

16 Commercial Core

Character Area 9: Bird Street & Sandford Street

Summary

16.1 The Bird Street character area is situated within the city core at the west side of the conservation area. It includes the section of Bird Street from Minster Pool to the junction with The Friary. It also includes Sandford Street and small sections of Swan Road and Queen Street.

16.2 The principle characteristics of this character area are the continuous built frontages along Bird Street and most of Sandford Street, the relative uniformity of building lines and heights of buildings and the proportions and materials used in their design.

City Morphology, Archaeology and History

16.3 The predominant building type in this area is Georgian, three storey, red brick although originally the buildings had a wider variety of uses including some town houses. Bird Street is however, most famous for its links with the coaching trade with the Swan and George Hotels both being famous coaching inns. Both of these Inns have strong associations with the turbulent politics of the 18th Century, the Swan traditionally with the Tory Party and the George Hotel with the Whigs. In the high point of the early 19th Century there would have been daily coaches to various cities leaving from Bird Street. By 1808 the carriageway was paved with granite sets and fringed by York stone flags, and this was the first city street to be 'macadamised' or tarmaced, in the 1820's.

16.4 Sandford Street in contrast was one of Lichfield's most important and heavily built up medieval streets. Before the opening of Friary Road in the 1920's it was the main thoroughfare for traffic from Walsall and Wolverhampton. There are still some high quality buildings both timber-framed and Georgian which indicate its past importance.

16.5 Queen Street dates to the 19th Century and Swan Road was opened in 1991.

Landmark and Views

16.6 Approaching the city from along Queen Street the views are channelled through Sandford Street towards the centre with a view of The George on Bird Street. The George and The Swan, both very imposing buildings act as local landmarks. The recently constructed, contemporary designed New Minster House overlooking Minster Pool is also a new local landmark.



Picture 16.1 Landmark buildings both old (The Gatehouse c1820) and new (c2008)

16.7 From Bird Street there are views down the roads running off either side of it. As these are predominantly pedestrianised it gives is the feeling of being at the centre of a historic town. Looking southwards up towards St. John Street the view opens up at the junction with The Friary where it is softened by a small group of trees on the left hand side and is then enclosed and framed by the building line. Looking north the tree canopies and hedges near to the Swan and the Museum Gardens provides a green end point to the views.



Picture 16.2 View looking south down Bird Street

CHARACTER AREA 9: BIRD STREET: VIEWS AND VISTAS



Picture 16.3 Bird Street Character Area - Map of Views and Vistas

Key Building Groups

16.8 The hotels form a small but significant group of buildings. Elsewhere along Bird Street the remaining properties form a cohesive group with a uniform building line and significant similarity in terms of scale and proportions.

16.9 Along Sandford Street, there is a greater variety of building types with more modern infill development. Numbers 6 and 9 Sandford Street are very significant both containing timber framing, an indication of the early importance of the road. Another important cluster of buildings is near the corner of Queen Street and Swan Road and includes numbers 2 and 5 Queen Street and the Queens Head Pub.

Current Uses

16.10 There are a wide range of uses within this area. The main uses that contribute to the character of the area are those on the ground floors which includes restaurants, hotels, retail, pubs. Other uses that are less visually prominent include office and residential uses.

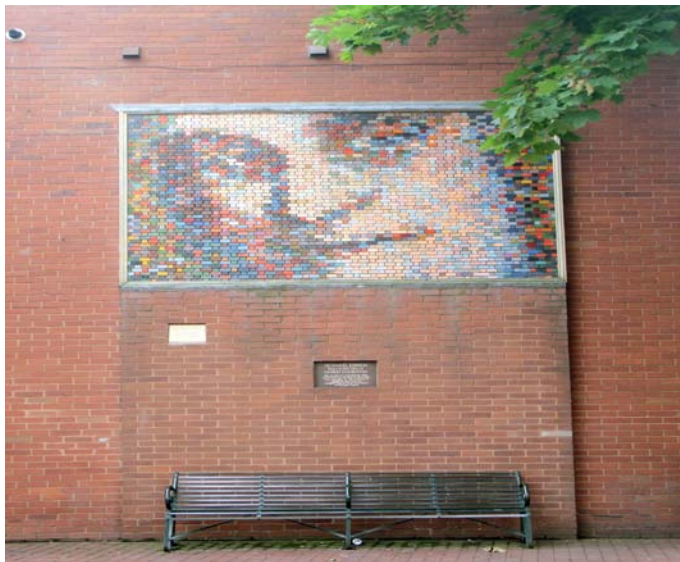


Townscape Elements

16.11 Bird Street is pedestrianised with only the occasional vehicle allowed. This lack of vehicular traffic, noise and visual intrusion creates a more traditional feeling to this area. Pedestrianised streets run off either side of Bird Street. Bird Street and many of the adjoining streets were re-paved in 1992 to a high standard, however, now when compared to the more recently paved areas for example in Market Place, the public realm looks outdated and in need of some improvement. In front of The George and The Swan the paving is York Stone with timber bollards which enhances the setting of these important buildings.

16.12 There is some high quality street furniture, including metal benches and interpretation panels which fits in well with and positively contributes to the character of the area. Other areas are not so well served, for example the road into the Bird Street car park has rusty lamp posts, although these will be replaced as part of a scheme by Staffordshire County Council.

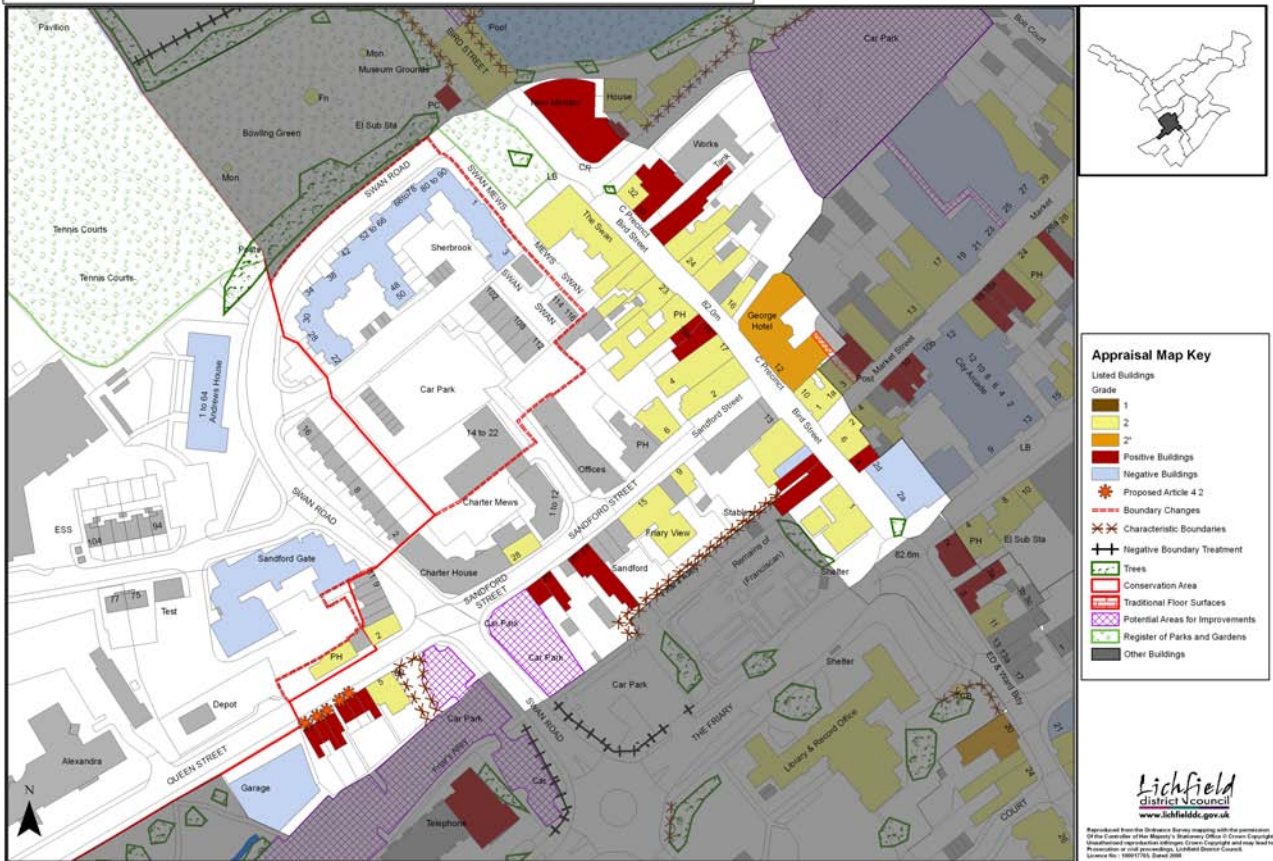
16.13 There is a significant number of trees within the character area, and also that are visible from within the character area. Important groups of trees include the small group opposite The Gatehouse, the group adjacent to number 32 Bird Street and the trees and other vegetation in the garden area immediately north of The Swan and also the trees that frame the car parks along Swan Road and Queen Street.



