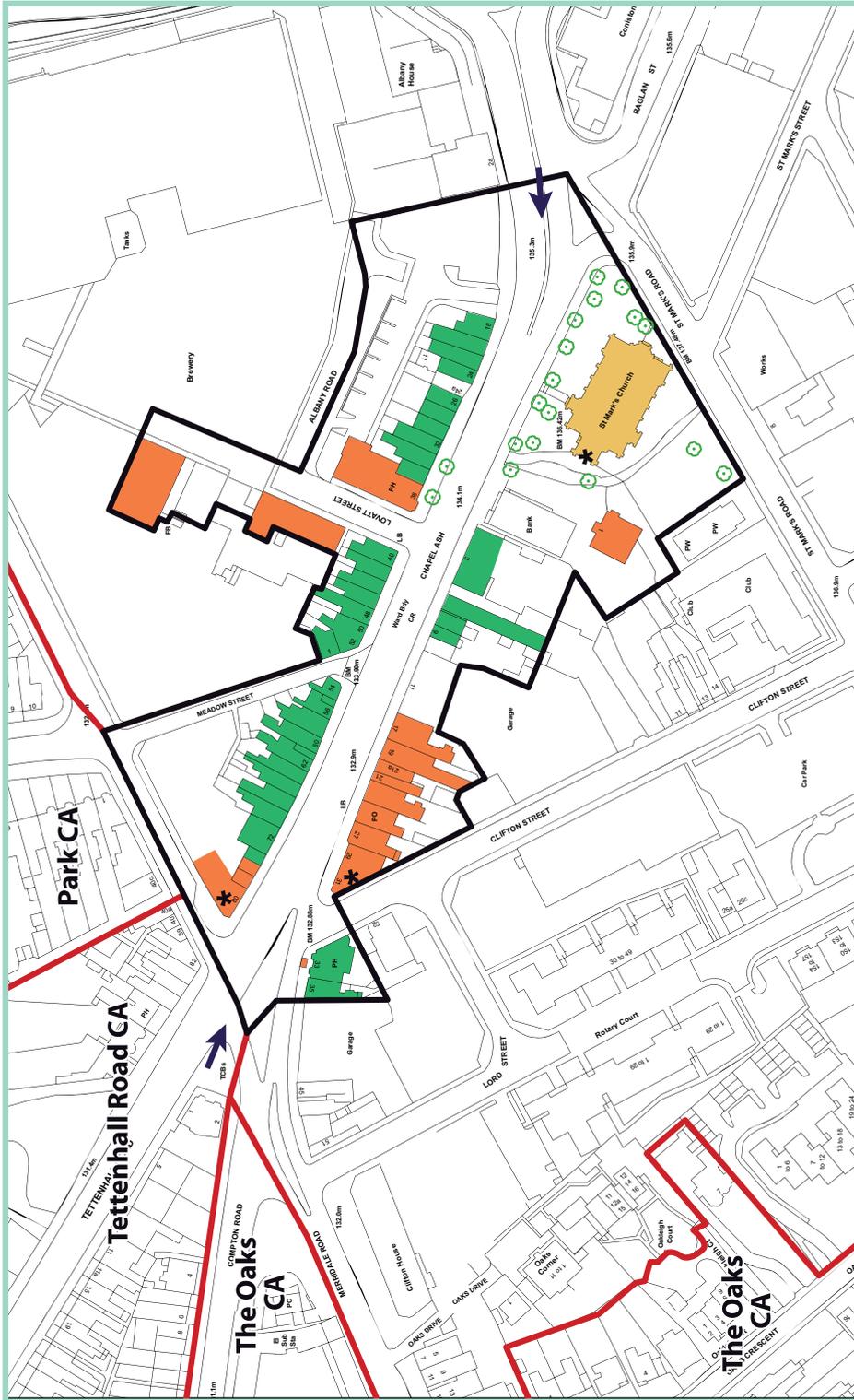
At the eastern end of Chapel Ash, the boundary has been drawn to include part of Banks's private car park (where nos. 2-16 Chapel Ash once stood) but modern development beside the 1970s ring road has not been included.

