
**CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

**TOWN CENTRE,
TAMWORTH**

On behalf of

**TAMWORTH BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

CgMs Ref: ND/GB/SW/7983

Date: June 2007

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1.0 Introduction and Planning Policy Context

- 1.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Such areas can then be designated as conservation areas.
- 1.2 The Act also states that local planning authorities should, from time to time, review their existing conservation areas and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas.
- 1.3 Essentially, the added planning controls that conservation area designation brings include controls over demolition, strengthened controls over minor development and the protection of trees. Within the Tamworth Local Plan (2001-2011, adopted July 2006), policies ENV22 and ENV23 concern conservation areas.
- 1.4 The appraisal defines the special interest of the Town Centre Conservation Area and includes proposals for enhancement of its character and appearance. The more clearly the special interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for development plan policies, development control decisions and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character of an area. A detailed survey of the area was carried out by staff of CgMs Ltd in February and March 2007.
- 1.5 It is intended that this guidance will be useful for residents, developers and the general public in understanding the significance of the area and will help to ensure its special interest and character can be preserved and enhanced for future generations. This document follows English Heritage's 2006 guidance on the production of conservation area appraisals and is intended to:
- Assist in defining what is of 'special' architectural or historic importance
 - Give recommendations on features and characteristics that should be protected

- Identify possible areas for future enhancement within the designated area
- Provide guidance on the form, style and location of future change and development within the designated area.

2.0 Overview of the Conservation Area

- 2.1 The set of plans in Appendix 2 aim to identify the elements which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and also illustrate recommendations for alterations to the conservation area boundary and for additional designations.
- 2.2 Plans 1a and 2a show the existing conservation area boundary, statutorily listed buildings (buildings identified by English Heritage as being of special architectural or historic interest), Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other buildings or structures of local note. Plans 1b and 2b show proposed amendments to the conservation area boundary, buildings recommended for inclusion on either the statutory or local list, significant views, important trees, important open spaces, walls or railings of note and 'enhancement' sites.
- 2.3 It should be noted that in order to show the plans in Appendix 2 at a reasonable scale, Plans 1a and 2a show only Zones 1 and 3-7 of the conservation area (i.e. everything except Zone 2, the Castle and Pleasure Grounds), while Plans 2a and 2b show only Zone 2. Designations and other features in Zone 2 on Plan 2b are not shown on Plan 1b where the plans overlap, and vice versa.
- 2.4 The local list consists of buildings that play a part in establishing the character of the area but have not yet been considered to be of sufficient importance to meet the current criteria for listing. However, as government guidance contained in *PPG 15- Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) makes clear, there is a presumption against the demolition of such buildings, particularly where they make a 'positive' contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 2.5 'Important' trees are also identified. These are usually highly visible from public places and/or they contribute to the setting of a listed building, the street scene or a building of local note. Important open spaces are also marked on Plans 1b and 2b, as these are a vital element in the character of an area. Character is defined not just by buildings, walls and trees, but also by the spaces between them. These contribute to the setting of buildings. Open spaces allow views around the area and they are often an important element in telling the story of the historical development of a community.
- 2.6 Important unlisted walls and other forms of boundary enclosure, such as railings or hedges, are recognised. These are usually built of local materials and help to define spaces and frame views. Significant views into, out of and around the proposed conservation area are also identified for it should be appreciated that a conservation area's character does not necessarily end with a line drawn on a map. Often the character is closely associated with attractive views out to other areas, sometimes via gaps between buildings, along streets or across open spaces. Views within an area such as that to a church or other landmark buildings can also be particularly valuable.

TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

3.0 Introduction and General Character Summary

3.1 The Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1976 and originally included the Victoria Road and Albert Road Conservation Area. Following a boundary review in 1994, the latter was designated as a separate conservation area. For the purposes of this appraisal, the Town Centre Conservation Area has been subdivided into seven broad 'character zones', shown on Plan 3 in Appendix 2. These comprise:

1. Holloway
2. The Castle and Pleasure Grounds
3. Market Street and George Street
4. St. Editha's Church and Church Street
5. Aldergate/Corporation Street
6. Lower Gungate/Colehill/Bolebridge Street
7. Lichfield Street/Silver Street

3.2 The appraisal has been carried out by character zone but a street-by-street audit was carried out as part of the process and each street is discussed within the text. Recommendations for boundary amendments and the addition of buildings to the statutory and local lists are made in Section 6.0 at the end of the document and are shown on Plans 1b and 2b in Appendix 2.

3.3 The character of the conservation area ranges from the intimate character of the pedestrianised historic market streets lined with domestically-scaled 18th-century buildings to streets busy with traffic like Lichfield Street and Aldergate, overshadowed

by 1960s high-rise developments and to the more open character of the area northwest of St. Editha's Church. In the south, the conservation area is dominated by the Castle and the large expanse of the Pleasure Grounds adjoining it.

- 3.4 The conservation area is based around the historic core of the town and the main thoroughfares into Tamworth, principally Lichfield Street, Aldergate, Gungate and Holloway, which converge upon the Castle and church. These are the two most significant landmark structures in the historic core. The centre of the town, although much changed by the demolition of many historic buildings and their replacement with later 20th-century buildings, still manages to retain its compact nature and historic street pattern.
- 3.5 The town centre has a wide range of architectural styles and scales ranging from the medieval core of the town with its Castle and church to the modern concrete architectural designs of the 1960s and '70s. The prevailing architectural style belongs, however, to the 18th century, and the main shopping streets are dominated by Georgian-style buildings of two and three storeys. It is these buildings that give the town its strong architectural character and which makes the flat-roofed and box-like 1960s structures interspersed between them all the more noticeable.
- 3.6 While the town centre itself is compact and attractive and retains much historic character, it suffers along its periphery by the proximity of the ring road, which has created major busy traffic intersections at various points around it, often truncating the historic street pattern very abruptly so that one comes from a narrow enclosed street of intimate character straight out onto a wide open traffic island and complete loss of traditional/historic character.
- 3.7 There are some negative features and general opportunities for enhancement that have been identified throughout the conservation area and which are referred to under each character zone. However, they are general to the whole conservation area and include low-quality street surfacing, particularly in pedestrianised areas where paving is patchy, insensitive to the built fabric and of inappropriate quality and type. Litter bins are also of poor visual quality, and there is a general clutter of apparently unnecessary bollards. The street lighting, while not always of the lowest quality, is still inappropriate in visual terms to the quality of the built environment, being too tall and

out of keeping in stylistic terms. Attention is also drawn to the ubiquitous planters randomly strewn around the town centre. These, consisting of five black plastic tubs arranged in order of decreasing size into 'towers' and filled with small flowering plants such as pansies are not in general aesthetically pleasing or particularly appropriate to the town's historic grain.

4.0 Summary History of the Area

- 4.1 Elements of Tamworth's street pattern probably originated as prehistoric trackways, including Holloway from the southwest, Bolebridge Street from the southeast and Lichfield Street from the west. Watling Street (the A5) linked Roman London with the important centre at Wroxeter (Shropshire) and there is some evidence for settlement of the Tamworth area in Roman times, but it was not until the Anglo-Saxon period that Tamworth became truly important as the capital of the Mercian kingdom.
- 4.2 The first reference to a royal residence at Tamworth comes from AD 781 in a grant of land to the monks of Worcester, signed by Offa, King of Mercia, from his royal palace at 'Tamworthie' and, by 799, there is clear charter evidence of the existence of the town. Unfortunately, no traces of the royal palace survive, although sites for it have been suggested and excavations northeast of Bolebridge Street in 1968 revealed the outline of what appeared to be a large Saxon building. An enclosure ditch, for which there is archaeological evidence, surrounded the palace and church. The sites of two Saxon watermills have also been excavated beside the River Anker just outside the defences behind Bolebridge Street. It is thought likely that a church existed in the town in the Saxon period, on the site of the existing Norman and later church.
- 4.3 Tamworth was looted and razed to the ground in 874-5 by the Danes and the town lay in a no-man's land on the borders of land ruled by the Danelaw. It was not until 913 that Aethelfleda, 'Lady of the Mercians' (daughter of King Alfred), made the strategically and symbolically significant town her base and began erecting fortifications to transform it into a burh, within which boundary today's town centre was mostly enclosed. The town's street pattern demonstrates active planning and follows the grid pattern model of other Saxon burhs.

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- 4.4 When the Normans arrived at Tamworth they refortified the town and built the mound and Castle, which guarded the approach into the town from Watling Street. Evidence for both Saxon earthworks and later additions has been discovered in the town. St. Editha's Church has important surviving Norman fabric, including two crossing arches for an earlier central tower.
- 4.5 Tamworth developed into a successful market town catering for local farmers and traders. In the Norman period the Borough was divided between the counties of Staffordshire and Warwickshire; Staffordshire's market was held at the corner of Church Street, Colehill and Gungate, and Warwickshire's on Market Street. A grain mill stood immediately south of the Castle near the confluence of the Rivers Tame and Anker and a mint (established in the Saxon period) continued to operate until the mid 12th century.
- 4.6 A great fire in 1345 gutted the church and it was rebuilt in the following 20 years, the square tower being added in the early 15th century. The medieval Deanery was also destroyed by fire in 1559, and only two fragments of its walls now survive above ground. The Castle has survived various threats throughout the centuries and managed to escape the Civil War with little damage, despite a two-day siege in June 1643 resulting in the capture of the Castle by Cromwell's forces.
- 4.7 The 18th century was a time of prosperity for Tamworth and one which witnessed a substantial amount of civic improvements to buildings and roads. It was also a time of considerable new build when a number of Georgian properties were built, having a fundamental effect upon the character of the town, an architectural character which it retains to a large extent today. Sir Thomas Guy built the town hall in 1701 and founded Guy's almshouses. In 1809 the town's streets were flagged and kerbstones were laid to make pavements and, by 1839, the Tamworth Gaslight and Coke Company were providing street lighting for the town.
- 4.8 Robert Peel, MP for Tamworth between 1830 and 1850 (and Prime Minister 1841-46), had close connections with Tamworth, which remain evident in the town today. He built a cotton mill at Tamworth and then adapted the Castle Mill for cotton production with textile production soon overtaking tanning as the main industry in the town. He had also opened a bank in the town in the 1770s. Peel helped fund the addition to the

town hall and made his famous Tamworth address here in 1835. As well as the textile industry, the 19th century also saw the development of the extractive industries, important to the growth of the town.

- 4.9 The Castle Mill had gone out of use by the end of the 19th century and the Castle Pleasure Grounds began to be developed as a recreational facility in 1897 when the council bought the land and opened it to the public. A cricket and football ground followed in the 1920s and several recreational buildings were added in the 1930s.
- 4.10 Extracts from historic Ordnance Survey (O.S.) maps and an 1810 map of the town are included in Appendix 1 of this document. The O.S. maps of 1884-5 show the extent of developed land in comparison to the earlier town map of 1810 which illustrates the open nature of the surrounding countryside and relatively undeveloped medieval layout of the town. The 19th century saw a relatively rapid expansion of the town largely instigated by the arrival of the railways in the 1840s. Prior to this Tamworth had benefited from its location on the junction of the London/Liverpool and Birmingham/Nottingham coach roads; there was a tollhouse on Lady Bridge until 1883 when the tolls were abolished. By that time the railways had become the principal mode of transport to London and other cities in England.
- 4.11 The part of the historic town centre that saw significant development throughout the late 19th and first half of the 20th century was the area enclosed by Church Street, Aldergate and Lower Gungate; the O.S. map from 1885 shows this area with a relatively unplanned appearance, with the large garden to the White House on Church Street truncated by isolated housing and commercial development and large areas of land taken up with the churchyard and overspill grave yard. This piecemeal development gradually became more formalised with the construction of Corporation Street, its subsequent reconfiguration, and the erection of civic buildings along it.
- 4.12 Otherwise, the town centre has largely retained its historic, medieval street pattern, with smaller changes here and there, the most significant of which was the creation of the shopping square south of the church in the 1960s. In 1965 the town's administrative boundaries were extended, which resulted in a doubling of the population. The town entered a period of rapid development, catering for overspill population from Birmingham and the West Midlands conurbation and, between 1965

and 1981 the population doubled from 32,000 to 64,250. As part of this rapid growth, the 1960s saw the erection of the high-rise flats off Lichfield Street and the clearance of many old buildings to make way for new shopping centres, including Middle Entry and The Gungate Precinct on Lower Gungate. These were followed in the 1980s by the much larger Ankerside Shopping Centre, which has such a profound impact on the town's topography.