Picture 16.4 Mosaic of Samuel Johnson

16.14 This area has a fine piece of public art in the form of a large mosaic of Samuel Johnson on the side of number 32 Bird Street. It was created by John Myatt and dedicated to the citizens of Lichfield by the Civic Society in 1976.

CHARACTER AREA 9: BIRD STREET: TOWNSCAPE QUALITIES



Picture 16.5 Bird Street Character Area - Map of Townscape Quality

Building Types and Details

16.15 The George Inn has an outstanding Greek influenced façade with six Ionic pilasters at first floor level neatly highlighting the centre of the hotel. The arch, now infilled, used to be for stage coaches to pass through into an enclosed cobbled yard. The Swan has a similar coach arch.



Picture 16.6 The George

16.16 The predominant building material is brick, two of the most prominent buildings in the area, The George and The Gatehouse Pub are finished in stucco with banded rustication at ground floor level and there are a small number of other buildings that are rendered or have painted brickwork. Most of the roofs are not visible from street level but the majority are covered in clay tiles with the occasional slate roof, such as The George.

16.17 There are some high quality shopfronts in the area, including, amongst others, the early 20th century shopfront in number 16 Bird Street and the late 19th century one in number 27 Bird Street.



Picture 16.7 Historic shopfronts at numbers 16 and 27 Bird Street

16.18 The two buildings on either side of Sandford Street, numbers 13 and 15 Bird Street both have recessed ground floors. While maintaining the building line above ground floor level this feature detracts from the character of the area, and in particular where it has been carried

out to a historic building, in the case of number 15 Bird Street it is unfortunate. Numbers 2a-2d Bird Street are part of a 1960's shopping arcade and are set back from the building line, these buildings do detract from the character of the area as they are out of character in terms of design, proportions and materials. They are screened by a small number of trees which goes some way to mitigate their impact.



Picture 16.8 Office buildings along Sandford Street

Opportunities and Constraints

16.19 The Council will work with its partner organisations to ensure the appropriate maintenance of street surfacing using matching materials.

16.20 There has been a shift in the use of this area to a popular evening destination and there should be a public realm to suit this.

16.21 When the opportunity arises the 1960's development on the corner of Bird Street and Bore Street would benefit from enhancement. Currently it does not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

16.22 The access road to Bird Street car park would benefit from the replacement of some of the existing street furniture, especially the lamp posts, with the juniper green used elsewhere in the conservation area.



Picture 16.9 Office buildings along Sandford Street

Boundary Changes

16.23 It is proposed to remove an area of modern buildings along Swan Road from the conservation area. This area was originally included as it has historically formed the backyards to the properties facing Bird Street and Sandford Street. However, this area is substantially developed now and therefore it is considered prudent to remove it from the conservation area.

Character Area 10: St. John Street

Summary

16.24 The character area of St John Street is situated just to the south of the city core and runs south-east to the edge of the conservation area. It includes the whole length of St John Street from its junction with Bird Street and The Friary to its junction with Birmingham Road.

16.25 The principle character of this character area is derived from the linear nature of the road and the almost continuous built line. It differs from other similar streets within the city core as it is not pedestrianised and has a high volume of traffic.

City Morphology, Archaeology and History

16.26 From the medieval period until the present, St John Street has been the main thoroughfare into the City from the south. Like Bird Street it included coaching inns such as the Lord Nelson, now part of the District Council Offices, and the Harts Horn Inn (now demolished but originally north of St John's Hospital). It was clearly a street for affluent 18th century residents as shown by the range of high quality Georgian buildings, such as numbers 20, 26 (Marlborough House) and 28.

16.27 The medieval ditch that marked the boundary of the city runs across this character area, crossing St John Street just north of the Hospital of St John without the Barrs. The hospital originally stood just outside one of the main city gates, known as Culstubble Gate. Historically St John Street would have continued past this point however, since the construction of Birmingham Road in the 1960's this has become a major junction and a logical point at which to draw the conservation area boundary.

Landmark and Views

16.28 Within the character area the main landmark is the Hospital of St John, it stands on the busy junction with Birmingham Road. The views within the area are linear and channelled between the strong built line on either side of St John's Street. Looking north the spires of Lichfield Cathedral are just visible and looking south the road junction and the railway bridge can be seen.



Picture 16.10 Views looking north and south along St. John Street

CHARACTER AREA 10: ST JOHN STREET: VIEWS AND VISTAS



Picture 16.11 St John Street Character Area - Map of Views and Vistas

Key Building Groups

16.29 The linear nature and relative uniformity of scale mean that the buildings combine to create the characteristic appearance of the area. Along the east side of the street there is greater variation in age and scale but a more continuous building line. To the west side the buildings are generally large, prestigious Georgian buildings which presents are very impressive street frontage, although on both sides some of the brick facades hide earlier timber-framing.

16.30 The Hospital of St John without the Barrs is a Grade I listed building and is considered to be one of the finest 15th Century brick built buildings in the country.

Current Uses

16.31 Current uses include mainly commercial use, including restaurants, retail, and offices with residential units at first floor level and above.

Townscape Elements

16.32 Green areas of trees and vegetation can be seen to the rear of St Johns Hospital and adjacent to number 20 St John Street, behind the listed wall. These areas provide



CHARACTER AREA 10: ST JOHN STREET: TOWNSCAPE QUALITIES



Picture 16.12 St John Street Character Area - Map of Townscape Qualities

attractive spaces and natural contributions to the area. The trees and hedges to the rear of the Hospital also act as a shield from the road and the tennis courts that are adjacent to Staffordshire University.

16.33 The public realm is varied in this area. At the southern end of St John Street the pavement on the east and west sides are different with tarmac on the east side and concrete slabs and bricks on the west. The area would benefit from a more cohesive public realm and the replacement of some of the more tired elements.

Building Types and Details

16.34 The predominant architectural styles within the area are Queen Anne and Georgian with the majority being constructed in red brick with some rendered. Almost all the roofs are clay tiles, with many of the Georgian houses having parapets and hipped roofs.

16.35 St John's Hospital is one of the finest 15th century brick built buildings in the country, and was located just outside of the City Gate (known as Culstubble Gate). There is an 18th century commemorative plaque on the building.



Picture 16.13 Grand entrances along St John Street

16.36 Of the buildings on the eastern side of St John Street some date back to the mid-19th century, with red brick façades and they are 3 storeys in height. Some are older, dating to the 17th century and have been refronted in later years.

16.37 The buildings on the west side of St John Street are almost all listed and include a Grade I and two Grade II* listed buildings. With the exception of the Hospital of St John these are all Classical Georgian in style.

Opportunities and Constraints

16.38 For many visitors travelling by car or by foot, St John Street represents an introduction to the city centre. This means that features in the public realm, such as signage, need to be very carefully considered. The signage on number 2 Bore Street on the corner with St John Street is out of character and makes this property a landmark for the wrong reasons. The replacement of this signage with more traditional signage would improve the appearance of this part of the conservation area.



Picture 16.14 Number 2 Bore Street.

16.39 There is a need to co-ordinate the paving in this area and to carry out an audit of street furniture and signage to ensure that they do not detract from the conservation area and from the setting of a number of important listed buildings. This would include in particular the speed camera warning signs, the pedestrian refuge near to St John's Hospital and the warning sign for the railway bridge outside the Council offices.

16.40 The Friary development will impact on this character area, in particular in terms of new traffic management arrangements and also in terms of the public realm. It must be ensured that any resultant works are carried out sympathetically.

16.41 There are opportunities within the Friary redevelopment scheme to improve the setting of St John's Hospital.

Boundary Changes

16.42 There are no proposed boundary changes within this character area.

Character Area 11: City Core

Summary

16.43 The City Core Character Area is, as the name suggests, the commercial core of the city and is situated in the centre of the conservation area, to the south-east of the Cathedral. The character area includes Market Street, Bore Street, Dam Street, Conduit Street and Breadmarket Street.

16.44 The principle character of the area is derived from the grid layout of streets, little changed from the 12th century and focused on the Market Place; the consistent, unbroken building line; and the uniform scale and massing of the buildings. It is further derived from the many variations of design of the buildings, including a wonderful variety of shop fronts.

City Morphology, Archaeology and History

16.45 This area is one of the most attractive and vibrant in the city and the streets which lead into the Market Place are some of the most traditional in the city.