To the north of the main road, the boundary encloses the entire triangle of land formed between Chapel Ash, Meadow Street and Bath Road. Lovatt Street, a 19th century street where a locally listed building is located, is included and, in order to protect a small late 19th century brewery building, the conservation area encloses a small part of Banks's Park Brewery site.



Above left and right:

Nos. 40-46 (even) Chapel Ash



Key

- Conservation area boundary
- Listed building
- Building included on local list
- Focal building or feature
- * Important view
- ⬆ Significant tree

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Chapel Ash Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal



The boundary has been drawn closely along the rear of properties on the south side of Chapel Ash, omitting modern development facing Clifton Street.

The conservation area is notable for the following:

- The architectural unity of the area's buildings, most of which date from the mid/late 19th century;
- The area's 19th century street layout and pattern which followed the completion of Darlington Street in 1823 and is imposed upon a much older historic westward route from Wolverhampton;
- The architectural and historic quality of the area's buildings including St Mark's Church (grade II listed) and several buildings on the Council's Local List;
- The spire of St Mark's Church which is prominent in views from the city centre and is also a local landmark;
- The role of the conservation area as a secondary shopping centre;
- The increasing quality of the public realm following enhancement works undertaken in 2004 that included natural sandstone paving, and new street lighting and furniture in a co-ordinated design and colour;
- The 'gateway' effect created by two imposing corner buildings on either side of the west end of Chapel Ash, no. 80 and no. 31;
- Mature roadside trees that make a valuable contribution to the inner city location.

Present character activities and uses

Retail and office uses are prevalent within the conservation area (even St Mark's Church is now offices).

As well as retail shops selling, for example, electrical goods, kitchen ware, furniture, art materials and mobile phones, there are also service providers such as estate agents, employment agencies and hair dressers, some located at first floor. Despite its location away from the city centre, the area hosts a mix of convenience and speciality shops.

A large vehicle service garage (tyres, exhausts, batteries, brakes etc) fronts Chapel Ash approximately midway between St Mark's Church and Clifton Street but most of the garage itself lies outside the conservation area.

At the time of writing (2004), there were several vacant shops and evidence of vacant first and second floors.

There are signs of 'living over the shop' but residential use is not common. The former vicarage and a row of six mid 19th century dwellings in Lovatt Street are now in office use.

There are two public houses, a café, a restaurant and several take-aways which are only open in the evening. The conservation area includes a small part of Banks's Park Brewery site.

Chapel Ash lies on one of the main roads into and out of Wolverhampton and as a result has high levels of traffic noise and pollution at all times except during the late night. A significant traffic problem is the drays from the Brewery, their main route being along Meadow Street from where they turn into Chapel Ash. The Brewery operates 24 hours a day and the drays can be leaving very early in the morning.

Architectural and historic character

The conservation area has a prevalent mid/late 19th century architectural and historic character reflecting the period during which Chapel Ash developed.

The two earliest 19th century developments are St Mark's Church and 1-6 Lovatt Street, both dating from c1850.

St. Mark's Church, which dominates the eastern end of the area, is typical of the Gothic style favoured by Victorian church architects. Nos. 1-6 Lovatt Street, called Clarence Place until the end of the 19th century, is a mid 19th century two-storey brick terrace that has a distinctly Georgian appearance which is at odds with the Victorian buildings fronting Chapel Ash.



Above left:
Natural stone paving, Chapel Ash (north side)



Above right:
No. 1 Meadow Street

The north side of Chapel Ash is uniformly three storeys presenting a terraced frontage to the road broken only by Lovatt Street and Meadow Street.

Proceeding from the south-east, the car park adjacent to no. 18 occupies the site of nos. 2-16 Chapel Ash which were demolished in the late 1970s to make way for the ring road. No. 18 retains its original window dressings and door with fanlight but the facing bricks are modern and its rebuilt gable end presents to those approaching from the east a large expanse of unrelieved brickwork.