5.0 Appraisal

5.1 CHARACTER ZONE 1: HOLLOWAY

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.1.1 This is the smallest character zone identified in the conservation area, consisting of a single street, Holloway, which continues southwest from Silver Street along the western side of the Castle motte and ends where the Lady Bridge crosses the confluence of the Rivers Tame and Anker. This street has retained its historic character to a high degree and is characterised visually by its topography, as its name would suggest. The predominantly early 19th-century houses (mostly now in office use) on its west side are set well above the level of the street itself and front onto a raised pavement, Lady Bank, separated from the street by a late 19th-century stone-coped brick wall with tall brick piers and topped with wrought iron railings. The bank slopes up to the south and then follows the line of the street back down again, and the wall is staggered in sections, creating an attractive 'crow-stepped' appearance.
- 5.1.2 The sloping ground and the height of the buildings above the road and behind the wall and railings emphasise the discrete and private nature of the west side of the road and the street overall and there are attractive views along the street in both directions. The mid 18th-century No. 1 Market Street (the former Peel Arms Hotel), with its large ground-floor sash set in a prominent Ionic colonnade, forms an attractive visual terminus to the view northeast along the street because of the bend in the road, adding to the sense of intimacy and enclosure. The view to the southwest ends in open space where the Lady Bridge rises up to cross the rivers. Here, on the southern edge of the town, there is still a semi-rural feel created by the large expanse of undeveloped water meadow that stretches away to the south and west.
- 5.1.3 The buildings on the east side of the street stand at the level of the street, fronting onto a narrow pavement of stone flags, and all form part of the Castle Hotel, presenting a solid red brick frontage which follows the line of the slope all the way along the street until reaching the Castle grounds gates, but having a visually interesting roofline and prominent and attractive fenestration, dating from the early 18th-century through to the beginning of the 20th century. Glimpses of the Castle's

battlements are afforded above the roofs, while more direct views up to the Castle, albeit shrouded by trees, are possible from the southern end of the street.

- 5.1.4 The essential character of the street lies in its gentle curve and slope down to the southwest towards the Tame and the Anker, its enclosed nature, interesting topography, primarily red brick buildings, and the traditional materials used on its street surfaces.

Architectural Quality of Buildings/Building Materials

- 5.1.5 All the buildings on Lady Bank (Nos. 1-9) and No. 1 Silver Street (also included in this character zone) are listed at Grade II, as is the revetment wall between Lady Bank and Holloway. The prevailing style is late Georgian, although all the buildings are of quite different character, which makes for an interesting streetscape. Architectural details that draw them together are their red brick construction, slate roofs, predominance of rubbed brick flat-arched window openings, and sashes.
- 5.1.6 At the southern end of Holloway is No. 1 Lady Bank, set well back from the street frontage behind a garden, the boundary wall and railings of which are also listed. The wall (brick on an ashlar plinth) is contemporary with the house, which was built in 1750 for Lords Weymouth and Middleton as the parish workhouse. A new, larger workhouse was built elsewhere in 1859 and No. 1 came into use as the Castle Brewery (it now serves as an annexe to the Castle Hotel). It is an attractive building of classical proportions, of two storeys and five bays, the central one breaking forward slightly under a pediment, and has a steeply-pitched hipped roof and painted stone sills and keystones. It, together with its large front garden, is rather an odd survival in an area redeveloped with 1960s housing. So too, perhaps, is the early 19th-century bowling green, to its south; its mid 19th-century brick club-house is listed.
- 5.1.7 The two-storey, single-bay No. 2 dates from c.1840, incorporating an older 18th-century wall, and has a hipped roof, three bays to the left return and a surviving 16-pane sash to the first floor, with an attractive doorcase with panelled pilasters. It adjoins the late 16th-/early 17th-century timber-framed Nos. 3-4, all of which stand directly on the Lady Bank frontage. Nos. 3-4 (now, like No. 2, in office use) were remodelled in the early 19th century and are clad in brick, although timber framing can

be seen in the left end of No. 3's facade and in No. 4's north gable end. This is rather striking in a streetscape of predominantly late Georgian buildings and provides an instant visual reminder of the street's earlier origins.

- 5.1.8 No. 5 is a pleasant if rather plain two-storey plus attic, ashlar-dressed house (now flats) of c.1800 with a symmetrical three-bay façade. It is set back beyond the building line of the adjoining Nos. 4 and 6 and has a small front garden area bordered by a low dwarf wall and neat hedge. This garden and setting-back from the frontage bestow some grandeur on the house, which is of a greater scale than the adjoining Nos. 6-7, two early 19th-century houses with a later 19th-century addition to the right (now all in office use). These are of two storeys but with a lower ridgeline than No. 5, and have attractive round-arched door openings with rubbed brick heads and fanlights.
- 5.1.9 No. 8 stands in marked contrast, having a stucco ground floor with quoin strips to either end and around the central doorcase, which has a pediment and round-arched opening, and secondary doorway to the right. The house has an asymmetrical façade, probably the result of later alterations, while the secondary entrance and flanking windows may have been inserted.
- 5.1.10 No. 9 is of altogether different character again and certainly stands out because of this and because it stands almost at street level at the north end of Holloway. This Tudor-style building was erected in 1845 for Sir Robert Peel as a Savings Bank (now an office) and has a buff-coloured brick façade with ashlar dressings and octagonal chimney stacks, which gives it the appearance from a distance of being constructed wholly in stone. It has two-storey canted oriels in gabled bays and a Tudor-headed entrance with label mould. The gables have the town arms in relief and the low parapet has the lettering AD and 1845.
- 5.1.11 Adjoining this building and fully at street level, is No. 1 Silver Street, another early 19th-century three-bay house (now an office), of three storeys with an almost preposterously large central doorcase with swan-neck pediment. The ground floor has been rebuilt in a browner brick and a concrete band has been inserted above the ground-floor windows. North of this building there is now a rather bleak open space where demolition of adjoining buildings on the Silver Street frontage took place in the

1960s as part of the redevelopment of this area for a housing estate and high-rise flats.

- 5.1.12 The east side of Holloway is almost wholly taken up with the long frontage of the various ranges which make up the Castle Hotel, which stand hard on the pavement and present a continuous and attractive streetscape. Standing on the corner with Market Street is the earliest of the row, dating from the early 18th century. It is of three storeys but appears taller because of the way it follows the sloping ground down to the south – the mid 19th-century range to the right has four storeys but a ridgeline of similar height. The 18th-century range has a Tuscan porch with attractive scrolled wrought-iron balcony that is a prominent feature of the streetscape, as is the extremely large bowed oriel on brackets on the first floor of the c.1900 two-storey garage range; this, in a bright orange brick, also has three attractive Dutch gables, the largest to the right bearing a 1900 datestone, and two elliptical-headed carriage entrances with striking banded arches and hoods, and other elliptical-headed openings in between. The façade to Market Street has five bays and four Ionic pilasters on the ground floor. The many flat- and cambered-arched sash windows are an important element of the streetscape, and this is particularly notable in the view which takes in both the Market Street and Holloway facades of the 18th-century range together.
- 5.1.13 Beyond the hotel are the stone-built Castle Coach House and Holloway Lodge to Tamworth Castle, built in c.1820 and 1810 respectively in a Gothic Revival style, the Lodge having embattled parapet and round angle turrets and forming a carriage entrance to the area around the foot of the motte. The Lodge provides an imposing 'portal' to the Castle, and also serves to emphasise the enclosed nature of this space. The partly embattled early 19th-century walls which extend between the coach house and lodge and continue around the corner of Holloway are also listed. These structures are important elements of the setting of the Castle, which is described as part of Character Zone 2. The pink-hued sandstone of these structures, combined with the trees in the Castle grounds behind the wall, lightens the streetscape here.
- 5.1.14 The rear elevations of the hotel buildings are only wholly visible from up on the Castle motte, where they present a jumble of roofs and extensions. The rears of the buildings on Lady Bank are, however, visible from Balfour (Road), part of the 1960s residential development. Overall, the view of the rears of these properties is attractive; No. 5 has 19th-century gabled rear wings with appealing cambered-arched windows and No. 8

has an attractive round-arched stained-glass staircase window; this, however, is in large part obscured by a small but unfortunate single-storey lean-to late 20th-century extension.

- 5.1.15 More significantly, however, the rears of the buildings have sadly lost their historic context through the loss of their former rear gardens and defining boundary walls to tarmac-surfaced open expanses of car park. This loss of definition between the original rear plots heavily detracts from the otherwise positive contribution that the rears of these buildings make to the conservation area. While the boundary wall to No. 1 Ladybank has been retained, the long east-west range of the building has suffered a similar reduction in context as a result of the redevelopment of the area to the north.
- 5.1.16 The pavements on either side of Holloway are primarily surfaced with traditional stone flags, which reflect the light well and are an attractive historic feature of the street. They should certainly be retained and should act as a guide for the replacement of lower-quality street surfacing found elsewhere in the conservation area. It is noticeable, too, that this street enjoys a better quality of street-lighting than that found elsewhere.

Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

- 5.1.17 All the buildings fronting Holloway are listed, with the exception of a small WWII pillbox, which stands on the west side of the southern end of the street up on the higher ground by the bowling green. The pillbox of course appears absurdly out of context alongside its predominantly Georgian neighbours, but this makes its appearance here all the more quirky, and it is really part of a 'group' of such structures, as another one is visible out in the floodplain to the southwest. In a way, its function as a defensive structure also seems somehow appropriate in its proximity to the Castle.
- 5.1.18 Every building on the street is key to its character and appearance, with individual buildings standing out because of their architectural detailing or location. For instance, the former Peel Arms Hotel (No. 1 Silver Street) is prominent in views northeast along the street, and the Dutch gables, oriel window and banded carriage arches to the two-storey garage range of the Castle Hotel are particularly striking.

Negative Features

- 5.1.19 There are few negative features on Holloway. The street is clearly recognised as an historic asset by the Council, as evidenced by the retention of stone flagging and the investment in 'heritage' street lighting. Clearly, the most significant negative effect is the 1960s residential estate west of Holloway, with its several high-rise blocks of flats. These are less visually offensive than they might otherwise be, as once one is standing on Holloway, the difference in ground levels renders them more-or-less invisible. However, when the street is seen from higher ground such as the Castle motte, the towers have a significant overshadowing effect.
- 5.1.20 The opening-out of the rear gardens of properties on the west side of Holloway, and their conversion to car parks, has also had a negative impact on the character and appearance of these buildings.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.1.21 The buildings appear generally well-maintained although the stucco to No. 8 is blackened and in need of restoration.
- 5.1.22 It is probably unlikely that the conversion of rear gardens to car parking will be reversed, but the provision of a separate car park for those employed in the offices housed by the buildings on the west side of Holloway could certainly be something to consider should major redevelopment of the 1960s estate take place in the future.