16.46 Bore Street, originally Bord Street which refers to the boards or tables used in the markets, is the widest of Lichfield's central streets and contains many fine buildings. It is thought that the width of the road was intended to make it the principle market street although the market has since gravitated to the Market Place.

16.47 Market Street was formerly known as Saddler's Street and has been a thriving trading area for many centuries. It retains a good mix of buildings with examples from the 16th century to the present.

16.48 Dam Street clearly refers to the dam formed at the end of Minster Pool and the siting of a causeway here. A mill possibly of Saxon origin, stood near to the site of number 36 Dam Street. Until relatively recently Dam Street was predominantly residential, with only a handful of shops of 19th century date. They provided a passage for traders and in the case of the archaic Dam Street a connection to Minster Pool, where by the early 18th century hawkers were setting up stalls on the waste ground south of Minster Pool to avoid market tolls. The market itself has been in existence in Lichfield since 1153 when King Stephen granted the Bishop a Sunday market in the city centre. The site is the transitional link between the cathedral and the rest of the city centre. The area today is characterised by small specialist shops, bars and cafés and as a consequence the area is quite vibrant with vehicular traffic limited on several streets.

16.49 There are a number of alleyways in and around the city core which form important pedestrian routes linking streets and car parks.

Landmark and Views

16.50 The principle landmark within the character area is St Mary's Church with its high spire. St Mary's sits within the Market Place which is a focal point.



CHARACTER AREA 11 : CORE : VIEWS AND VISTAS



Picture 16.15 Character Area 11:Core:Views and Vistas

16.51 Almost all the views looking from within the character area are characterised by a strong built line terminating with either a built edge or a softer, tree canopy edge. Looking north from Conduit Street up Dam Street the view channelled along the built line and is terminated by the great bulk of the Cathedral, this is softened by the greenery provided by tree cover around Minster Pool.



Picture 16.16 View along central streets



Picture 16.17 Market Square

Key Building Groups

16.52 There is a wide span of building ages and styles within the area almost all of which are a very high quality. There are the timber-framed buildings along Bore Street and Dam Street, there are the later brick built buildings from the early 18th to late 19th century. There are also the stone public buildings of the Guildhall and St Mary's. Some of the brick fronted or rendered buildings that appear to be Georgian in style actually disguise an earlier timber-framed building.

16.53 There are also some 20th century buildings. These do not however impose on the quality and character of the street scene to a great extent as there is such architectural quality and a good mix of building types in these areas.



Current Uses

16.54 The area is an important part of the city's shopping provision with an impressive range of specialist shops together with chain shops, pubs, bars, cafes and various bank and office uses. The Guildhall is now used as an exhibition space and a meeting point and also holds book fairs, weddings and city council meetings, complementing the range of uses within the area.

Townscape Elements

16.55 The impact of the Market Place and its contribution to the character of the area is very significant. Despite some of the buildings fronting the Market Place being relatively new or significantly altered they are integral to the character of it as it is the inter-relationship between the buildings and spaces, in particular the scale of the spaces and the buildings that creates such a feeling of this being the hub of the commercial city.

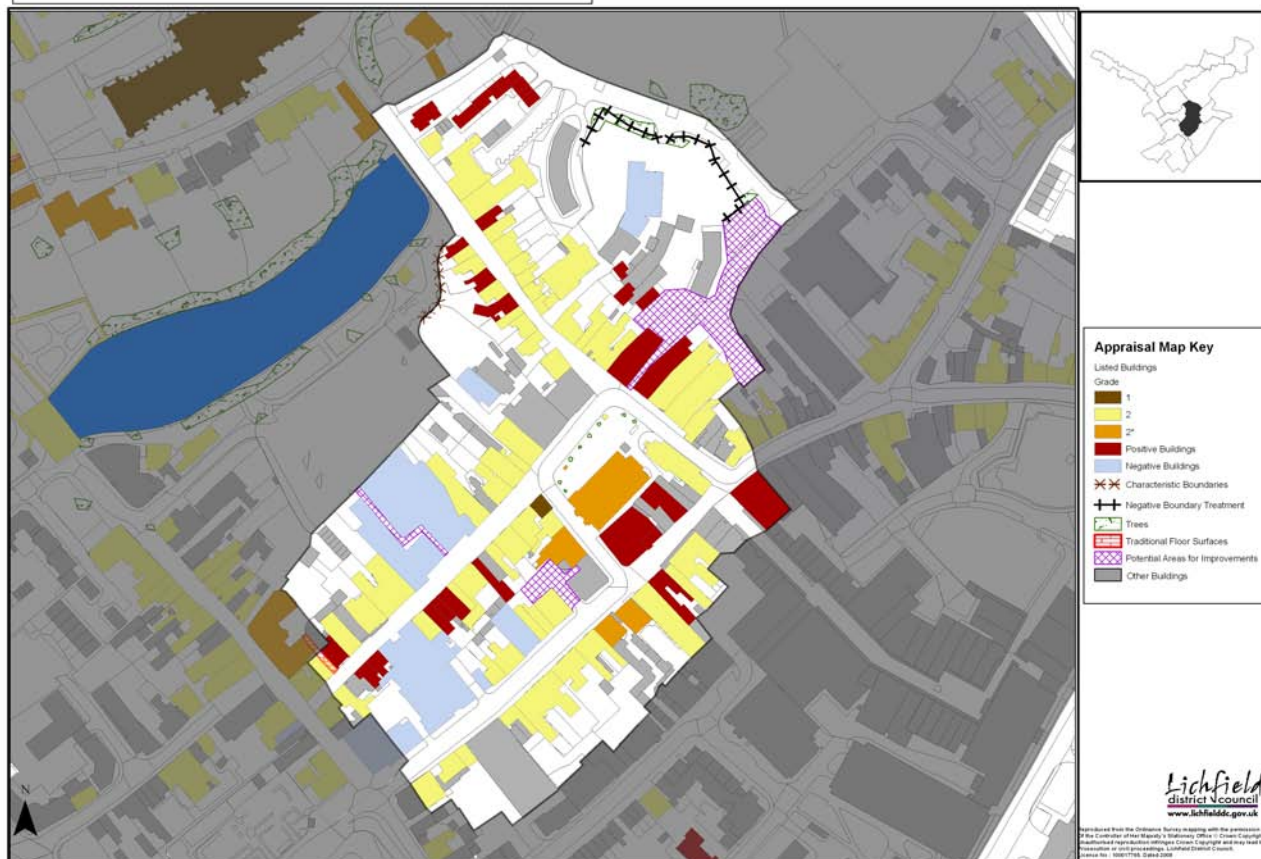
16.56 Part of the area has recently been re-paved and this has greatly enhanced its appearance. However, this has also made some of the surrounding areas of paving seem tired and in need of some maintenance and/or replacement. It is no longer considered appropriate to have wall to wall block paving in such a historic setting so a complete re-paving should be considered.

16.57 The city core is relatively free of street clutter and the mounting of street lights on the buildings is beneficial in this respect in that the lighting is very discreet. This should be an important consideration in any future street lighting upgrades.

16.58 The topography of the area is flat.

16.59 There are a number of individual trees that contribute to the character of the area by complementing and softening the otherwise solid building lines.

CHARACTER AREA 11 : CORE : TOWNSCAPE QUALITIES



Picture 16.18 Character Area 11 - Core - Townscape Qualities

Building Types and Details

16.60 This area contains some of the best vernacular buildings in Lichfield with some exceptionally high standards of timber-framed structures. Dr Johnson's Birthplace Museum is the birthplace of Samuel Johnson, which is a Queen Anne town house. It is an excellent example of a building in the transitional style merging timber framing and brick. The 16th-18th century Guildhall originates as the Hall of the ancient trade and religious guild of St Mary and St John the Baptist and later serving the corporation, incorporates the former city prison. "The Tudor of Lichfield," a richly ornate timber framed house dated 1510, although probably late 16th century, with a large range of outbuildings alongside Tudor Row. Donegal House is one of the best early 18th century town houses in the country, the three latter structures occur side by side on Bore Street and their architectural diversity occurring in such close proximity is spectacular.

16.61 The importance of the streets for retail and commercial activities during the 19th century and early part of the 20th century saw alterations to shop fronts. A greater sense of architectural diversity came to Lichfield in this period. Number 4,6 and 8 Tamworth Street are an excellent example of a mock Tudor façade of 1908; influenced by the "Arts and Crafts" movement.



16.62 The use of stone is restricted to some prestigious buildings such as the Guildhall and St Mary's Church. The Church of St Mary is on the site of the medieval guild church, rebuilt in the 18th Century with a steeple replacing a tower in 1853. The remainder of the church was rebuilt in 1868-70.