Nos. 18-36 Chapel Ash is a row of three storey buildings with shopfronts at ground floor. The row lacks architectural unity: nos. 18, 20, 22, 24 and 24a are one-bay wide with a variety of window and eaves detail (no. 24a is a 20th century infill building) whilst nos. 26-30 forms a single design. The Clarendon Hotel, at the end of the row on the corner of Lovatt Street, has no shopfront and, unusually, has a gable end facing the street.

Continuing west, beyond Lovatt Street, roadside buildings have less ornate facades. Nos. 40-74 is a red brick terrace (broken by Meadow Street) with an almost uniform eaves line and modern shopfronts below a regular rhythm of single and paired first- and second-floor windows. Nos. 50-52, which neatly rounds the corner into Meadow Street, have stone classical door surrounds at ground floor and a large tri-partite window at first floor. The building is in a poor state of repair.

No 80 holds a prominent position in a triangular site in the junction of Chapel Ash and Bath Road. A clock on the corner of the building is topped with an open sided cupola.

The south side of Chapel Ash is less uniform than the north side because there is a gap in the frontage between no. 9 and no. 17 and a 1960s bank building between no. 3 and St Mark's Church.

Nos. 17-31 is a tall, long terrace with an unusual decorative corner feature projecting above the eaves of no. 31. The terrace has modern shopfronts at ground floor and occupies almost half the length of the roadside development between Clifton Street and St. Mark's Church and dominates the north-east end of the church conservation area.

Proceeding towards the town centre, the other buildings in the street are unremarkable in comparison but retain a late 19th century appearance except for flat roofed development between no. 9 and no. 17 that mars the character and appearance of the street. Barclay's Bank, adjacent to St Mark's, Church is a modernist two-storey flat roofed 1960s office building at odds with the Victorian character of the street.

The rears of properties 40-74 (north side) and 17-31 (south side) are visually unattractive but, being slightly neglected, original architectural detail such as timber sash windows have not been altered.

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



Above left and right:
Nos. 17-31 (odd) Chapel Ash

Street pattern and prevalent building form

The buildings of Chapel Ash lie astride part of the historic route westwards from Wolverhampton. A map of the Town of Wolverhampton (1827) (see page 4) shows Darlington Street, a new street completed in 1823, and indicates 'Chapel Ash Gates' across the roads to Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury. A road in the approximate position of Lovatt Street is labelled "To The Racecourse".

The Wolverhampton Tithe Map of 1842 shows a clearer indication of the course of Meadow Street and an entrance to Lovatt Street. By 1864 the conservation area's street layout was complete and, with the exception of changes made by the ring road, has not significantly changed since then.

Buildings are generally two or, more commonly, three storeys in height opening directly onto the footway in short rows or terraces. Former rear gardens are now mostly given over to parking. Pitched roofs running parallel to the road are the norm, some, like nos. 18-24, concealed behind a parapet. Unusually, The Clarendon Hotel has a gable end facing the highway.

Notable exceptions to the above are St Mark's Church, Bank House (a detached former vicarage set well back from the main road beside St Mark's Church), and Barclays Bank, a detached infill building set back from the historic building line. Lovatt Street contains a two storey terrace of six dwellings and a four storey brewery building with an industrial character.

Building materials

Brick walls and Welsh slate roofs are the most prevalent building materials. Some historic brick buildings such as nos. 58 and 62 Chapel Ash have been painted or rendered. Red brick is the norm but nos. 1-6 Lovatt Street is built with 'white' bricks in Flemish bond; blue bricks are used in the window arches of the four storeys building in Park Brewery.

Render is common as a facing material. Nos. 17-31 Chapel Ash is rendered but, viewed from the rear in Clifton Street, the building can be seen to be constructed with red brick. The Clarendon Hotel has a rendered first floor above a brick ground floor.