CHARACTER ZONE 1: HOLLOWAY



Looking north along Holloway, with Lady Bank to left, Castle Hotel to right, and view terminated by the former Peel Arms Hotel on Market Street



View south along Holloway towards Lady Bridge, showing listed wall, castle coach house and Lodge



View west from the north end of Lady Bridge across confluence of the Rivers Tame and Anker and water meadows



The Castle Hotel, with attractive roofline on east side of Holloway and castle behind



Nos. 2-4 Lady Bank



Former Savings Bank, No. 9 Lady Bank



No. 1 Silver Street



Former workhouse, No. 1 Lady Bank, seen from the castle motte, in which view it is dwarfed by the high-rise blocks off Lichfield Street



View to castle from south end of Holloway



Former rear plots of properties on Lady Bank, now given over to car parking

5.2 CHARACTER ZONE 2: THE CASTLE AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.2.1 The Castle and Pleasure Grounds character zone includes Tamworth Castle and the open land to its south. This is a large open space planted with mature trees, including important copses forming distinctive groups of trees within the landscape. The principal planting is along the tree-lined avenue that runs northwest-southeast the length of the Pleasure Grounds, and along the river banks, although there are numerous other areas of trees which add considerably to this 'green space'. The principal park buildings and other leisure facilities are also located along the central avenue.
- 5.2.2 The boundary of the character zone follows the conservation area boundary as it runs along Fazeley Road (now a cycle track and pedestrian route) from the Castle lodge south along the medieval Lady Bridge (rebuilt in the 18th century) to the ring road. It then continues east and northeast, following the ring road until it reaches the Anker Drive Bridge, where it meets the Ankerside Shopping Centre and multi-storey car park. The character zone boundary then bears west along the river bank, keeping tight to the southern edge of the shopping centre until it reaches the 13th-century gatehouse entrance to the Castle off Market Street, from where it runs around the lower edge of the motte on the north side.
- 5.2.3 The Castle, a circular sandstone building typical of many Norman strongholds, is positioned above the town on its motte or mound, immediately southwest of the medieval market place, from where it dominates the town, overlooks the confluence of the Rivers Anker and Tame, and guards the southern approach into Tamworth.
- 5.2.4 South of the Castle the Rivers Anker and Tame define the western and northern limits of much of the area of the Pleasure Grounds, with a smaller area of grounds immediately north of the Anker around the Castle. The substantial Pleasure Grounds are a significant open space in terms of both the character and setting of the town and in providing an important leisure facility for the inhabitants of Tamworth.

- 5.2.5 The concrete bridge, which continues from the central avenue to cross the River Anker, is the main pedestrian access from the town centre to the leisure facilities in the Pleasure Grounds. There are three other bridges which cross the rivers in the area of the Pleasure Grounds, including the Lady Bridge, a modern brick and concrete bridge giving access to the Ankerside Shopping Centre, and the road bridge on the eastern boundary of the conservation area. These last two are not of any architectural note.
- 5.2.6 The area around the Castle is an attractive mix of open space, municipal planting beds, natural landscaping and historic structures. There are attractive views looking out from the grounds towards the Town Hall from the gatehouse, allowing a fuller appreciation of the architectural design of the Town Hall and its arcaded market, but the view is unfortunately partly obstructed by the sharp-angled bulk of the 1960s Nationwide building on the corner. The proximity to the town and its shopping centres give this area a busy feel, with people continually passing through.
- 5.2.7 The grounds of the Castle's inner bailey provide a pleasant open space that serves as a tranquil park just off the busy Market Street, allowing distant views of the Pleasure Grounds and the countryside beyond. Those views can be more fully appreciated when walking around the Castle shell-keep, which affords fine views of the town and its compact historic street pattern, including an evocative vista across a jumble of gabled roofs and the slightly askew cupola on the town hall towards St. Editha's Church.
- 5.2.8 The Castle motte has an established wooded appearance, although it is now strictly managed. There is a number of mature specimen trees as well as other evergreen species such as holly and yew within the grounds of the inner bailey, all of which further enhance the leafy character of this area. The 1884 O.S. map shows the motte as being wooded with trees screening Castle Mill to the south and additional specimen planting along the ridge of land where the bandstand is located. Today most of that planting remains albeit with some reduction in the location of the bandstand.
- 5.2.9 Today trees screen the car park near the Castle Lodge, the site of the former Castle Mill, demolished in the early 20th century. The land on which it stood has undergone considerable re-landscaping and the island and river channels have become

incorporated into the Pleasure Grounds. There is little physical evidence for the weir and mill race.

- 5.2.10 Today the Pleasure Grounds still provide an important and well-used community leisure resource for the inhabitants of Tamworth and its use as such extends fully to the ring road. The land has, however, witnessed a steady increase in buildings and hard surfaces to accommodate those needs. The facilities are still accessed off the central tree-lined avenue, which provides an important visual link both from the town to the various leisure facilities as well as from the ring road to the river, town and Castle.
- 5.2.11 The 1920s-30s buildings along the central avenue sit relatively well within the recreational parkland landscape although, as uses have evolved, the buildings have been adapted; the Pavilion has become a café while the swimming pool and fountain have been lost and the associated buildings used to provide facilities for a children's play area with the equipment contained within the three sides of the former swimming bath buildings. Other play areas have been integrated into the landscape using more sympathetic materials and are not particularly intrusive. The architecture of the leisure uses ranges from buildings dating from the 1920s to the modern day. As uses have become more varied so the buildings have increased in size and, it has to be said, decreased in terms of architectural quality. This is especially true of the Namco Station, the large leisure centre which dominates the southern section of the Pleasure Grounds with its shed-like appearance.
- 5.2.12 In terms of the impact upon the Pleasure Grounds it is perhaps the need for vehicular access both by users and staff, necessitating the large surface car parks, the intrusive lighting of the car parks and the tennis courts, and the large modern developments, including the Ankerside shopping centre, the Snow Dome and the Namco Station, that are most harmful. In general the older uses are more sympathetically scaled and detailed while the newer ones are less so.
- 5.2.13 Apart from the extensive views available in all directions from the foot of the Castle walls, there are other significant views from elsewhere within the Pleasure Grounds. These include long views out across the River Tame floodplain from Lady Bridge, where a lone WWII pillbox sits, and long-distance views south from the top of the

terraced ground north of the Anker, the foreground laden with trees. Other views, such as that past the bandstand to the pinnacles on the tower of St. Editha's Church and the Town Hall cupola, and the longer-distance view of the church tower from across the playing fields, are compromised by the sprawling, flat-roofed horizon of the Ankerside Shopping Centre.

Architectural Quality of Buildings and Building Materials/Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

- 5.2.14 The zone is dominated principally by the Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade I listed late 11th-century motte and bailey Castle, which is of outstanding merit. It is built in a warm red sandstone rubble with ashlar and brick with ashlar dressings and has a number of visible and significantly different phases which all add to the character of the surviving fabric, including a 12th- to 13th-century north wing with first-floor hall, an early 15th-century hall range, 16th-century warder's lodge, early 17th-century south wing and various other alterations. Of particular note, too, is the Norman causeway wall northeast of the Castle, which has important herringbone masonry. The Castle and its associated buildings and structures all add significant value both to the conservation area and the town in general. Its setting is enhanced by the various listed walls and railings that surround it, as well as by the wooded motte. The Castle is the defining structure of Tamworth.
- 5.2.15 At the foot of the motte is the early 19th-century lodge and associated coach house, both of which are listed and built out of local stone in a gothic style. The lodge has been extended from its original single-storey plan to include a first floor. These two buildings enhance the western boundary of the zone along Holloway and provide a sense of enclosure and completeness to the Castle site. Also at the foot of the motte are three Grade II listed 18th-century ashlar urns on pedestals and a 1913 statue of Aethelfleda, erected to commemorate the raising of the Castle mound in AD 913.
- 5.2.16 The locally listed bandstand southeast of the Castle is of traditional octagonal decorative timber design with slate pagoda-style roof. It sits on top of a stone base which, due to the terracing of the land, forms a room beneath. The structure looks out over the Pleasure Grounds and beyond to the ring road and Snow Dome. It has a more significant aspect when viewed from the Pleasure Grounds as its full height and

setting amidst the planted beds can then be appreciated. It is flanked by two cannons but these are relatively small in size and are really only seen when the stand is approached from the town.

- 5.2.17 In the Pleasure Grounds the buildings are a mix of early 20th-century recreational architecture and those of more modern functional design. The 1930s buildings are built in brick and are of a single storey. They reflect the period and their former uses well and are sympathetically scaled to fit into the landscape, unlike the more modern structures.
- 5.2.18 The former swimming baths (built in 1937 and included on the local list) has a long façade, built in brown brick with striking white-painted artificial stone dressings and roofs covered with mottled green glazed tiles. The central entrance of artificial stone has Art Deco decorative elements. Original metal-framed windows have been retained, as have the attractive central cupola with clock and weather vane. The baths have now been converted to a children's play area, but the principal architectural elements have been retained.
- 5.2.19 The pavilion, also contemporary with the development of the Pleasure Grounds as a recreational facility, is built of a red-brown brick with some herringbone detailing and has a plain clay tile roof. It should be considered for inclusion on the local list, partly in recognition of its relationship to the former swimming baths. The brick and weatherboarded (altered) 1930s WCs are also part of the original 1930s facilities.
- 5.2.20 The concrete pedestrian footbridge over the River Anker south of the Castle is an attractive structure and should also be considered for addition to the local list.
- 5.2.21 East of the bandstand a garden for the blind and disabled was built by the Rotary Club in 1991 comprising brick raised planting beds. St. Ruffin's Well, an ancient holy well, is sited here; apparently restored in 1957, it appears to have been removed (or at least to have lost its superstructure). The garden is built in the shadow of the multi-storey car park.

5.2.22 Part of the banks of the River Anker is lined with a low crenellated stone wall, which echoes the listed wall around the Castle motte (and of course the battlements of the keep itself) and is important to the character of the Pleasure Grounds.

Negative Features

5.2.23 The overriding negative feature of this area is the intrusive nature of the ring road and the modern leisure buildings and their associated car parking. Although the Snow Dome is not within the conservation area, it has by virtue of its scale and mass had a negative impact on the character of the Pleasure Grounds and can be clearly seen from the playing fields as well as in the view south from the bandstand. The Ankerside Shopping Centre has had a similar impact upon the character and setting of the town when viewed from the pleasure ground playing fields.

5.2.24 The clutter caused by the need to provide safe and well-lit car parking in three areas of the Pleasure Grounds has eroded the character of the grounds. Although most are well screened by tree planting they still intrude upon the openness of the conservation area in the locations concerned.

5.2.25 The Mansard-roofed architectural style of the Ankerside Shopping Centre has an overbearing impact upon the bandstand area and the eastern edge of this zone. The shopping centre's somewhat severe design juxtaposed with the open nature of the Castle grounds makes for an uneasy visual combination and obstructs the view towards the town and St. Editha's Church from the south.

5.2.26 The tennis courts' requirements for lighting and fencing have also had considerable impact on the setting of the Pleasure Grounds. The courts are surrounded by fencing and lamp-post flood-lighting, which have a detrimental visual impact upon the avenue and views of the town and church. As yet the planting has not matured enough to screen the courts. As it matures this will help lessen the impact of the fencing but it is unlikely to reduce the impact of the lighting when the courts are used at night.