16.63 Timber-framed structures of the medieval city occur in this area, 'The Tudor of Lichfield,' Numbers 38-44 Bore Street are a row of late 16th or early 17th century timber-framed houses. In addition several structures on Dam Street and Quonians Lane are timber framed or part timber framed. Number 18 Causeway House of Dam Street has obtained heavy restorations as a late 16th century timber framed house.

16.64 There are some occasional rendered structures within the city centre such as Number 5 Dam Street although they do not detract from the overall quality of the area.



Picture 16.19 Good examples of shopfronts

16.65 Several of the commercial properties have good, mostly 19th century shop fronts with some earlier examples surviving on Dam Street for example.

Opportunities and Constraints

16.66 The recently completed paving scheme has set the standard for future phases. The quality but minimal treatment allows city centre activities to develop and thrive. As and when resources permit the Council will consider further high quality public realm enhancement schemes.

16.67 Areas of back land may come forward for redevelopment and, where appropriate, the Council will work closely with landowners and partners to draw up development briefs. Where proposals seek to fit in and assimilate with the patters and grain of the city core and where views of landmarks and monuments are retained these have the potential to enhance the character of the area.

16.68 When the opportunity arises the 1960's development on the corner of Bird Street and Bore Street would benefit from enhancement. Currently it does not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Picture 16.20 1960's development on the corner of Bird Street and Bore Street

Boundary Changes

16.69 There are no proposed boundary changes within this character area.

Character Area 12: Tamworth Street & Lombard Street

Summary

16.70 The character area of Tamworth Street and Lombard Street is situated to the east of the city core. The area covers most of the length of Tamworth Street and Lombard Street and includes sections of Greenhill, George Lane and Cross Keys.

16.71 This character area marks the edge of the extent of the medieval city with plaques marking the site of two of the medieval city gates. Today the area still represents the edge of city core with some residential uses mixed in with the commercial retail and offices uses. The roads with its almost continuous building line channels visitors and views into and out of the city core.



City Morphology, Archaeology and History

16.72 As mentioned above the medieval city boundary ran through this area and its limits are now marked by two plaques, one on the wall of the Lee Garden Chinese Restaurant on the corner of Tamworth Street and Gresley Row and the other on the side of number 39 Lombard Street marking the sites of Tamworth Gate and Stowe Gate respectively. It is also very likely that there would be archaeological evidence remaining of this medieval boundary.

16.73 The western section of Tamworth Street is a mixture of 2 and 3 storey buildings, with the 3 storey properties being most prominent towards the western end of the street. At the eastern end of the character area, the most notable characteristic is the sweep of Tamworth Street, initially forming a fine group of buildings in the vicinity of the former Regal Cinema (formerly occupied by Kwik Save), and then channelling into the gentle curve of the road. The curve in the road is bordered by tall flat fronted properties towards the western end, creating a sense of being drawn into the centre of the medieval city towards the bottom of the street. The western end is very much part of the town centre in layout and atmosphere, but the eastern end, separated by building gaps and the sweep of the road, has much more of a distinctly residential feel.

16.74 The open area at the junction of Tamworth Street and Lombard Street was the former location of a cross known as Stone Cross in the 13th century, and later of the Stone Cross Conduit; a source of water for local people marked by an ornate conduit head.

16.75 During the twentieth century there has been some demolition and some new development within the character area, this has had relatively little impact except along Greenhill where, in the mid-20th century there was substantial demolition prior to the construction of Birmingham Road.

Landmark and Views

16.76 There are no substantial landmarks within the character area that are visible from other parts of the city although the spires of St Michaels, St Mary's and Lichfield Cathedral are all visible from certain vantage points within the area. The predominant views are narrow views down the streets, framed by the solid building line. These either look toward the core of the city where a busy and pedestrian dominated view is seen or look outwards from the city where the views are dominated by roads and vehicular traffic. The most important vantage points are the road junctions which are the most open spaces within this character area.



Picture 16.21 View along Tamworth Street from the junction with Lombard Street with the former Regal Cinema on the right



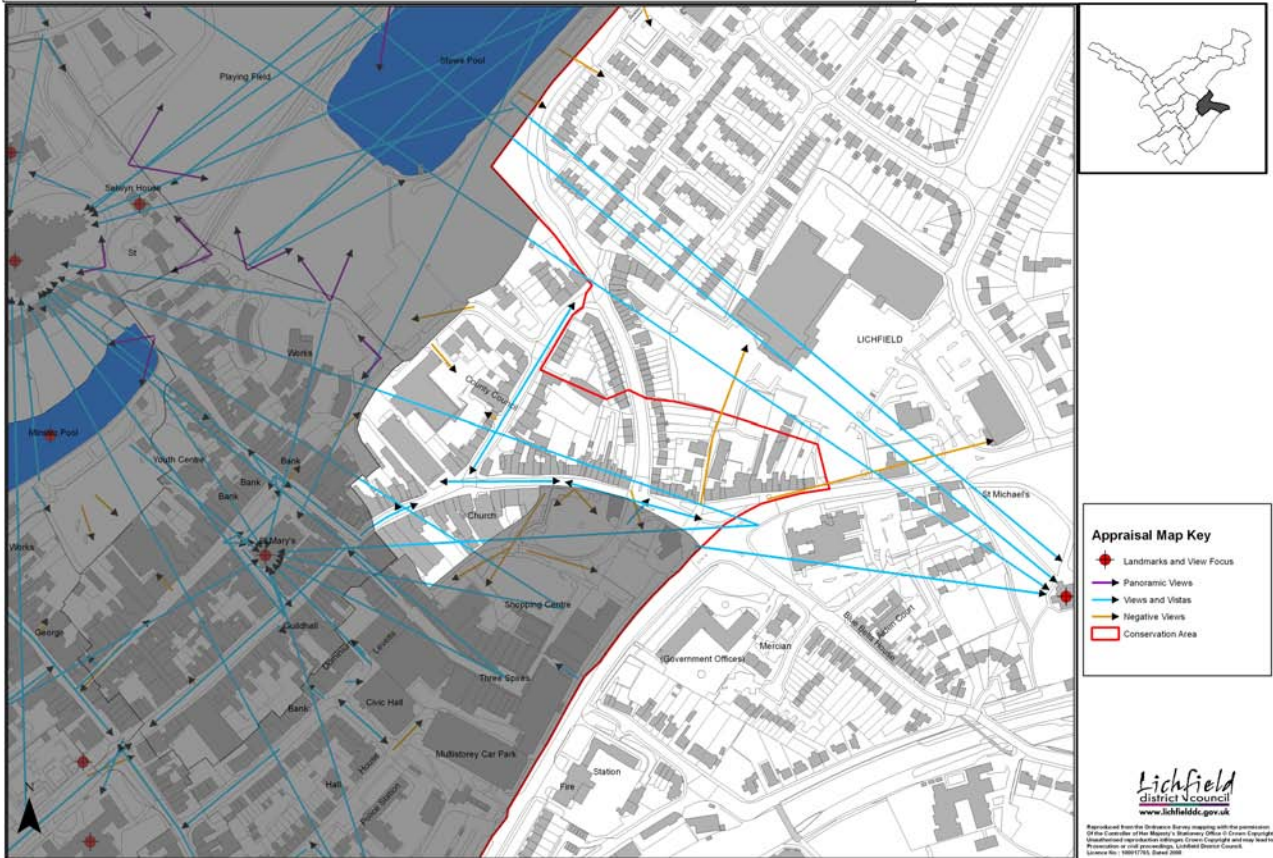
Picture 16.22 View from junction with Greenhill and Birmingham Road showing slope into city centre and Cathedral spires in the distance



Picture 16.23 View up Tamworth Street

16.77 Important buildings within the area which provide local landmarks include the former Regal Cinema and the Lichfield Methodist Church both on Tamworth Street.

CHARACTER AREA 12: TAMWORTH STREET/LOMBARD STREET: VIEWS AND VISTAS



Picture 16.24 Tamworth Street and Lombard Street Character Area - Map of Views and Vistas

Key Building Groups

16.78 The buildings within this character area date from the 15th century onwards of which there are a number of easily identifiable building groups. Throughout the character area but particularly along Lombard Street and the east end of Tamworth Street many of the two storey buildings, have later, often Georgian facades, either of brick or render, which conceal earlier timber framing.



Picture 16.25 Timber framed buildings along Lombard Street with later brick and render facades

16.79 There are also a number of Georgian houses, mostly now in different uses, many of which are three storey in a mixture of render and red brick. Some of these are of very fine quality in terms of architecture and retain many of their classical Georgian features.