Natural slate, brought from Wales by canal or train, is the common roofing material but some slates have been replaced with modern concrete tiles, for example no. 72 Chapel Ash.

The only stone building in the conservation area is St Mark's Church, constructed in the 1840s with local sandstone. Sandstone can also be found in Bank House and in the plinth of nos. 1-6 Lovatt Street. Bath stone and other stone is used to good effect in door and window surrounds of brick properties along Chapel Ash, particularly The Clarendon Hotel, Bank House and nos. 50-52 Chapel Ash.

Original 19th century windows are timber sliding sashes but some have been replaced with aluminium or uPVC to the detriment of the conservation area's historic character and appearance. Similarly, the loss of original chimney stacks erodes the area's historic roofscape.



Above:
Meadow Street looking south



*Above:
Locally listed buildings in
Lovatt Street*

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.

There is only one listed building in the area; the grade II listed St Mark's Church designed by C.W.Orford in an Early English style. It is now in use as an office.

Locally listed buildings

As well as statutorily 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.

Seven buildings or structures in the conservation area are locally listed: 1 Bank House, nos. 17 - 31 (odd) Chapel Ash, the 'Lucy Box' outside 33 Chapel Ash, 80 Chapel Ash, 38 Chapel Ash (The Clarendon Hotel), the four storey 19th century brick building in Park Brewery off Lovatt Street and nos. 1- 6 Lovatt Street. These are identified on the Townscape Appraisal map on page 8.

Buildings of Townscape Merit

Almost 40 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 statutorily 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

No complete 19th century shopfronts remain. There are vestiges of historic shopfronts, mainly timber pilasters and console brackets, for example at nos. 56 and 66 Chapel Ash and 1 Meadow Street. The old shopfront of no. 68 survives relatively intact. Nos. 3 and 27 have mid 20th century shopfronts, the former timber, the latter metal.

Focal points, vistas and views

The spire of St Mark's Church is a prominent landmark and a focal point when viewed from the higher ground of Queen Square, outside Chapel Ash Conservation Area in the city centre.

Although obviously designed to be a focal point at the end of Darlington Street, the construction of the ring road has divorced the church, and the conservation area, from the city centre. Ironically, in 1871, one of the main complaints about St. Mark's Church was that, although the view from Queen Square was impressive, it blocked out the vista of the Clee Hills and Shropshire beyond.

The spire is also a prominent feature within the conservation area, though rivalled by two chimneys at Banks's Brewery. Both chimneys are distinctive features in the townscape, the taller, slimmer brick chimney is 19th century and more in keeping with the area than the modern concrete one.

At the west end of Chapel Ash two corner buildings, nos. 31 (south side) and no. 80 (north side), form a pair of high 'gateposts' at the western approach to the city.

Views outward are undistinguished but the green copper roof of the Darlington Street Methodist Church attracts the eye as one looks upward towards the city centre from the east end of the conservation area.

Historic associations

Bank House, formerly St. Mark's Vicarage, was the childhood home of K. G. Hunt (1884-1949), whose father was the vicar of St. Mark's. Hunt was one of the most famous footballers of his time, not only scoring the first goal in Wolverhampton Wanderers' famous cup victory in 1897, but also gaining international honours and an Olympic gold medal in 1908. A plaque on the wall of St Mark's Church recalls his residence.

Park Brewery, part of which is included in the conservation area, is the home of Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries Ltd., one of the largest independent regional brewers, formed in 1890 from an amalgamation of three local brewing businesses - Banks's of Park Brewery, George Thompson and Sons of Dudley and C.C.Smith of the Fox Brewery in Wolverhampton.

The area's most notable trees are the limes and beeches in front of St Mark's Church. These are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. They have significant public amenity value and, like St Mark's spire, are prevalent in views from Queen Square. Two roadside plane trees on the north side of Chapel Ash make an important contribution to the conservation area.

A number of recently planted young trees beside Albany Road help to soften the otherwise open parking and turning areas.