5.2.27 The area still has a number of important viewpoints giving glimpses of Tamworth and its landmarks as well as other sites outside the town's historic boundaries, but these are becoming blighted by security cameras, lighting and signage. Some of the views

have also been compromised by new development; for example the views of the Church from the playing fields are partially obscured by the Ankerside Shopping Centre, while views out from the playing field to the southeast are dominated by the ring road (albeit partially screened by banking and tree planting) and the mass of the Snow Dome. The intrusive noise of the ring road is also noticeable.

- 5.2.28 The area around the warehouse-like Namco Station building has been severely compromised by the building itself and the need to provide a large area of car parking. This is dominated by lighting, cameras and associated signage. The views towards the town at this point are either blocked by the building or glimpsed over the tennis courts, as described above.
- 5.2.29 The six tower blocks off Lichfield Street are highly prominent in views northwest from the Pleasure Grounds. From here, they appear to be advancing in serried ranks on the Castle, an image which detracts from the Castle's historic setting.
- 5.2.30 The need for signage, bicycle stands, lighting, security cameras, barriers etc., has eroded the character of the conservation area in the location by the ring road.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.2.31 Despite the obvious intractability of some of the major negative features of the Pleasure Grounds, smaller changes could be carried out to its general environs, which would have a beneficial impact upon its character and appearance. This could include the introduction of more sympathetic lighting and screening of the car parks.
- 5.2.32 While overall this zone is in good order its character is being slowly eroded by the intrusion of new leisure facilities and the associated clutter that is required to provide car parking and access to it.
- 5.2.33 There is scope here for improvement to street furniture, lighting and barriers in all parts of the zone but more especially at the southern edge. This section has seen a steady erosion of character as the impact of leisure and transport has taken its toll.

- 5.2.34 The trees are particularly important and every effort should be made to maintain the existing specimens and replant should any be removed. More planting should be considered along the ring road to provide a sound buffer as well as screening the Snow Dome from view.
- 5.2.35 The management of the car parks should consider the impact of signage, lighting and barriers in terms of the existing and any future adverse impact upon the conservation area. Steps should be taken to reduce the amount of clutter.

CHARACTER ZONE 2: THE CASTLE AND PLEASURE GROUNDS



Views of the castle



Long-distance view across pleasure grounds to St. Edith's Church



View to St. Editha's Church and the Town Hall cupola from the castle motte



View to south across pleasure grounds



View to St. Edith's Church from playing fields, compromised by the long flat-roofed Ankerside Shopping Centre



The locally listed bandstand and terraced flower beds



The locally listed former swimming baths



The Pavilion (recommended for inclusion on the local list)



The footbridge over the River Anker south of the castle (recommended for inclusion on the local list)



View of Lady Bridge with tower-blocks behind



Line of tower blocks 'advancing' towards the castle



View across car park and tennis courts to church



Car park immediately south of castle



The 'Namco Station' leisure building

5.3 CHARACTER ZONE 3: MARKET STREET AND GEORGE STREET

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.3.1 Market Street runs east off Silver Street and opens out at its eastern end into the triangular market place, in the centre of which stands the 18th-century Town Hall. George Street runs northeast from the southeast corner of the market place. The character zone broadly includes the north and south frontages of both streets and, necessarily, the relatively vast 1980s Ankerside Shopping Centre which, with its attached multi-storey car park, crouches on the southeastern edge of the developed part of the town.
- 5.3.2 Both streets are busy shopping streets, particularly on market days when the market place on Market Street, and the whole of George Street, is lined with market stalls. The two streets are visually separate, an effect created by the sharp kink (almost a right angle) at the western end of George Street, where it turns to join the market place, meaning there is no direct view from one street into the next and that the town hall is not visible in views southwest along George Street: the rather grand and curving neo-classical stone-built façade of No. 22 Market Street (the Halifax Bank) effectively marks the transition between the two streets. The view southwest along George Street from its eastern end is relatively rewarding, while the western end of the street is dominated by insensitive 1960s developments.
- 5.3.3 Both streets are pedestrianised and surfaced primarily with rather harsh red-brown brick paviers with blue bricks and gutters demarcating 'pavement' lines. In contrast, the floor of the arcaded market part of the town hall is of old stone flags, while the small seating area created around the statue of Sir Robert Peel in front of the town hall has been paved with new stone flags (of different colour and character to the older flags) alongside an area of stone sets/cobbles and quirky 'penny farthing' style bicycle racks. A photograph from 1999 shows part of this area, and shows what appears to be a patchy surface of traditional stone flags in poor repair and areas of tarmac where individual flags have been removed. The brick paviers are not the ideal solution for these streets and do not complement the brick tones of the 18th-century buildings. These buildings stand hard on the street and the minimal 'pavement' definition dilutes their historic character.

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- 5.3.4 The western end of Market Street has an intimate and enclosed feel created by the narrow width of the street at this end, with the buildings appearing to lean out over it, in marked contrast with the eastern end, which widens out to incorporate the historic market place. There is a fine view from the west end of the street, looking east towards the Town Hall with its chequered brick west façade, modillioned eaves cornice and pediment, and arcaded ground floor. The view west along the street from the town hall is less rewarding than it would originally have been; No. 1 Silver Street, with its prominent doorcase, forms a visual terminus to the view, enhancing the enclosed feel of the west end of the street, but is unfortunately dwarfed by the towering 1960s high-rise block looming up directly behind it, which is completely out of kilter with the domestic scale of the primarily 18th-century buildings on Market Street.
- 5.3.5 The south side of Market Street is the most historically intact in terms of surviving buildings; on the north side, and on George Street, there is a higher level of intrusion dating primarily from the 1960s and also from the 1980s Ankerside shopping centre.
- 5.3.6 There is a good view south along King Street towards Market Street. This narrow lane linking Market Street with Church Street slopes down to the south at its southern end and is terminated by the bridging structure created by No. 1 King Street and No. 66 Church Street, over the roofs of which can be seen the battlements of the Castle. The lane itself has a strong sense of enclosure and although some older buildings have survived, at the Market Street end are mostly later 20th-century structures. However, the lane retains historic character.
- 5.3.7 The important view north from George Street along College Lane to St. Editha's Church has retained far less historic character, but remains an important route through to the church and would benefit from enhancement.
- 5.3.8 There is access between buildings on Market Street into the Castle Pleasure Grounds. The remains of the gatehouse have been excavated and a pedestrian bridge constructed over them – this is an attractive feature of the street and allows views out of the tightly packed shopping street through to green open space past the pagoda-like roof of the bandstand in the Castle grounds.

Architectural Quality of Buildings/Building Materials

- 5.3.9 The town hall and butter market is of course the principal and most attractive structure in this area. Listed at Grade II*, it was built in 1701 for Sir Thomas Guy, extended in 1811 and rebuilt in 1845. Its chequered brickwork, stone quoins, prominent projecting modillioned eaves cornice and pediment with clock face, ogival cupola with wind vane, and the two large, round-arched, small-paned windows in its narrow two-bay west front give it a rather decorative and light Italianate appearance, afforded a little more gravitas by the Doric-columned arcade on the ground floor with its stone-flagged floor.
- 5.3.10 Seen from the east side, the 19th-century extension is dignified but much plainer; this range has no arcading and forms the office part of the structure. The earlier butter cross part of the building essentially sets the architectural standard for the rest of the street and, while many of its 18th-century buildings, albeit domestic in scale and character, meet the challenge in the way that they should, the 1960s interlopers sadly are a long way from doing so. The bronze statue of Sir Robert Peel in front of the town hall is listed and was erected in 1853. This makes a good group with the town hall.
- 5.3.11 Many buildings on the south side of Market Street are listed, and primarily date from the early 18th century, being of two or three storeys and of red brick (often with stone dressings) in the 'Georgian' town house style, although many have fronts rebuilt in the 19th century, including No. 34 (Better Bites). The latter's attractive ashlar dressings include stop-chamfered pilasters and entablature, and shouldered architraves to the first- and second-floor windows (four-pane sashes). At first-floor level is a set of three projecting 19th-century-style lamps on wrought iron brackets, a feature which also exists on other buildings in the street. Nos. 32-33A adjoining it dates from c.1700 and also has 19th-century alterations. It is built of an attractive chequered brick, similar to that used in the construction of its contemporary, the town hall, which it also echoes in its modillioned eaves cornice and arcaded ashlar shop front, now mostly filled in with 20th-century glazing.
- 5.3.12 No. 30 (The Retreat and The Headquarters) is another Georgian-style town house, having an attractive four-bay front with segmental-arched eight-pane sashes and two gabled dormers in its steeply-pitched tile roof with deeply overhanging modillioned

eaves cornice. It has a c.1900 shop front with Art Nouveau detailing including decorative iron cresting and incorporates a rubbed-brick round-arched entrance to a side passage paved with traditional blue bricks. In general, the shop fronts on this side of the street are remarkably good in terms of retention of historic character and, while of course they are not wholly untouched by the late 20th century, modern signage and alteration is generally relatively low-key and inoffensive in nature.

5.3.13 Nos. 28-29 (Tourist Information Centre) dates from the late 17th or early 18th century, and was re-fronted, like No. 34, in c.1840. The building has a timber-framed rear wing. Its windows stand out from others on the street, being three-light leaded casements in laced plaster surrounds. The shop fronts are 20th-century. Adjoining No. 28 is a long row of three two-storey shops (Nos. 26A, 27 and 27A) with early 19th-century re-fronting. The ground floor of all three retains late 19th-century plate-glass shop fronts with fascias and recessed entrances and there are four almost disproportionately large eight-over-eight sashes to the first floor. Both Nos. 28-29 and No. 26A have 19th-century-style projecting lamps bracketed to their front elevations like that to No. 34. These lamps are an attractive feature of the street and their design appears to have been taken as a guide for the design of the modern street-lighting on this street.

5.3.14 The remaining listed building on this side of the street is No. 22 (Halifax Building Society), built c.1900 of ashlar in a Baroque style with channelled rustication and four tall round-arched windows separated by paired attached Tuscan columns. The cupola with clock face, the curve of the building's façade and its balustraded parapet are prominent features in the streetscape, and the building acts as a 'landmark' structure, defining the place where Market Street and George Street meet.

5.3.15 The north side of the street is less coherent architecturally, having admitted to its ranks a substantial number of unattractive 1960s structures, which appear totally out of context, especially in views east along the street towards the arcaded town hall. The street's many 18th-century buildings do their best to overcome this unfortunate situation but only partly succeed, particularly at the eastern end of the street in the immediate vicinity of the town hall.

- 5.3.16 In contrast, at the western end, on the corner with Silver Street, No. 1 (the former Peel Arms Hotel, now Wilkinson's) is a large mid 18th-century building with an early 19th-century extension. The canted angle to its left end (visible in views northeast along Holloway) has an entrance with attached Ionic colonnade, and the frontage to Market Street is long and of three separate ranges, providing a good response to the long return elevation of the Castle Hotel opposite. Despite the building's change of use, historic external features on the street frontage have been retained, including a 19th-century shop front, sash windows, classical doorcases, 19th-century bracketed lamps and the brackets for the former hotel signage (albeit now with shop signage hanging from them). This shop signage and the two blocked windows to Silver Street do, however, rather detract from the character of the building. Much of the original rear portion of the building has been demolished and redeveloped.
- 5.3.17 The right-hand range (No. 3) incorporates the entrance into King Street, a narrow passage which extends the depth of the street block through to Church Street. This is an inviting lane when approached from Church Street, but a little less enticing when approached from Market Street as it is flanked by a large 1960s building at this end. However, unlike the originally similar College Lane, a densely built-up frontage has been maintained along King Street and there is a good view south along it towards the Castle battlements.
- 5.3.18 No. 6 (Garfield Snow) particularly stands out on the north side of the street for its fine 1870s shop front with highly decorative cast-iron cresting, bracketed end blocks to a canopy, and slender colonettes separating its plate-glass shop window panes. The building itself is early 18th-century, of stuccoed brick, and has four closely-spaced six-over-six sashes to the first floor. It makes a good group with the adjoining Market Vaults public house, a 17th-century painted brick building with a timber-framed rear wing. The façade, however, is in the Georgian style, its public house front having panelled pilasters, an entablature and etched plate glass window.
- 5.3.19 George Street has fewer listed buildings, many of its 18th-century structures having been demolished and replaced by 1960s buildings and the 1980s Ankerside shopping centre, whose long frontages are out-of-scale and thoroughly overbearing in this narrow street. This effect is most pronounced at the western end of the street.