Picture 16.26 Georgian houses, now offices along Lombard Street

16.80 There is a further group of properties which consist of 19th century houses, again now in various uses. These are more domestic in style and scale often with a more cottage style appearance.

16.81 Notable exceptions to these predominant groups are, amongst other, Boots the Chemist dating from 1908 and a fine example of mock Tudor style influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, the 1930's former Regal Cinema and the Gothic style Methodist Church dating to the 1890's amongst others.



Picture 16.27 Boots the Chemist in Mock Tudor Style and the Former Regal Cinema in Art Deco Style

Current Uses

16.82 The location of this character area between the city centre and the city outskirts has a mixture of commercial and a more residential area in Greenhill.

Townscape Elements

16.83 The topography of the area slopes down away from the junction at Greenhill, it slopes down Tamworth Street towards the city core and down George Lane towards Cross Keys.

16.84 The contribution that natural elements make to the character of this area is limited in comparison to other character areas. There is, however, a small area of open space at the junction of Tamworth Street and Church Street, with trees shielding the buildings from the large road junction, and the building line retaining a channelling effect towards Tamworth Street and towards the town centre. Within this area of open space is the Serjeantson Fountain which is a notable feature within the public realm. It is the a memorial fountain of 1881 to the Rev. J.J.Serjeantson of St Michaels Church and its setting should be considered in any highways or public realm improvements.

16.85 There are a number of trees along Lombard Street, mostly in small front gardens and this greatly enhances the residential feel of the area despite the fact that it is only a small minority of buildings in residential use.



16.86 The public realm is very varied in its quality. The western end of Tamworth Street, up to the junction with Lombard Street has benefited from a recent very high quality paving scheme. The quality of the paving and general public realm along Lombard Street is relatively good, however, further up Tamworth Street, the public realm is relatively poor and the eastern end of Tamworth Street and Greenhill would certainly be enhanced by public realm improvements.



Picture 16.28 The Serjeantson Fountain on the corner of Greenhill and Birmingham Road

16.87 Most of the properties along Tamworth Street and Greenhill are built to the back of pavement so there are no boundary treatments to note for these properties. There are a number of cottage like properties along the east side of Lombard Street with attractive brick boundary walls. And further up Lombard Street on the west side there is a Grade II listed boundary wall at the front of Lombard Gardens.



Picture 16.29 Grade II listed boundary wall on Lombard Street

CHARACTER AREA 12: TAMWORTH STREET/LOMBARD STREET: TOWNSCAPE QUALITIES



Picture 16.30 Tamworth Street and Lombard Street Character Area - Map of Townscape Qualities

Building Types and Details

16.88 Lombard Street is still partially residential, and this atmosphere is reflected in the styles of most of the buildings. It has a mix of buildings two and three storeys in height, with the two storey buildings generally in the western half of the street. There is an even mix of red brick and rendered properties with clay tile roofs and brick chimneys. On the north side of Lombard Street there are some fine Georgian buildings; notably numbers 21, 35, 37 and 39. Lombard Gardens are private houses and gardens discreetly sheltered behind the high brick wall fronting Lombard Street. The south side of the street has a row of cottages and a fine townhouse, number 14, all set back behind low brick walls and raised up behind small front gardens. On the south side numbers 1-11 (odd) encase elements of timber-framed buildings, only evident with the visible close studding on part of this row.



Picture 16.31 View along Lombard Street showing numbers 12-14 with the Methodist Church in the background

16.89 The eastern end of Tamworth Street including Greenhill and Church Street retain an almost continuous run of two and three storey properties, mostly rendered with dormer windows. They mainly date from the 17th and 18th century and form an attractive and prominent sweep of buildings neatly staggered down the slope of the street. The careful use of colour-wash gives points of interest throughout the area and offers a welcome change from subdued red brick and tiled buildings. This is particularly noticeable in the view from Church Street junction down towards Tamworth Street and the town centre, where the use of white or cream-wash render at focal points highlights the attractive grouping of the shops and cottages, in a variety of styles stepping down the hill and around the curve of the street.

16.90 The south side of Tamworth Street offers a broad variety of building styles with the mock Tudor façade of Boots the Chemist and the Victorian Gothic style of the The Oak Public House and the Methodist Church.

Opportunities and Constraints

16.91 The recently completed new paving scheme has greatly enhanced the conservation area, although it only includes part of this character area. As and when resources permit the Council will seek to carry out further improvements to the public realm to include improvements to the paving and to street furniture.

16.92 The Council will, through its existing policy framework, encourage the re-use of vacant historic buildings, in particular the former Regal Cinema on Tamworth Street.

16.93 The forecourt of the Regal cinema would benefit from re-paving and the removal of the existing parking as part of a scheme to bring it back into use.

16.94 It is considered that there are residential properties within this character area that may benefit from an Article 4 directive. The Council will give further consideration to this and will carry out further consultation with the relevant property owners.

16.95 The heavy vehicular traffic along the roads within this part of the conservation area is a significant constraint to the enhancement of the conservation area. The Council will work with colleagues in Staffordshire County Council Highways Department to investigate potential ways to improve junction areas and to minimise the impact of the traffic on the conservation area. The Council will also work with colleagues in the Police and in Staffordshire County Council Highways Department to enforce existing traffic restrictions and parking restrictions.

16.96 The adopted local plan shows potential city centre redevelopment sites extending out onto Tamworth Street through redevelopment incorporating Backcester Lane surface car park, the explanatory text refers to the large gap in the street frontage and potential here to improve the street scene. Where appropriate, the Council will work closely with landowners and partners to draw up development briefs. Where proposals seek to integrate and assimilate with the patterns and grain of the city core and where views of landmarks and monuments are retained these have the potential to enhance the character of the area.

16.97 Where possible the introduction of additional tree planting in the public realm will be sought. Besides visual enhancement tree planting will increase the provision of shade and cooling. This will become increasingly important for users of the built commercial area as the affects of climate change increase.

Boundary Changes

16.98 It is proposed to remove a section of this character area from the conservation area. This is being proposed as the properties date to the late 20th century and do not possess a special character or appearance that it is desirable to preserve. It is proposed to remove the Kingdom Hall off Lombard Street and numbers 11-21 and 8-22 inclusive George Lane from the conservation area. The proposed amended boundary is marked on the map of the character area.

Character Area 13: Birmingham Road

Summary

16.99 The Birmingham Road character area is located to the south-east of the City core and forms the boundary of this side of the Conservation Area. The character area includes the frontage to Birmingham Road from St Johns Street to the junction with Greenhill and includes Frog Lane, Wade Street and Bakers Lane.



16.100 The character of this area is varied, it includes part of the medieval street plan and archaeological digs have confirmed the location of the historic city ditch but much of the area currently consists of large municipal buildings and spaces constructed in the 1960's and 1970's and smaller buildings constructed in the late twentieth century.

16.101 There are currently proposals for a major, mixed use development scheme within this character area that will bring a new injection of retail and leisure uses along with residential and commercial uses and new public spaces.

City Morphology, Archaeology and History

16.102 Wade Street, Frog Lane and Bakers Lane all form part of the original medieval street pattern as laid out in the 12th Century, while Gresley Row appears to follow the original line of the Castle Ditch. John Speed's plan of Lichfield, dated 1610, shows these streets only partly developed and these evidently formed the 'backstreet' areas of the City.

16.103 The area now contains relatively few buildings of historical or architectural importance. It does however contain much important archaeology including the remains of the medieval city boundary known as 'Castle Ditch'. This marked the southern edge of the medieval boundary and was a ditch cut out by Bishop Roger de Clinton. The name of 'castle ditch' led to the myth of Lichfield having a castle in this part of the City.

16.104 This section of the conservation area is home to many modern developments and these are set to undergo changes over the next few years. The new development will provide a fresh outlook for the area and provide regeneration to this part of the city, which is regarded as the 'backstreet' area and often not seen as included in the core of the city. Due to the nature of this area there are relatively few buildings of special character compared to other sites within the city. The buildings within this part of the conservation area as a whole do not have the same wealth of architecture of many of the other focal points of the conservation area within Lichfield, and there is a higher volume of more modern development towards the retail units and the Garrick theatre. However the area still has character and once the regeneration of the Birmingham Road site has taken place there will be many more focal points and buildings of interest within the site. Whilst the character of the buildings will focus around a more modern approach to development they will provide a contrast to the historic city centre and create a clean, contemporary feel to the area.

Landmark and Views

16.105 Many of the views within the character area are dominated by the twentieth century substantial municipal and commercial buildings. In between the larger buildings view of Lichfield Cathedral and St Mary's Church spires can be glimpsed. These glimpsed views are an important part of the character as they provide a visual link to the historic core of the city.