Above left and right:
No. 80 Chapel Ash

Trees, gardens and natural / cultivated landscape

Open spaces

With the exception of private car parks, there is no significant open space in the conservation area. St Mark's Church, now an office, originally stood in an open churchyard but this has been encroached upon by the vicarage (c1875), Barclays Bank (c1965) and The Haven (outside the conservation area). Whilst land to the rear of the former church has become a car park, the grassed area between church and road remains important both to the setting of the church and Chapel Ash. The nearest public open space is West Park, a few minutes walk to the north.

Public realm

The public realm has been improved by the introduction of natural stone paving to the footway, setts at road crossings and new street lighting columns, bollards and litter bins. An area to the rear of nos. 18-38 Chapel Ash has been re-developed and landscaped to create private parking.

There is a row of old blue stone setts along the west side of Meadow Street and black bollards with an embossed crest in Lovatt Street. Meadow Street and Lovatt Street have tiled street names cut into first floor brickwork. Two red ER II post boxes and an ornate pair of iron gates with the initials LE at no. 3 Chapel Ash add further to the conservation area's distinct identity.

5. Issues: Positives and Negatives

Positives

- Architectural quality of the area's buildings;
- Historic environment;
- Recent improvements to the public realm;
- Secondary / specialist shopping close to City Centre;
- Amenity value of roadside trees in front of St Mark's Church and The Clarendon Hotel;
- Good public transport connections;
- Wide pavements;
- Public car park in Clifton Street.

Negatives

- The conservation area is blighted by traffic noise and fumes;
- There is a break in the historic street frontage of Chapel Ash between nos. 2a and 18 (north side) and 9 and 17 (south side);
- The ring road disconnects Chapel Ash from the city centre, both practically and visually;
- The garage buildings on the corner of Meadow Street and Bath Road have little architectural merit and are out of keeping with the Chapel Ash and adjoining West Park conservation areas;

- No. 9 Chapel Ash is vacant and in a very poor state of repair; land to the rear is neglected and unkempt;
- Road signs with no regard to surrounding historic buildings adversely affect the area's distinctive sense of place;
- Poor state of repair of key historic buildings, notably nos. 9, 50-52 and 17-31 Chapel Ash detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- Design of some 20th century development, notably no. 24a (north side) and Barclays Bank (south side), fails to preserve the predominantly 19th century character and appearance of the conservation area;
- A high proportion of modern shopfronts, fascia and projecting signs are poorly designed and spoil the historic appearance of the host building and the conservation area;
- The vehicle service centre (Hi-Q) is an inappropriate use for the area; vehicles turning into the service centre disrupt traffic flow;
- Loss of architectural detail and insensitive alteration of historic buildings detract from the area's historic interest.
- Advertising A-boards on the pavement are unsightly and impede pedestrians;
- Vacant shops create a bad impression and spoil the appearance of the conservation area, especially when boarded up;
- The east-facing gable wall of no. 18 Chapel Ash presents a blank, uninteresting face to those approaching from the east;
- Parking of cars outside allocated areas in the Banks's car park causes a hazard to pedestrians;
- Car parking to the rear of St Mark's Church intrudes upon its historic setting.

6. Management Proposals

Conservation area boundary review

No boundary changes were proposed in the 2006 review of the area.

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

All of the buildings in the Chapel Ash Conservation Area are residential flats or commercial properties. Such buildings have few 'permitted development rights' (as set out in the General Permitted Development Order 1995, as amended) and planning permission will therefore be required for many minor changes such as the installation of new windows, external painting or the alteration of roof covering.

It is not considered that there is a role for Article 4 Directions in this area of predominantly commercial property.

Local List

Four new sites were added to the Local List in 2007 following public consultation:

- **The Clarendon Hotel**

There appears to have been a hotel on this site since the 1880s and possibly earlier. The Clarendon Hotel is run by Banks's, owners of the nearby Park Brewery, and has been an outlet for the local brew for over 100 years. The present building, which dates from the early 20th century, holds a prominent corner position at the junction of Lovatt Street and Chapel Ash and is uncharacteristically aligned with its gable end facing Chapel Ash. The building is notable for its Edwardian detailing and stone dressings and stained glass in ground floor windows.