- 5.3.20 On the south side, No. 17 (Lloyds TSB Bank) is a good complement to No. 22 Market Street (Halifax) having a similar balustraded stone parapet. It was built in 1910 but in a Georgian style, with recessed windows in heavy ashlar surrounds. Unfortunately, sandwiched insensitively between these two buildings is the blank-faced red-brown brick façade with unattractive dark mansard roof of one of the entrances to the Ankerside shopping centre.
- 5.3.21 Nos. 1 and 3-5 at the eastern end of the street are also listed. No. 1 (Jordan's) is a probably 16th-century timber-framed building covered in stucco and jettied to both George Street and Bolebridge Street. It has quite an attractive late 19th-/early 20th-century shop front, although the fascia board is unnecessarily large and prominent. Nos. 3-5 is a terrace of three shops with accommodation (now offices) to the two floors above, of red brick with stucco dressings, dating from the late 18th/early 19th century. No. 4 (First Choice) is particularly notable for its highly attractive late 19th-century shop front (with decorative iron cresting) and interior. The ground floor of No. 5 is obscured by the projecting entrance 'porch' to the Ankerside Shopping Centre, a pitched-roof construction supported on cast-iron columns in an apparent attempt to look Victorian, although the building it is attached to is in fact Georgian. The pitched roof also obscures the first-floor windows of the building behind, the entire ground floor of which has been completely reconfigured as a single space leading directly into the 1980s shopping centre behind.
- 5.3.22 On the north side, the three-storey No. 37 (Halifax Estate Agency) is a striking element of the street scene with a coped, shaped gable to the street and buff terracotta dressings on red brick to its decorative facade. Built in 1898 with an inserted early 20th-century shop front, it is prominent in views southwest from the east end of the street. The adjoining Nos. 36-36A (Tamworth Jewellers/Phonebox) probably dates from the 17th century and is of brick with a plastered front. The first floor has three 19th-century canted oriel windows and there are also three dormers. The modern shop fronts are unsympathetic to the building.

Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

- 5.3.23 There is a single locally listed building on the north side of Market Street; this is No. 11 (Tamworth's Toolbox), a narrow but tall two-bay, three-storey building dating from

the 18th century This is squashed rather uncomfortably against the 1960s brown brick, flat-roofed HSBC Bank at No. 10. Adjoining it on the other side, the two-storey Nos. 12-13 (Taffeta/The Jewellery Box/Peels Coffee Shop), probably also 18th century in date, has replacement windows, but could probably also be added to the local list as the only building on the street of this date which has not so far been protected in this way.

- 5.3.24 On the south side Nos. 31 (The Nail Studio/M-Viron), No. 35 (Chinese Medical Centre/Edward Thomas), No. 36 (Monsoon) and No. 38 (Phil Roberts & Co./The Bow Street Runner) are all on the local list. No. 31 comprises two late 19th-century three-storey shops with attractive painted stone bracketed cornice hoods to the windows. The appearance of these buildings is let down by the overly prominent modern fascia boards to the shop fronts. No. 35 is very similar in style to the adjoining listed No. 34, with the same detailing to the first- and second-floor window surrounds. However, the building's character is compromised by its unsympathetic late 20th-century shop fronts with large fascias, in marked contrast to the ashlar used around No. 34's shop front. The local list states this building is late 19th century, but given its similarity in style to No. 34, it is possible that this building, too, is 18th-century with the front rebuilt in the mid 19th-century.
- 5.3.25 The three-storey late 19th-century No. 36 has the added visual interest of a central canted oriel window on the second floor, while No. 38 stands out for its gable with applied timber framing and bargeboards; the ground-floor of the right-hand bay is of rusticated ashlar and appears to be in use as part of The Bow Street Runner bar attached to the Castle Hotel. The gabled bay has a highly unsympathetic low-quality shop front and the brickwork above is scarred from the removal of an earlier shop front.
- 5.3.26 On George Street locally listed buildings include on the south side Nos. 15-16 (Burton's) and on the north side 31-31A (Jenks/Carrick's/Edwards) and No. 33 (Edwards). The Burtons building has a considerable visual impact on the street, built in 1936 to a standard Burton's store design, constructed of brick with a stone façade and stepped parapet. It has retained its original Art Deco style metal-framed windows and its original shop front with bronze mullions beneath a marble fascia, although a new fascia has been applied below it, giving it a rather dark appearance.

- 5.3.27 Nos. 31-31A (Jenks/Jewellers Workshop/Bar B79) is an attractive row of three-storey late 19th-century shops with stone string course and lintels and three gabled dormer windows on the steeply-pitched roof. Traditional timber shop fronts survive. Nos. 32-33 adjoining (Bar B79) is stated to be late 19th century, but could well be earlier, possibly 18th-century/early 19th-century. It is a pleasant building of two widely-spaced bays with splayed painted stone window heads with keystones and unhorned glazing bar sashes. Its interior has been wholly reconfigured meaning it is probably not of listable quality, but should certainly remain on the local list.
- 5.3.28 Nos. 7-8 George Street (Dorothy Perkins/Abbey) are recommended for inclusion on the local list. This is a very attractive probably mid to late 19th-century three-storey building (now two shops) with a five-window range (four-pane cambered-arched sashes), being built of red brick and having yellow brick dressings to the windows and corners and sill band, and a highly decorative stone eaves cornice. Its shop fronts are modern and inappropriate.

Negative Features

- 5.3.29 Excepting No. 22 (Halifax), the banks/building societies on Market Street are housed in a series of architectural ills erected in the 1960s to the general detriment of the streetscape, including No. 26 (Nationwide), whose deeply recessed ground floor is overhung by a flat-roofed first-floor façade mostly filled with glazing, and apparently supported on a single slim steel column so that it appears to be projecting from the side of its neighbour, No. 26A, which it unfortunately directly adjoins.
- 5.3.30 The NatWest and HSBC bank buildings (Nos. 8-10) on the northern side have an even greater negative effect on the streetscape, their long and flat brown brick frontages and flat roofs (particularly the dark and prominent concrete roof to NatWest) sitting uncomfortably between 18th- and 19th-century shops, which they dwarf. Nos. 4-5 (Shop & Save), of similar vintage, is marginally less offensive, but has garish shop signage and also has a negative effect on the east side of King Street.
- 5.3.31 It is doubly unfortunate that the 1960s 'boxes' housing Nos. 14-17 (Bright House/Bon Marche) should be directly opposite the arcaded north return elevation of the town hall. Worse still, the long featureless façade of the 1960s Nos. 18-19 (part of the

Middle Entry shopping arcade) faces the east elevation of the town hall and certainly does not enhance the view from the east end of Market Street into George Street. Indeed, these buildings have a particularly unfortunate impact on the appearance of the curved stone façade of No. 22 (Halifax), which is also adversely affected by the entrance to the Ankerside Shopping Centre.

- 5.3.32 Adding insult to injury is the rather bland row of late 20th-century shops (Philip Howard/Cancer Research UK) facing the south return elevation of the town hall, apparently designed to emulate the prevailing 18th-century style but not quite succeeding, although their dormer windows add some visual interest. This row and No. 26 also frame the bridged entrance across the archaeologically excavated remains of the Castle gatehouse into the Pleasure Grounds.
- 5.3.33 The current, rather dated-looking paving scheme is not the ideal solution for this conservation area, particularly not in these narrow, intimate and predominantly 18th-century market streets, especially Market Street itself. The paving dilutes the overall historic character and positive visual impact of these buildings, leaving them to appear rather 'lost' in the carpet-like expanse of harsh red-brown brick, which drowns out their own softer-hued brick tones. There also appears to be an over-proliferation of bollards, particularly on Market Street by the town hall, and the large litter bins are of low-quality design.
- 5.3.34 The area where Market Street and George Street join has been 'landscaped' as a seating area, but could still be much further improved. This area, although faced by unattractive 1960s and later structures, adjoins the town hall and Halifax building, and has the potential to be more inviting, which the current layout and low-quality seating certainly does not achieve.
- 5.3.35 The use of modern 'brass' swan-neck lamps, such as on the Burtons and Shop & Save stores does not accord well with the 19th-century-style lighting that survives on other buildings.
- 5.3.36 There are some individual buildings where some external maintenance would be beneficial. For instance, No. 38 Market Street has damaged stonework and scarred

brickwork from the removal of an earlier shop front and the parapet to the Burton's store on George Street could do with some repair.

- 5.3.37 Several buildings are blighted by overly large and garish shop fascias, such as Nos. Nos. 1a and 2 George Street. Clearly, the 1960s and later structures on George Street are not attractive additions to the street. Woolworth's on the north side and McDonald's on the south side are particularly overbearing and Nos. 12a-12b have an unappealing heavy projecting concrete canopy. Nos. 34-35a are also scruffy and unattractive.
- 5.3.38 The Ankerside shopping centre, while for the most part concealed behind the street frontage, does intrude into it in places, but its most visible negative impact is on the Castle Pleasure Grounds, from where it is all too visible.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.3.39 The external condition of the older buildings and of their historic shop fronts, where these survive, appears generally good, although there are certain individual buildings in need of maintenance and repair. A significant opportunity for positive change lies in the replacement of the paving scheme, particularly on Market Street.
- 5.3.40 While opportunities for the demolition and redevelopment of the sites of 1960s and later buildings or the Ankerside shopping centre are perhaps unlikely to be forthcoming, at least in the near future, this should remain a long-term aspiration. Certainly, if such demolition and redevelopment should take place this could provide the opportunity for reinstating the historic street pattern and grain of this part of the town destroyed by these developments.
- 5.3.41 The public seating area between George Street and Market Street could easily be made more attractive and inviting through better landscaping and seating.
- 5.3.42 Replacement of insensitive late 20th-century shop fronts with more traditional style examples would benefit the appearance of both streets.