16.106 The landmarks within the character area are not all positive landmarks, for example the unsightly police station, multi-storey car park and the rear of TJ Hughes are all highly visible from Birmingham Road, however, some local landmarks, such as the Garrick Theatre, while modern, have architectural merit and positively enhance the character of the area.

16.107 The Bald Buck Public House on the corner of Birmingham Road and Greenhill is situated on a very prominent site which acts as a landmark for traffic and pedestrians approaching the city from the north and east. While the building itself dates from the 1930's and has some limited architectural merit, the buildings and its immediate surroundings would benefit from some enhancement. This site is included in the City centre Strategy 2003, as part of a wider area that could be redeveloped.

16.108 Vehicular traffic dominates much of this area, this includes the provision of service areas and the view down Frog Lane is terminated by one such service area which along with the entrance to the multi-storey car park provides a very poor visual stop to the road. The service area and car park will both be removed as part of the Friarsgate development although there will still be a service area in this location.

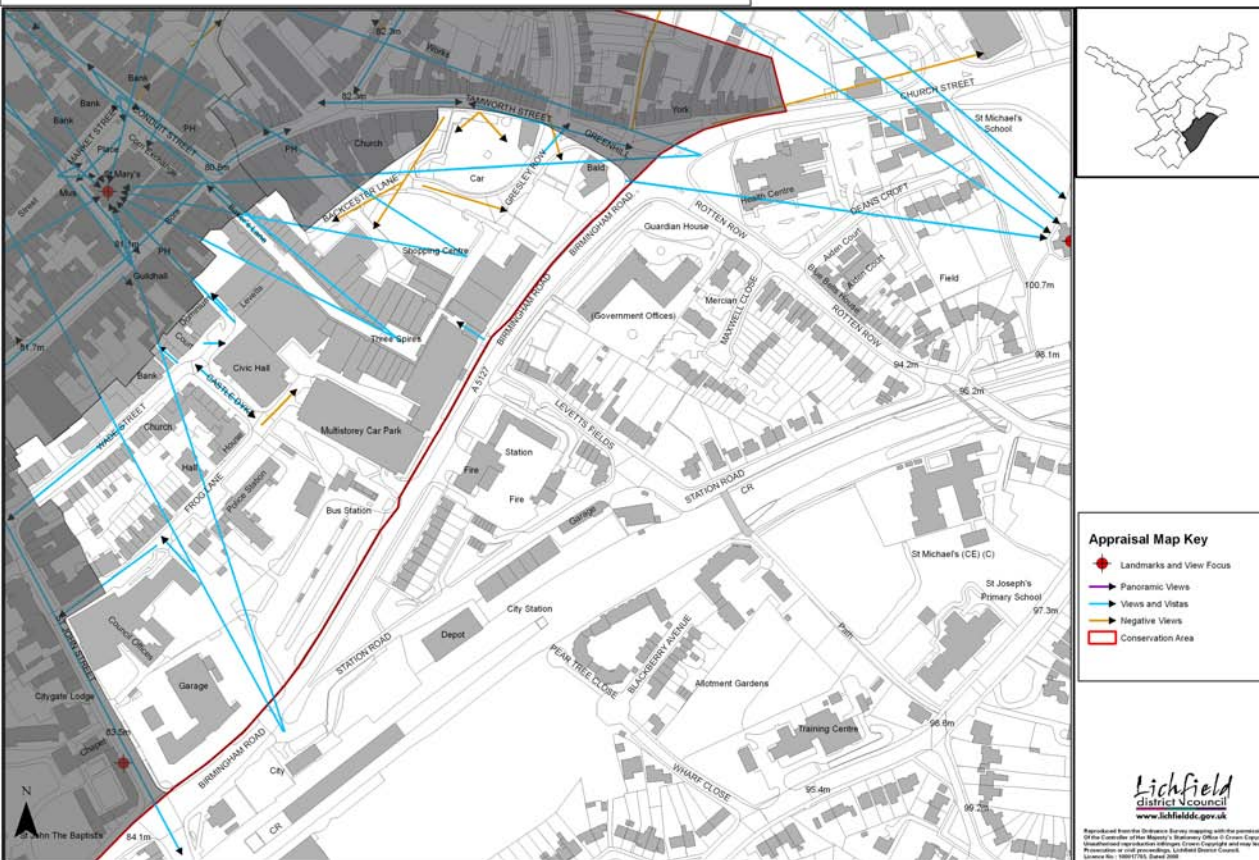


Picture 16.32 View down Wade Street with 20 St John Street in the distance



Picture 16.33 View from Birmingham Road across extensive car parking

CHARACTER AREA 13: BIRMINGHAM ROAD: VIEWS AND VISTAS



Picture 16.34 Birmingham Road Character Area - Map of Views and Vistas

Key Building Groups

16.109 This character area has only three listed buildings, the United Reformed Church on Wade Street, which was built as a congregational chapel in 1812 in a simple classical style, typical of non-conformist buildings, number 39 St John Street and number 45 St John Street both of which form part of Lichfield District Council offices. There are also a few buildings that are unlisted, but of historic or architectural interest. These buildings include the Church Hall which is an early twentieth century red brick hall and a row of eight turn of the century terraced houses on Frog Lane.

16.110 The area also includes a number of substantial late twentieth century buildings from the 1960's multi-storey car park and police station, the Three Spires Shopping Centre that was constructed in the 1960's and refurbished in the 1990's, the 1970's extension to the Council Offices, and the Garrick Theatre which opened in 2003.

16.111 Wade Street consists mainly of late twentieth century commercial and residential buildings that broadly follow the historic building line.

16.112 The Three Spires shopping centre represents a large section of this character area. There is a very distinct change in character as you enter the precinct, in particular as you enter it from Wade Street and also from Bore Street. The precinct is a similar width to many of the historic streets within the city and the buildings are of a similar height and massing but it is distinctly modern. It is also a very vibrant and busy part of the city.



Picture 16.35 The Three Spires Shopping Centre

Current Uses

16.113 The area includes the bus station, police station, multi-storey car park, and the Garrick Theatre, as well as some residential buildings along Frog Lane and Wade Street. The site also includes retail units towards the north around Levetts Square and Bakers Lane.



Townscape Elements

16.114 The topography of the area is relatively flat although it is situated on a higher level than the Market Place and much of the historic core. There is a very slight gradient along Birmingham Road down from Greenhill to St John Street and a more significant raise in gradient at the top of the precinct of the Three Spires Shopping Centre. There is a significant fall away in levels as you walk along Backcester Lane.

16.115 Soft landscaping and trees are an important part of the existing character along Birmingham Road but less so elsewhere in the character area. Semi-mature trees and areas of planting serve to shield views of the bus station and multi-storey car park; they also soften the lines of some of the more substantial buildings.

16.116 The public realm within the area is fairly standard and would benefit from improvements. Some of the street furniture is co-ordinated in a dark green colour while other items are of a poorer quality and are poorly maintained.