It has four symmetrically placed brick chimney stacks. Later extensions to rear.

- **No. 80 Chapel Ash**

Built in an approximate Georgian style, this building replaced an earlier carriage works and garage and dates from the late 1940s. Its rainwater hoppers are embossed with the letters JHB 1948. Though altered at ground floor, the Classical first floor window surrounds, balustraded parapet, clock and cupola give the building a distinctive appearance. It is notable for its corner location on the approach to the city, forming a pair of 'gateposts' with locally listed nos. 17-31 Chapel Ash opposite.

- **Victorian brewery building, off Lovatt Street**

There has been brewing at Park Brewery at the end of Lovatt Street, formerly Clarence Place, since 1875. Banks's Brewery (otherwise known as The Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries Plc) was formed out of a merger of three local brewing businesses on 14 May 1890 and today is a major contributor to Wolverhampton's local identity. This functional industrial building is the best preserved late 19th century building of Park Brewery.

- **Lucy box outside 33 Chapel Ash**

'Lucy box' is a name applied to boxes, about 3 feet high, about 2 feet wide and about 18 inches deep, often with an embossed Wolverhampton coat of arms, which are to be found on pavements throughout the city. Such boxes were originally used in connection with the tram network and then with the trolley bus network; and as part of the general electricity supply network; and for telephone purposes. The name 'Lucy box' was applied to these boxes because the great majority of them, in the early days at least, were made by the Lucy Foundry in Oxford.

Opportunities for enhancement

- Encourage replacement of all inappropriate shop fronts in a design and materials in keeping with the area. Advice in Wolverhampton City Council's Shopfront Design Guide (1996) should be followed;
- Encourage restoration of architectural detail which is essential to the design and character of key historic buildings, especially timber windows, chimney stacks and original roof covering;
- Encourage repair and restoration of traditional shopfronts;
- Restore railings around St. Mark's churchyard;
- Encourage the co-ordinated redecoration of the exterior of nos. 17-31 Chapel Ash;
- Promote and encourage the re-use of vacant floorspace;
- Improve rear accesses to properties by addressing issues such as physical access, use of rear yards, lighting, parking and safety;
- Promote and encourage the structural and external repair, and routine maintenance, of key historic buildings;
- Produce site specific design briefs to guide the sensitive re-development of the Meadow Street/Bath Road garage (note there is a road improvement line affecting the west side of Meadow Street) and the sites between nos. 2a and 18 and nos. 9 and 17 Chapel Ash;

- Seek sources of grant aid to assist in the continued regeneration of the area. Conservation area status gives the potential for external funding from English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Other recommendations

- Review all traffic signage, advertising and street furniture with a view to the removal of unnecessary clutter;
- Take enforcement action against unauthorised advertising, especially the use of A-boards;
- Promote awareness of the conservation area amongst landlords and tenants.
- A comprehensive survey should be undertaken in the area to assess whether there are grounds to seek approval for an interim planning policy to protect the Chapel Ash area from further loss of A1 retail uses.

7. 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 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

- R. Dixon, Victorian Architecture, Thames and Husdon, 1978
- M. Mills and T. Williams, Images of England - Wolverhampton, Tempus, 1996
- C. Upton, A History of Wolverhampton, Phillimore, 1998
- N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Staffordshire, Penguin, 1974
- M. Mills, Mapping the Past: Wolverhampton 1577-1986, 1993
- Wolverhampton History and Heritage Society website 2004 (www.localhistory.scit.wlv.ac.uk)
- William Yates' Map of the County Of Stafford 1775
- 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
- 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 & Urban Design Section
Regeneration and Environment
Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1RP
Tel: 01902 555625/565622/555617
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.



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, conservation area appraisals 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.



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