CHARACTER ZONE 3: MARKET STREET AND GEORGE STREET



View east along Market Street to the Town Hall, showing dilution of historic character by inappropriate surface treatment



View west along Market Street to tower block off Lichfield Street. Surface treatment is of higher quality in front of the Town Hall



View from the Town Hall into the Castle Pleasure Grounds



Town Hall, also showing the negative effect the red brick paving has on the character of the historic buildings



View south along King Street to Market Street



The significant view north to St. Editha's Church along College Lane suffers from late 20th-century redevelopment and clutter



View west along George Street



The Grade II* listed Town Hall with statue of Sir Robert Peel



South side of Market Street



The listed No. 34 Market Street, with attractive detailing to windows and ashlar dressings



The listed Nos.32-32A Market Street, with arcaded ground floor



The listed No. 26A Market Street, with 19th-century shop front (also showing traditional style street-lighting). No. 26 adjoining (Nationwide) and the late 20th-century shops development beyond do not enhance the conservation area



The listed No.22 Market Street, a landmark building between George Street and Market Street



Contrasting architectural styles on north side of Market Street



The listed No. 6 Market Street, with fine 1870s shop front



The listed Market Vaults public house



Unsympathetic 1960s buildings on north side of Market Street (NatWest and HSBC)



Seating area between George Street and Market Street, showing unfortunate location of 1960s shops and 1980s Ankerside Shopping Centre in relation to No. 22 (Halifax) and Town Hall (to right)



The listed No. 4 George Street with attractive late 19th-century shop front



The listed landmark building, No. 37 George Street



Entrance to the Ankerside Shopping Centre from George Street, the entrance structure obscuring the façade of the listed No. 5



The locally listed Nos. 15-16 George Street: a purpose-built Burton's store, prominent in the streetscape



The attractively-detailed Nos. 7-8 George Street, recommended for inclusion on the local list



Unattractive 1960s structures on George Street, which severely detract from the historic market character of the street

5.4 CHARACTER ZONE 4: ST. EDITHA'S CHURCH AND CHURCH STREET

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.4.1 This character zone includes St. Editha's Church and the churchyard directly adjoining it to the north, the 1960s market square south of the church, bordered by the Middle Entry shopping arcade, and both parts of Church Street. It also includes Church Lane, which runs north off the churchyard and the northern half of College Lane.
- 5.4.2 The architectural character of the zone ranges from the Norman but mostly 14th-century church, through the 18th-century buildings on Church Street to the 1960s shopping units which border the west and south sides of the rather bleak expanse of the market square. It is unfortunate that this important location in the heart of the medieval town adjoining the church should have suffered such a degradation of its historic character through the construction of the characterless Middle Entry shops. Beyond these, in views to the west, the tower-blocks off Lichfield Street loom over all.
- 5.4.3 In contrast, the churchyard is a green, enclosed oasis which evokes the feeling of a churchyard in a Victorian suburb or village (save, of course, for the white mass of the library). Views east and northeast across it look out towards a jumble of red brick and tiled roofs and take in the attractive properties on Church Lane and Little Church Lane, which cut through to Lower Gungate. These views, the high brick walls and the many mature trees throughout the churchyard emphasise the feeling of enclosure despite its large size.
- 5.4.4 Church Street west of St. Editha's Square has retained historic coherence and character, with only one or two later intrusions, while the section of the street east of the square has fared less well. The street has shops and restaurants, but is not as bustling and lively as George Street and Market Street.
- 5.4.5 College Lane, which has historically provided access from George Street through the street block to Church Street, opening onto the latter directly in front of St. Editha's Church, has been sullied at either end by 1960s developments, so that the important view up the sloping ground north to the church is sadly framed by the great brown, red and yellow brick (but still featureless) expanses of the side elevations of Nos. 27

and 28 George Street. The view is also cluttered with phone boxes, commercial waste bins, bollards, street-lighting and signage.

- 5.4.6 The view south is little more rewarding as the lane has been widened where it opens into the 1960s shopping square at its north end with the result that the two older buildings surviving on its east side are not readily visible, having been surrounded by the block-like masses of the 1960s structures.

Architectural Quality of Buildings/Building Materials

- 5.4.7 St. Editha's Church of course dominates the area. It has Anglo-Saxon origins from when Tamworth was the capital of the Mercian Kingdom, but most of the building now dates from the mid to late 14th century (including its west tower with rare double helix staircase, only two other examples of which survive, at All Saints, Pontefract, and at Much Wenlock) when it was rebuilt after the Norman church was destroyed by fire.
- 5.4.8 Despite this, much Norman fabric survives, including two of the four arches supporting the former central crossing tower. The church was extensively restored by Ferrey and Gilbert Scott in the 1850s and again by Butterfield in c.1871. It is an impressive and solid-looking former collegiate church, with a rather dumpy and wide west tower (a planned spire was never built), which gives it great character. It is unfussy and simple in decorative terms, which reinforces the effect of the four rather solid crocketed corner pinnacles to the tower, while its stone construction in a town full of brick buildings is welcome to the eye.
- 5.4.9 The south side of Church Street opposite the church was blown apart in the 1960s to create St. Editha's Square and the Middle Entry shops. This altered the historic street pattern but provided an opportunity to create an attractive square adjoining the church and open up longer views of the church. However, the most was not taken of this opportunity and the square today is bleak and visually unappealing, particularly in winter, severely detracting from the character and appearance of the important Grade I listed church.
- 5.4.10 At the extreme eastern end of Church Street is the Grade II listed No. 33 (Old Stone Cross public house). Although an early 18th-century building it has 16th-century cellars

and some timber framing. Its façade was reconstructed in 1974, using concrete dressings, including quoins and curved hoods over the entrances. This gives it a slightly odd appearance, also not enhanced by the use of modern 'brass' swan-neck external lighting over the signage. Nevertheless, the building is important in the streetscape not least for the part it plays in the conflict between old and new at this end of the street, in which it rather acts as a visual intermediary.

- 5.4.11 There are several other listed buildings on Church Street. On the north side just west of the church, No. 25 (The Colin Grazier Hotel) is an early 18th-century red brick house distinctive for its seven tall and narrow round-arched first-floor glazing bar sashes with stone keystones. The building was formerly used as a police station (and later by Social Services) and has a rear extension incorporating a late 19th-century cell block. The long façade of this building, which stands directly on the pavement, is part of a continuous and attractive red brick street frontage, all on a plastered plinth. The range also includes Nos. 21-22, two houses (now offices), dating from the early 19th century, one of two storeys and the other of three.
- 5.4.12 No. 10 (Shipleys Amusements), further west, is also a Grade II listed mid 18th-century house, now part of a row of small shops, with an attic storey lit by two hipped dormers. It is rather blighted by its modern shop front. On the south side of the street is an attractive row of listed buildings (Nos. 66-71), all standing directly on the narrow pavement and of varying style and character. They make an important contribution to the conservation area as a group.
- 5.4.13 Nos. 66-67 are mainly early 18th-century, with a 17th-century core and are of painted brick with attractive dentilled friezes over each floor, end pilaster strips and coved cornice. The mid 20th-century (probably 1930s) shop fronts are appealing, too, with attractive sunburst motif to the glazed door at the canted corner entrance of No. 66, and black glass fascia. Unfortunately, the mosaic marble tiling set into the street in front of the entrance is in poor repair. No. 1 King Street (Grade II listed) has an identical shop front with sunburst motif to the door and the right-hand bay of the building bridges the entrance into King Street, creating a carriage entry. No. 1 is plainer and probably later in date, but the two buildings form an important group flanking King Street with their matching shop fronts. The shop fronts to all three buildings should certainly be retained and kept in good repair. This is important, as

Nos. 1 and 66 were unoccupied in early 2007 and the shop fronts are potentially under threat.

- 5.4.14 Nos. 68-69 (New Mayflower takeaway) consists of two single-window ranges, the right-hand lower than the left-hand, and is of painted brick with some timber framing, dating from the 17th century and later. It has suffered loss of character due to the blocking of entrances, insertion of an unsympathetic modern shop front and re-fenestration of the right-hand range. Adjoining it, the c.1820-40 No. 70 (Bollywood Restaurant) is distinctive for its large rusticated elliptical-arched carriage entry to the right; unfortunately, the 19th-century shop front referred to in the list description of 1992 appears to have been replaced since. The three-storey No. 71 (Rainbow Cantonese) has retained glazing bar sashes like No. 70, and has a former bow window to the ground floor, now a flat plate glass opening but retaining its 19th-century surround. Nos. 70-72 are of three storeys but because of the slope in ground level do not appear taller than their two-storey neighbours to the east.

Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

- 5.4.15 Approaching the western end of Church Street from Lichfield Street one is confronted by the impressive curved façade of the early 20th-century Co-op building (Nos. 1-8). While sadly the ground-floor shop front, which runs around both the Aldergate and Church Street elevations has been bricked-up between its supporting pilasters, the stuccoed first floor has retained its attractive Art Deco windows which cover the whole of the upper storey to Church Street and the corner with Aldergate, separated by pilasters. Above, a part-balustraded, part-panelled parapet conceals a hipped roof. The other half of the Aldergate elevation is plainer and of exposed brick (and may be an earlier structure) but has attractive Georgian-style round-arched windows. This building is a prominent landmark structure on the corner and should be added to the local list. However, it would clearly benefit from restoration of its original shop front.
- 5.4.16 On the opposite side of Church Street, No. 72 is on the local list, a three-storey probably early 19th-century house which forms part of a group with the adjoining listed Nos. 70-71.

- 5.4.17 The most impressive unlisted building on the street in terms of scale is certainly No. 59 (Chicago Rock Café), a large Art Deco building constructed in 1932 by Colonel D’Arcy Chaytor who, prior to this date, was largely responsible for bringing electricity to the town. He built it to serve as a showroom and offices for the TADESCO electricity company and with its long symmetrical façade with central clock tower (which forms an impressive visual terminus to the view south along Corporation Street), it forms an eye-catching landmark. Despite its rather rude intrusion into an intimate street of primarily domestically-scaled 18th- and 19th-century red brick houses and shops, the building is finely detailed and makes a bold architectural statement. It is included on the local list.
- 5.4.18 Two doors down, at No. 63, a late 19th-century three-storey building is also on the local list, and actually forms part of a larger building which has been much altered. This is part of an important streetscape together with the row of listed buildings further down, having an interesting roofline of different heights and styles of dormer windows.
- 5.4.19 Opposite is the highly attractive late 19th-century No. 15 (Tavern Inn), a large public house with Dutch gable and stone-dressed Venetian window to the Church Street frontage. The pub also has elliptical-arched windows with label moulds and keystones on the ground floor of both this elevation and to the long two- and three-storey ranges along Corporation Street; an ashlar oriel also adorns this elevation. Looking past the Church Street elevation along Corporation Street, the Dutch gable makes visual reference to the semi-circular pediment of the Assembly Rooms beyond. No. 15 stands in a prominent location and should be added to the local list, along with the adjoining No. 14 (The Wardrobe), a probably earlier 19th-century three-storey building with attractive stone sill banding and window surrounds.
- 5.4.20 In the eastern section of the street, two buildings are included on the local list. No. 29 is a mid 19th-century two-storey stuccoed brick building which presents its rather quirky side elevation to Church Street. The building’s long western façade faces the church and, as the local list description states, the building forms a ‘sympathetic visual foil effecting a transition between the contrasting styles of St. Editha’s Church and the former TSB’. The latter (No. 31; Extra Job Shop) is certainly not a pleasing addition to the street, a late 1970s/1980s brown brick building with a particularly unattractive roof form.