Picture 16.36 Garrick Square, soon to be refurbished

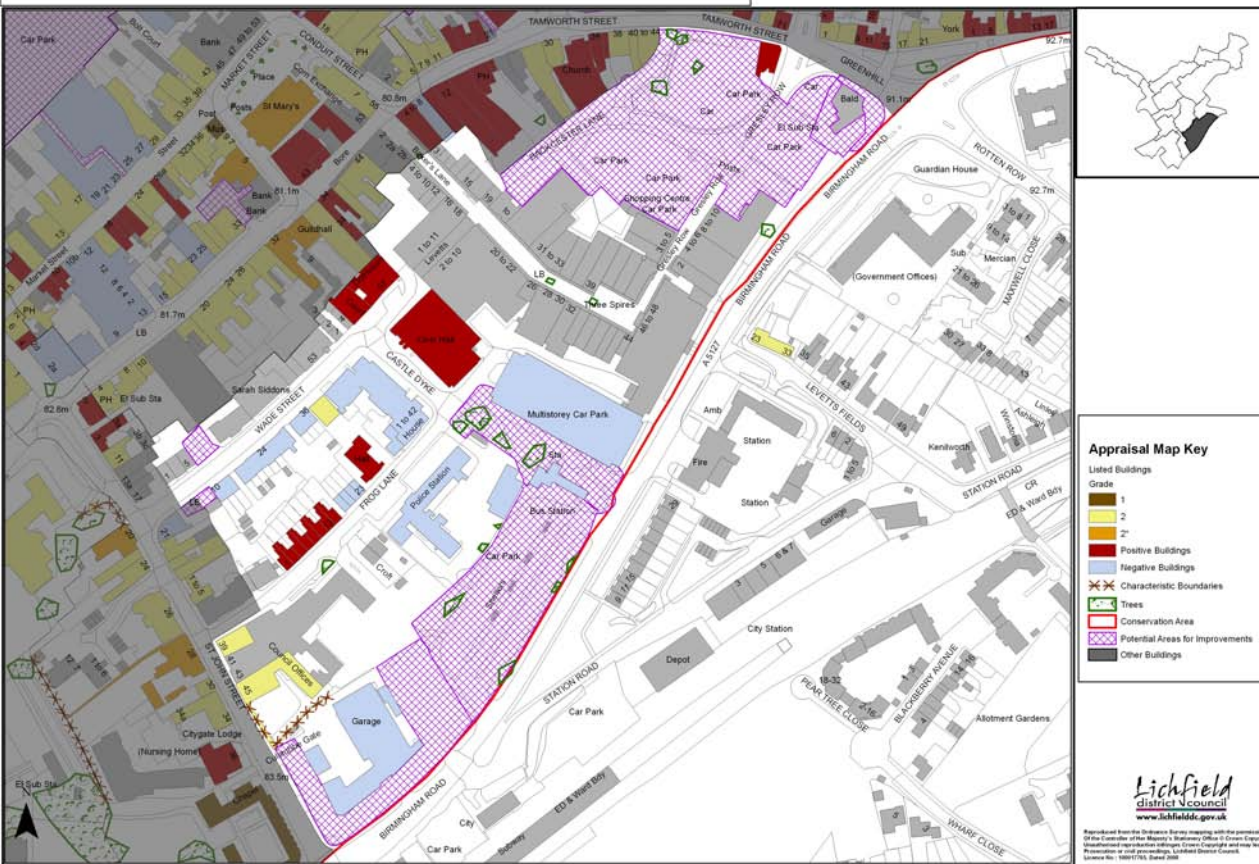
16.117 The area contains both pedestrianised sections and areas where vehicles have clearly been given priority. The use of extensive surface car parking and service and access areas is of great detriment to the character and appearance of the area. While there are a number of pedestrian routes through the area there are also areas where the requirements of vehicles dominates what would otherwise be a positive public space. As part of the Friarsgate scheme service areas will be contained underground and as such will have a lesser impact on the street scene.

16.118 Boundary treatments vary within the area, with many boundaries being poorly defined, in particular the boundary of the vehicle showroom on the corner of Birmingham Road and St John's Street and the area around the bus station. This area is being redeveloped as part of the Friarsgate scheme which will include more appropriate boundary treatments.



Picture 16.37 Birmingham Road showing lack of active frontages

CHARACTER AREA 13: BIRMINGHAM ROAD: TOWNSCAPE QUALITIES



Picture 16.38 Birmingham Road Character Area - Map of Townscape Quality

Building Types and Details

16.119 The predominant building material throughout the character area for buildings of all ages and types is red brick.

16.120 The Grammar School, now part of the District Council Offices, is an outstanding late Stuart brick building, built only 22 years after the restoration. Founded in 1495, the school had numerous pupils including two of Lichfield's most famous sons David Garrick (1717-1779) and Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

16.121 The Lichfield District Council Offices contain historical parts with number 39 comprising of a house built around 1820, which was formerly part of the Lord Nelson Inn. Number 45 of the Lichfield District Council Offices and attached wall and gates were originally the schoolmasters and borders house of 1682, with an 18th century rear wing and attached school room (now the council chamber), and a boundary wall of 1849.

Opportunities and Constraints

16.122 This character area is regarded as including the 'back street' area of the city and is outside the core site of historic importance, despite encapsulating the medieval city boundary of 'Castle Ditch'. Modern development within the site should not detract from the character of the conservation area as a whole.

16.123 There are proposals for a major redevelopment within this character area which will consist of the Friarsgate retail led mixed use development.

16.124 Extensive areas of surface car parking detract from and dissolve this edge of the city centre. The Council will work with development partners in drawing up development briefs for any redevelopment proposals.

16.125 It is proposed to carry out public realm improvements within Garrick Square and these are due for completion soon. However, the street scene of Wade Street, Castle dyke and Frog Lane would also benefit from improvement as in parts the street lighting, footways and carriageways are in a poor condition.

16.126 There is an existing Article 4 directive on Mousley Terrace in Frog Street. It is not considered that there are any other properties within the character area suitable for such a directive.

16.127 The introduction of street trees along the highway verges and public realm would enhance the approaches into the city.

16.128 In Bakers Lane, the 1990's refurbishment only tackled a certain number of shop units, a number of others still retain their 1960's facades at first floor level. In any future refurbishment the opportunity should be taken to redevelop or re-front these units to fit in better with the rest of the precinct.



Picture 16.39 Mousley Terrace, Frog Lane

Boundary Changes

16.129 There are no proposed boundary changes within this character area.

Character Area 14: Beacon Street (south)

Summary

16.130 The Beacon Street (south) Character Area lies to the north-west of the city core on the west side of the conservation area.

16.131 The character area includes the southern section of Beacon Street from the junction of Beaconfields and Anson Avenue, south past the entrance to the Cathedral Close, where Beacon Street becomes Bird Street and includes a small section of Bird Street forming its southern boundary with the Museum Gardens.

16.132 The principle character of the area is derived from the Georgian townhouses which line both sides of the road. The buildings generally become larger and of more high status the closer they are to the city centre.

City Morphology, Archaeology and History

16.133 It is believed that the Georgians changed the name to Beacon Street from Bacon Street, presumably to raise the status of the area, alternatively it may have been named after the Beacon Hill, the name of the high ground referred to during the English Civil War.

16.134 The west side of Beacon Street was undeveloped until the late 18th century when the existing red brick boundary wall was built to form the boundary of the Beacon Place estate. This large Georgian house was demolished in the 1960's.

16.135 Number 26 was originally a toll house for the bridge further down Bird Street which was sited here to avoid people attempting to avoid the toll by following the long route via Gaia lane and Stowe Street into the town.

16.136 Milley's hospital is the oldest building in the area dating to 1504, it was built by Dr Thomas Milley as an almshouse for women. It has remarkably survived three Civil War sieges between enemy lines and a serious fire of 1649, which destroyed many properties lower down in the southern end of Beacon Street.

Landmark and Views

16.137 There are a number of prominent buildings within the area. Possibly the most visually prominent is the former Library and Art Gallery which is situated adjacent to the Museum Gardens, it acts as a local landmark, particularly when travelling northwards. The entrance to The Close is also very important and provides a view into The Close and to the Cathedral.



Picture 16.40 The former Library and Art Gallery

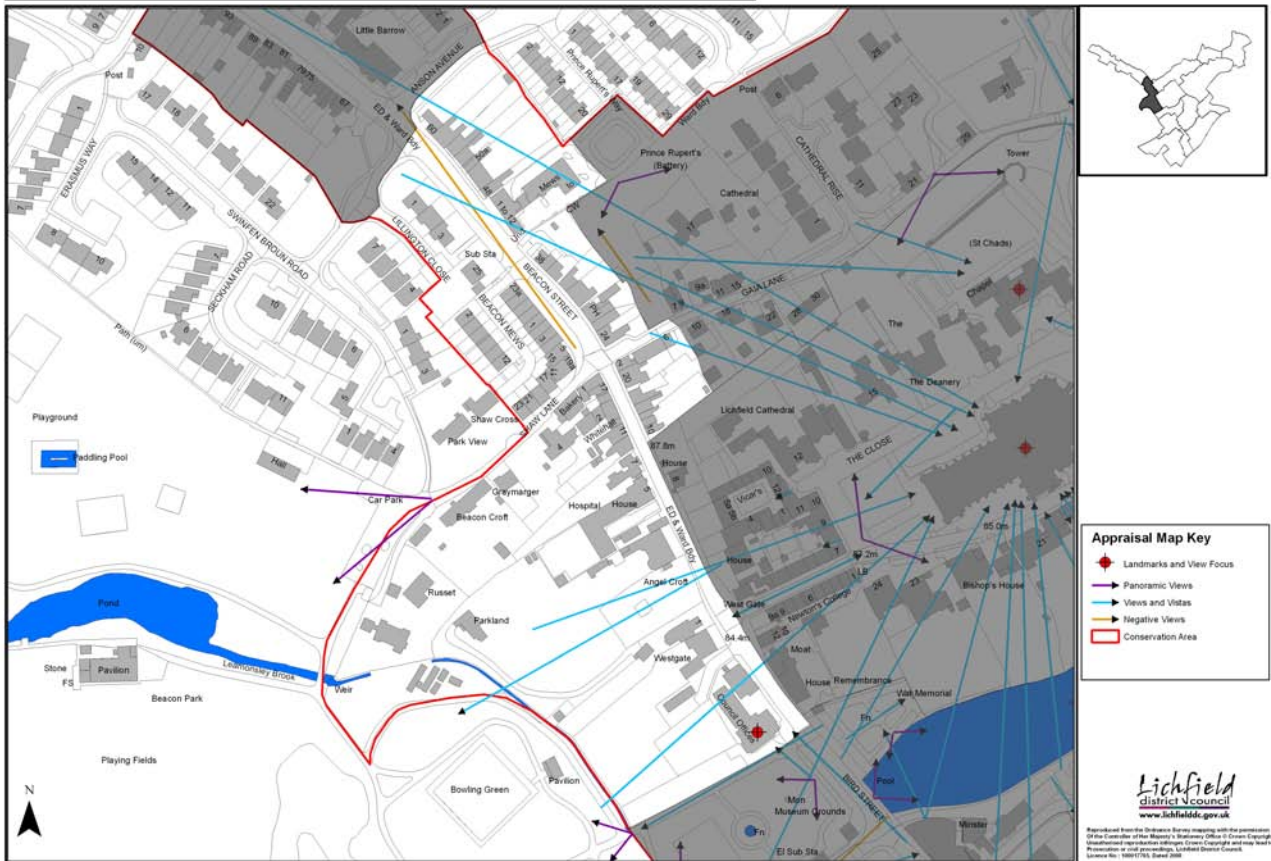
16.138 Along Beacon Street view to the north and south are framed by buildings but the views to the south are softened by the tree canopies around the Museum Gardens and Memorial Gardens.