- 5.4.21 Opposite, fronting onto Colehill, is the attractive late 19th-century Co-operative Society building (on the local list and discussed as part of Character Zone 6). Its fine highly-detailed Church Street elevation is sadly marred by the inappropriate and bland-faced 1960s extension which extends west from it towards the church and part of which has a long and overbearing concrete projecting canopy over the ground floor.
- 5.4.22 St. Editha's Church Hall on College Lane (included on the local list) has little obvious physical or visual link to the church. The 1885 map marks it as a Sunday School, with a vicarage behind (now demolished) and at that time, tucked away in a densely-packed street frontage on this narrow lane, with views to the church having more coherence and historical context, the building would have been a more significant element. Now, sandwiched between large 1960s structures (except for its neighbour, No. 5 (Aladdin's)) it is sadly out of context and faces across the lane into a bleak service yard and car park for the Middle Entry and other shopping units. It is, however, an attractive building, erected in 1827 as a National School and used as such for much of the 19th century. It is of two storeys and stuccoed brick and has a five window range. The ground-floor openings have been reduced and the original entrance portico replaced; the building is now in use as the Griddle Café. The adjoining No. 5 is also recommended for inclusion on the local list as the only other surviving 19th-century building on the lane, its two dormers adding much-needed visual interest to the streetscene.
- 5.4.23 The two-storey plus attic terrace (Nos. 21-31) on the east side of the narrow cul-de-sac, Church Lane, is rather isolated but manages to retain some historic coherence in the face of the library and rear of the bus depot opposite. Most of the sashes to the terrace have been replaced, and one or two openings moved, but on the whole the buildings are attractive, with prominent dormer windows, flat front elevations with a high ratio of wall to window, and small front yards. The otherwise attractive view along the terrace towards the church tower is, however, rather spoilt by the library.

Negative Features

- 5.4.24 Clearly, the most significant negative feature of this area, and possibly of the whole conservation area given its central location, is the square directly south of the church, created in the 1960s by the clearance of properties on the south side of Church Street.

While the idea of creating a square close to the church may have been an appealing one at the time and could have created a pleasant townscape feature (despite it necessitating the destruction of the historic street pattern in this area), such a positive result was not achieved. Instead, the visitor to the heart of the town and the medieval church is confronted by a bleak expanse of poor-quality paving surrounded on three sides by ugly and sprawling flat-roofed 1960s shop units of absolutely no architectural merit or visual appeal.

- 5.4.25 The buildings are of low height (excepting the great three-storey bulk of the Co-op extension) and, on the west and south sides of the square, present continuous brown-brick and 'pebble-dashed' concrete frontages with dark ground floors shielded from view by large projecting, white concrete canopies, which simply serve to emphasise the buildings' blank, rectangular, horizontal appearance. The shops are part of the Middle Entry shopping arcade, Middle Entry itself originally being part of the historic street pattern, an alleyway leading from Church Street through to the medieval Market Place. It is now a covered walk lined with featureless 1960s shop units, which opens off the square. At the end of the afternoon, when the market stalls have been taken down, there is no reason to linger here and the square is empty and surrounded by closed shops.
- 5.4.26 This is a rather sorry state of affairs for the heart of the historic town and severely detracts from the appearance of St. Editha's Church, which stands rather forlornly on the north side of the square, separated from it only by the margin of grassed bank rising up to the higher ground on which the church is built, behind a stone dwarf wall (with pitifully crudely applied concrete-slab coping) which defines the church 'precinct'. This area, paved beyond the grass in concrete slabs, is bedecked with the teetering 'towers' of plastic-tubbed planters which are found throughout the town seemingly in random distribution, and which are certainly not particularly appropriate to this historic location.
- 5.4.27 The square has some public art in its centre and a few young trees have been planted, but these things do little to counteract its bleak aspect or the profusion of unnecessary bollards, poor-quality litter bins and poorly positioned seating and street-lighting poles that clutter the area and are rapidly turning it almost into an obstacle course. The fading and graffiti-strewn information boards found throughout the conservation area, one of which is close to the church, badly need redesigning and replacing, too.

- 5.4.28 Rather like the square, College Lane has sadly lost virtually all historic context. The former National School/Church Hall is not in particularly good condition externally and the important view to the church from the southern end of the lane is blighted by 1960s structures and the general clutter of street furniture. Superficial improvements to aesthetic quality could no doubt be made to improve this situation until such time as major redevelopment might be able to restore the grain of the historic street pattern in this area.
- 5.4.29 Away from the square there are of course various buildings erected in the mid to late 20th century that do not enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, including No. 31 Church Street (Extra Job Shop), and there is the somewhat intractable problem of the looming Lichfield Street tower blocks that are ever present in views to the west and which cause the buildings along the western section of Church Street to appear small-scale and huddled together in their shadow.
- 5.4.30 Shop fronts in this zone are generally poor, with one or two notable exceptions, including the 1930s fronts to No. 1 King Street and Nos. 66-67 Church Street. The state of the ground-floor of the Co-op building at the west end of Church Street is unfortunate and detracts from this otherwise handsome landmark corner building.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.4.31 If the opportunity arises to redevelop St. Editha's Square, this would represent a significant chance to bring some vitality and visual and architectural quality to the heart of the conservation area and to this important and potentially very attractive location next to St. Editha's Church. Whatever its merits, now that this space has been created, investment in turning it into a high-quality square with outdoor cafes and shops which could engage with the street frontage (in contrast to the *status quo*), could clearly have beneficial effect on this part of the conservation area. Of course, it should be recognised that this would be a substantial and costly undertaking, but should nevertheless remain a long-term aspiration. In the meantime, however, improvement and reconfiguration of street surfacing and furniture, and improvement of tourist/heritage information boards, would have at least some beneficial effect.

- 5.4.32 Coupled with this, improvements to the church boundary wall on the square side (i.e. reinstatement of traditional coping to the dwarf wall in place of the existing low-quality and crudely applied concrete slabs) and replacement of the concrete-slab paving immediately around the church with traditional stone slabs, would enhance the immediate setting of the church and restore to it some dignity, as would the removal of the inappropriate planters on the grass bank.
- 5.4.33 A unified scheme of shop front replacement may be beneficial on the western section of Church Street. This historic street retains a large proportion of its architectural character but this is being eroded by inappropriate late 20th-century shop fronts and, given the important historic function of this street (which leads directly to St. Editha's Church via Lichfield Street and forms the western route into the town), restoration of historic character and visual quality to its buildings would be a significant improvement on the existing situation. The attractive 1930s shop fronts to No. 1 King Street and Nos. 66-67 Church Street should be retained, and the marbled entrance in front of their entrances should be restored/replaced.
- 5.4.34 Re-opening and restoration of the ground floor of the Co-op building at the western end of Church Street should also be sought.

CHARACTER ZONE 4: ST. EDITHA'S CHURCH AND CHURCH STREET



The Grade I listed St. Editha's Church



The rather bleak square created south of the church in the 1960s. Also showing low-quality cracked concrete paving slabs alongside church



Attractive view across churchyard to Editha's Cottages on Church Lane



Less attractive view across churchyard to the Central Library



The Colin Grazier Hotel



The listed Nos. 66-71, an attractive group on the south side of Church Street



Attractive shop front to No. 66 Church Street



The listed Old Stone Cross public house with reconstructed façade



The Co-op building, a landmark building at the western end of Church Street, recommended for addition to the local list



The locally listed No. 59 Church Street, an impressive landmark structure built in 1932 as an electricity showroom



The locally listed Tavern Inn, an attractive building in a prominent corner location, recommended for addition to the local list



The locally listed No. 29 Church Street adjoining the unattractive No. 31



Looking west along Church Street; the attractive façade of the Co-op building to the left is sadly marred by its 1960s extension as part of the shopping square opposite the church



View south along College Lane, showing loss of historic character



The locally listed former St. Editha's Church Hall. No. 5 adjoining is recommended for inclusion on the local list



The locally listed terrace on Church Lane



Poor-quality concrete slab coping to dwarf wall around church precinct and inappropriate planters on bank



The rather dismal condition of the heritage information board in the square

5.5 CHARACTER ZONE 5: ALDERGATE/CORPORATION STREET

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.5.1 This character zone includes Aldergate, the long, curving street which forms the western side of the 'A' of the medieval street pattern, and also includes the small 'civic' area to the southeast of Aldergate, based around Corporation Street and the Garden of Rest. It has an open feel, in contrast to the more intimate and densely built-up streets of the town centre to the south, with large buildings including the attractive Assembly Rooms, Carnegie Centre and Philip Dix Centre dispersed along Corporation Street, their historic setting now rather compromised by the surface car parks between them.
- 5.5.2 The Central Library stands between St. Editha's churchyard and the former Aldergate Cemetery (now Garden of Rest), and is a lone but large 1960s interloper, at odds with the church, the row of Victorian houses along Church Lane, and its setting in general. North of it is the large bus depot, constructed around 1930. The latter, constructed in the late 1920s/early 1930s is inoffensive enough and not without architectural detailing. It is a large building but manages not to be too prominent, and fits relatively well into its surroundings.
- 5.5.3 Views northwest through the mature trees across the Garden of Rest towards the listed buildings on Aldergate and the Philip Dix Centre on Corporation Street are attractive, giving the impression of an enclosed square, and there is a good view southeast from Aldergate along Corporation Street, which takes in the good group of red brick Victorian buildings including the Carnegie and Philip Dix Centres and the long return elevation of the Assembly Rooms. The view from further south along Corporation Street, which encompasses the impressive façade of the Assembly Rooms, the church tower rising behind and above its decorative semi-circular pediment, and the prominent full-height curved white-stucco bays of Nos. 16-20, is attractive but sadly blighted by the car park in the foreground. These buildings along Corporation Street seem rather isolated due to the spaces between them now being used as car parks, rather giving the street the feel of one large car park with buildings scattered throughout.

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- 5.5.4 The churchyard and Garden of Rest play a significant role as important open and green spaces in this area.
- 5.5.5 The large traffic intersection at the junction between Aldergate and Lower Gungate acts very much as a barrier, certainly reinforcing the impression that this is the outskirts of the town and that the buildings turn inwards into the town centre. The late 19th-century Nos. 29 and 31 just north of the bus depot look a little lost on this widened stretch of the street, as does the short row of altered cottages opposite the bus depot. It is proposed to amend the conservation area boundary to exclude the large car park and intersection, as these do not form part of the established grain of the area.
- 5.5.6 The bend in the road in long views southwest along Aldergate has a more inviting aspect, with the former Congregational chapel terminating the view. Beyond the Garden of Rest on the east side is a strip of grass dotted with planters in front of the public WCs and modern office extension to the Philip Dix Centre. In the late 19th century Bradbury Square, two rows of small terraces built along an inner yard, stood on the line of the present-day Corporation Street and south of this square was open land, apparently all that survived of a large landscaped and planted garden associated with Nos. 16-20 Church Street, entered via a long driveway from Aldergate. This area was comprehensively redeveloped as a result of the creation of Corporation Street between 1885 and 1902 and subsequently that street's reconfiguration and the erection of the various 'civic' buildings along it. Currently, the north end of Corporation Street has a rather dispersed and too-open appearance, the sense of dignity these buildings would have lent to the street having been depleted by the lack of coherence created by the introduction of car parks around them.
- 5.5.7 Behind the frontage buildings on the east side of Aldergate is a small area of old workshops, while glimpses are afforded through the yards to the church tower and pediment of the Assembly Rooms.
- 5.5.8 The townscape is more open and fragmented in this part of the conservation area, away from the heart of the market places and shopping streets. The difference in scale between the buildings on Aldergate and Marmion House and the tower blocks which loom up behind them makes for an uneasy (and unattractive) juxtaposition. Despite

this, the area remains part of the historic town and contains some good individual buildings.