Picture 16.41 View north up Beacon Street

16.139 As important as the views of the street frontages are the views into the area from the rear of the properties. There are some superb views from Beacon Park through this character area to the Cathedral.

CHARACTER AREA 14: BEACON STREET SOUTH: VIEWS AND VISTAS



Picture 16.42 Beacon Street South Character Area - Map of Views and Vistas

Key Building Groups

16.140 The character of the area is not uniform throughout, the houses are larger, and more varied in scale and plot width to the south of the area and this becomes more uniform further northwards with a more consistent plot width and scale and design of properties which are principally townhouses.

16.141 The two principle groups of residential buildings are the mid-Georgian houses and the late Georgian to early Victorian houses. Of the non-residential buildings these are mainly mid-Victorian and very ornate.

16.142 There are nineteen listed structures in the character area, including Darwin House, a grade I listed building of about 1758. It merits particular mention, built on the site of the former common hall of the vicar's choral, stands on the bank of the moat to the fortified close.

16.143 In addition there are numerous non-listed structures, which are still considered to have historic interest, such as The Old Bakery on Shaw Lane, a two storey red brick Victorian building.



Current Uses

16.144 There are a variety of uses within the area. Many of the properties are in residential use either as single dwellings or sub-divided into apartments. There is also commercial use in the form of offices, hotels, retail units and Dimble House is a school.

Townscape Elements

16.145 Natural elements provide a great deal of character to this area. These are mainly to the west of Beacon Street although there are some significant trees surrounding Dimble House on the east side. Most of the tree cover is found to the rear of the properties fronting Beacon Street and around the more recent developments off Shaw Lane. These trees can be seen from Beacon Street between the properties and provides an important part of the setting of these buildings and positively contribute towards the character of the area.

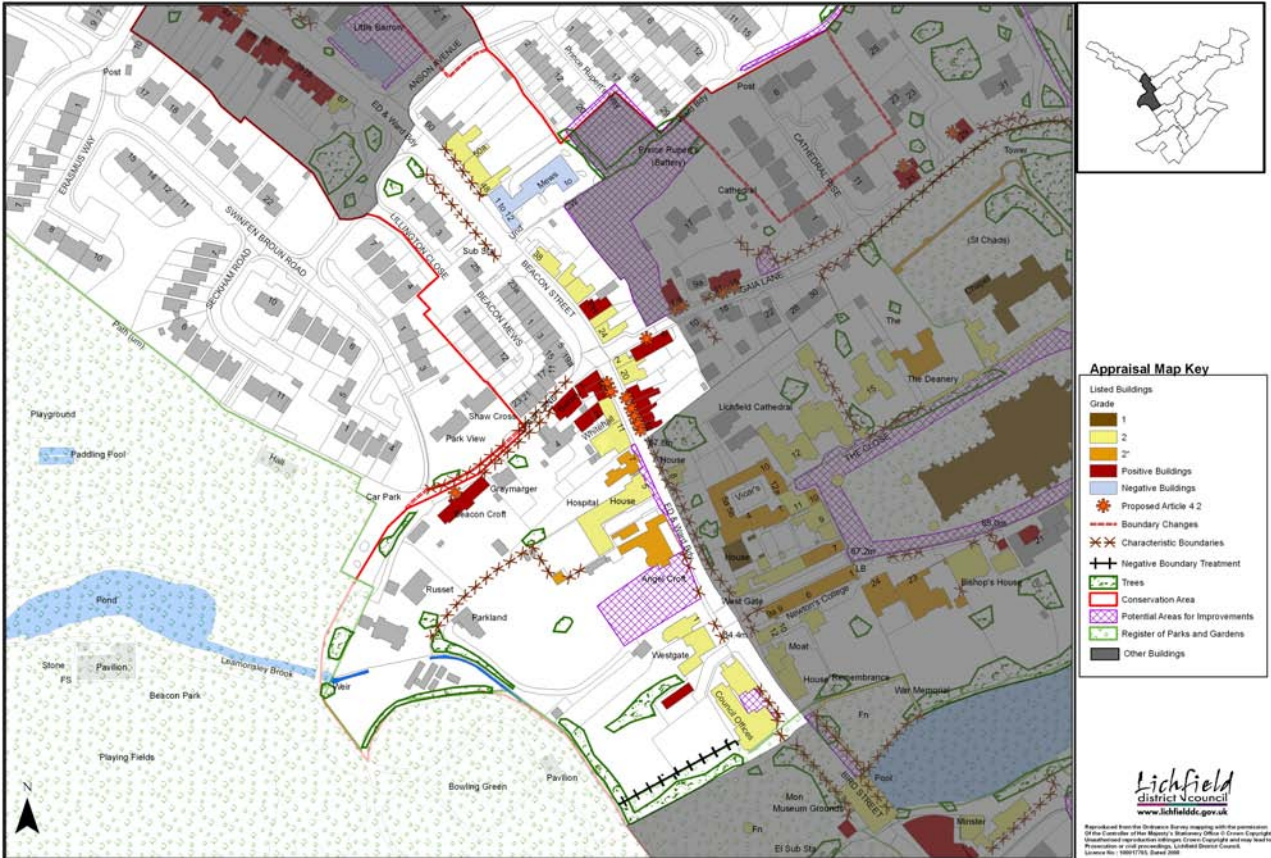
16.146 Beacon Street like other streets within the city is narrow but as it is not in the immediate centre, the building pattern is generally looser and the houses larger. The road narrows even more so as it drops down towards the junction with Gaia Lane and the greater height of the houses on the northeast side increases the sense of enclosure.



Picture 16.43 Front boundary wall and ornate wrought iron railings to the Angel Croft Hotel

16.147 This sense of enclosure is enhanced by the substantial boundary walls that run between the properties presenting a continuous built line. The boundary treatments within this area are of great important and form an integral part of the character of the area, in particular there are some notable examples of iron railings to a number of properties.

CHARACTER AREA 14: BEACON STREET SOUTH: TOWNSCAPE QUALITIES



Picture 16.44 Beacon Street South Character Area - Map of Townscape Qualities

Building Types and Details

16.148 The defining type of building within the area is the quintessential Georgian, classical style town house. These are principally red brick with clay tile roofs and brick chimneys, some properties are rendered. They have timber sash windows and pedimented doorcases and ornate fanlights.



Picture 16.45 Georgian townhouses on Bird Street

16.149 The late-Georgian to Victorian buildings mainly to the north of the character area are simpler in design and more humble in scale built of red brick and having a cottage like appearance.

16.150 The two mid-Victorian public buildings on Bird Street, the former Public Library and Art Gallery (1857) and the probate court (1856) are both red brick built with ashlar details and slate roofs.

16.151 As a whole the character is largely characterised by red brick frontages (with occasional stuccoed façade), red brick walls, or lengths of railings. Shaw Lane as a medieval lane extends this character, enclosed as it is by high red brick and stone walls.

Opportunities and Constraints

16.152 The re-introduction of street trees along the highway verges would enhance the approach into the city.

16.153 Any future traffic measures to manage traffic speeds and pedestrian safety should be carefully designed to ensure that they do not have a detrimental impact on the conservation area.

Boundary Changes

16.154 There are no boundary changes proposed within this character area.