Architectural Quality of Buildings and Building Materials

- 5.5.9 The most architecturally impressive buildings in this character zone front the east side of Corporation Street and are both listed. The Italianate Assembly Rooms, built in 1889 of red brick with prominent ashlar dressings, is an eye-catching building and certainly the one with the highest level of architectural merit and detailing. Its large semi-circular heavily-coped pediment carries a boldly carved town arms with mermaid supporters. This and the contrast between the building's red brickwork and the white-painted stone make the building stand out in the streetscene.
- 5.5.10 Nos. 16-20 Church Street (The White House; Employment Agency) adjoins the Assembly Rooms. The building fronts Church Street but is set well back from the street and has been included in this character zone because of its scale and nature. It is a large early 19th-century stuccoed house of three storeys with, at the rear, a full-height bow, which is prominent in views towards the Assembly Rooms.
- 5.5.11 The other listed buildings in the character zone front the north side of Aldergate in the northern section of the street and make a good and visually coherent group, all of a period and important in views from the Garden of Rest. These include Nos. 11-17, all dating from between 1770 and 1800. No. 11, a three-bay, three-storey double-pile house, now offices, has ashlar dressings, a round-arched entrance with pilastered and pedimented doorcase flanked by 19th-century ashlar bay windows. It has retained its glazing bar sashes, as does the adjoining Nos. 12-13, two rather more modest single-bay houses set further back from the street frontage, one an office and the other an annexe of The Peel Hotel. A dividing wall survives between what were once front yards, but which have now been given over to car-parking space. The right return elevation has been rather unfortunately rebuilt in 20th-century Fletton brick.
- 5.5.12 No. 14 (The Peel Hotel with Domino's Pizza on the ground floor) is a similar three-bay, three-storey double-pile house, set back from the street frontage, but the entire width of its ground floor has been built out with an unattractive late 20th-century shop front,

which has severely compromised the character and appearance of the building; its character has been further eroded by the creation of a car-parking area in front.

- 5.5.13 No. 15 has fared better, a neat three-bay and three-storey house which stands directly on the extremely narrow pavement. Although it has been converted to flats, No. 15 has retained its integrity, and has rusticated splayed lintels and an attractive pilastered and pedimented ashlar doorcase. Its long rear range incorporates two carriage arches and a 20th-century canted oriel. Across the tarmac-surfaced rear yard are open views to the 1999 MacGregor Tithe development in the Hospital Street Conservation Area. Nos. 16-17 (Premier Blinds), originally two houses and now a shop, is of similar style to No. 15, but with channelled rustication to its ground floor and a large elliptical-headed former carriage entrance through the centre, now glazed and used as the main central entrance into the shop.

Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

- 5.5.14 The two locally listed buildings within the character zone face each other at an angle across Corporation Street. Both are important elements of the streetscape, particularly in terms of their group value with each other. The Carnegie Centre, built as a Carnegie-funded library in 1905, is a highly attractive and rather picturesque single-storey building, of red brick with stone dressings. It has a symmetrical façade with gabled outer bays containing large Venetian-style windows. The central entrance has an attractive rusticated round-arched architrave and there is an ornamental cupola on the slate pitched roof. Opposite, the two-storey 1911 Drill Hall (Staffs Territorial Force Association, now the Philip Dix Centre) is of red brick with yellow brick string coursing and ashlar-dressed entrance and has a central gable to the street and stone ball finials to the corners. Its original rear wing has been demolished and redeveloped with a two-storey office building, which is more visible from Aldergate, but happily the original frontage building remains the dominant element.
- 5.5.15 Other important buildings stand on the north-south section of Aldergate, including the Methodist Chapel (built between 1885 and 1902) and former Congregational Chapel (pre-1885, but late 19th-century, now the Jalali restaurant). While the plots between these two buildings have been insensitively filled by a box-like late 20th-century medical centre and the inappropriately large building on the corner of St. John's Street

- the Methodist Church in particular is horribly dwarfed by the high-rise Marmion House (Borough Council offices) directly behind it - both buildings should be added to the local list. Both are in the gothic revival style, of red brick with stone dressings, and present gable ends with large arched windows to the street. The Methodist Chapel is of more architectural interest. The original porch and entrance to the Congregational Chapel has unfortunately been removed and replaced with a very poor substitute, to the detriment of the building's character, but it is important that both these buildings are retained. They also form a good group with the later St. John's Roman Catholic Church to their west, which it is proposed to bring into the conservation area by extending the western boundary at this point.

5.5.16 This latter building, constructed between 1924 and 1937 on the site of an earlier church, is a rather elegant brick-built structure with hipped slate roof, modillioned eaves, and a tall tripartite lancet window set in a round-arched recess in its west end. It is stuccoed on part of its southern elevation, which part also has full-height pilasters and tall lancet windows in sets of three. There is a tall statue niche in the west end of its lower-height north range. The building stands out for its simple clean lines and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. It should be added to the local list and the conservation area boundary amended to include it.

5.5.17 The White Lion (probably built in the 1920s) is a characterful public house on the corner, now dwarfed by Marmion House. It is of brown brick with a slate roof and white-painted stone dressings around casement windows. Its canted corner façade has a prominent chimneybreast. This building cannot help but suffer from the immediate presence of Marmion House towering facelessly behind it, but it should nevertheless be added to the local list.

Negative Features

5.5.18 The overarching negative feature of the character zone is Marmion House which, along with the high-rise block opposite, towers over the buildings on Aldergate. Views south along Aldergate are thus blighted by its overshadowing effect. The streetscape between the Methodist and former Congregationalist chapels has also seen loss to historic character with the construction of the Peel Medical Centre and the box-like building with large hipped roof and meanly proportioned windows on the corner of St.

John's Street, the latter built around the time the conservation area was designated. The two chapels would previously have dominated the view southwest along the street, but have now become lost in this later development. The Congregationalist Chapel has suffered further damage to its appearance through the construction of the 1960s building adjoining it to the north, which unfortunately projects forward of the chapel's building line, and through the inappropriate replacement of its original porch in the later 20th century.

- 5.5.19 The other major building in the zone which has a less than positive effect on the conservation area is the Central Library. The library does not sit well in its surroundings, acting as a physical barrier between the two churchyards, and is very out of scale with the Victorian terrace along Church Lane. Built in the 1960s, it is of bold, concrete design and very much of its time, meaning that it is rather alien in context, detracting from the otherwise quiet Victorian character of the churchyard's periphery, not to mention the church itself.
- 5.5.20 Gaps in the street frontage have been created through demolition and non-replacement of buildings, including the area east of No. 9 and east of the terrace at Nos. 18-20. These areas have been given over to car parking to the detriment of the appearance of the streetscape.
- 5.5.21 Individual buildings have also seen loss of character. In particular, the listed Peel Hotel, its appearance sadly blighted by the insertion of a wholly insensitive late 20th-century shopfront and signage (Domino's Pizza). Nos. 12-14 have also suffered the loss of their original front yards to car parking.
- 5.5.22 The black-tubbed planters make their inevitable appearance, with one rather oddly standing firmly in the middle of the pavement in front of No. 11. Others abound throughout the conservation area.
- 5.5.23 The large car-parking areas on Corporation Street are ill-conceived and cause the fragmentation of the street's historic character and the depletion of the historic visual links between the area's large civic buildings.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.5.24 There are opportunities for enhancement of the Aldergate street frontage in various places should it become possible to redevelop certain sites. Improvements to this streetscape, which should be designed to complement views of the two Victorian chapels, might also help to counteract the unfortunate effects of Marmion House.
- 5.5.25 On a smaller scale, the unused strip of green space in front of the public WCs could be made more attractive through planting and landscaping (to replace the planters already there).

CHARACTER ZONE 5: ALDERGATE/CORPORATION STREET



Attractive view across churchyard to Aldergate



Looking from Aldergate along Corporation Street towards attractive group of civic buildings



View from further along Aldergate, blighted by large car park



Major traffic intersection at north end of Aldergate (and car park to left), recommended for exclusion from the conservation area



View southwest along Aldergate



High-rise block and Marmion House rear up behind the smaller-scale buildings on the west side of Aldergate. Also showing the unfortunate design of the late 20th-century buildings between the Victorian Methodist Chapel and former Congregational Chapel



The eye-catching Assembly Rooms



The listed No. 11 Aldergate



The listed No. 14 Aldergate, unfortunately marred by a wholly inappropriate modern shop front



The attractive and picturesque locally listed Carnegie Centre



The locally listed former Drill Hall (Philip Dix Centre) with modern extension behind



The Methodist Chapel, recommended for addition to the local list



The former Congregational Chapel, recommended for local listing



The elegant St. John's Roman Catholic Church, also recommended for inclusion on the local list



The White Lion on the corner of Aldergate, sadly dwarfed by Marmion House



Glimpse through to church and Assembly Rooms beyond backplot area of workshops

5.6 CHARACTER ZONE 6: LOWER GUNGATE/COLEHILL/BOLEBRIDGE STREET

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.6.1 This character zone includes both sides of Lower Gungate, Colehill and Bolebridge Street, which continue from each other in a northwest-southeast alignment, forming the right-hand side of the 'A' of the medieval street pattern, plus part of Victoria Road. Its character ranges from the more intimate quality engendered by the domestically-scaled buildings of Lower Gungate through to the more formal aspect of Colehill.
- 5.6.2 The north and south sections of Lower Gungate are of markedly different character, the north section, beyond Spinning School Lane, being open to vehicular traffic and the south section being pedestrianised. The north section, too, has seen greater erosion of its historic character, with the redevelopment of much of the east side in the late 20th century with large-scale warehouse-like buildings, including the former Palace Media Centre (now a music venue and nightclub).
- 5.6.3 The south section of the street is more historically intact despite the intrusion of the Gungate Precinct, a 1960s shopping development, on the east side, and this part of the street has many attractive qualities with, on the west side, a high level of retention of historic shop fronts. It retains significant character as a historic shopping street, created by the domestic scale of its buildings and the width of the street. Attractive views are found in both directions along Little Church Lane, an intimate narrow lane leading to St. Editha's churchyard, and there is an important glimpse through the rear yard of No. 3a, past historic outbuildings, through to the church. These features lend a strong sense of enclosure to the street. Guy's Almshouses on the east side are an important element in the streetscape and provide architectural interest, also allowing tantalising glimpses through to its green inner courtyard.
- 5.6.4 Colehill, which continues south from Lower Gungate, is also pedestrianised, and its east side is lined with larger three-storey Georgian-style buildings, on a grander scale than the smaller buildings on Lower Gungate. Despite the greater building height, the street has less of a sense of enclosure than the latter, having a more commercial feel.

- 5.6.5 Bolebridge Street has quite a strong sense of enclosure, created by its domestically-scaled buildings and the curve in the road at its southeast end. However, beyond here, this sense is lost due to the interruption of what historically was a much longer street, to accommodate a major traffic intersection as part of the ring road. This unfortunate effect, the abrupt transition from intimate, narrow street to wide open traffic island, occurs elsewhere on the periphery of the historic town centre.
- 5.6.6 The part of Victoria Road included within this conservation area is open to traffic and is busy with buses. Its buildings, in use as shops and offices, unlike the residential stretch of Victoria Road to the northeast, are characterised by their white stucco, and are of two storeys on the south side and two and three storeys on the north.

Architectural Quality of Buildings and Building Materials

- 5.6.7 There is a small number of listed buildings on the west side of Lower Gungate. The 17th-century Nos. 9-11 stand out in the street for their exposed timber framing, No. 9 incorporating part of the listed 14th-century stone rubble wall to the medieval deanery, which extends back from the street frontage to adjoin the churchyard wall. This building stands in an attractive row of listed buildings which are integral to the character of the street.
- 5.6.8 Nos. 3A (Truckles), 5 (G. Claridge & Son) and 7 (R.W. Wood & Son) (only Nos. 5 and 7 of which are listed) form an attractive row of three c.1840 shops, although No. 3A, on the local list, is dated to the late 19th century. All three two-storey red brick shops make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the street, having retained attractive late 19th-century shop fronts.
- 5.6.9 Adjoining the timber-framed Nos. 9-11 is the 17th-/early 18th-century Sir Robert Peel public house (Nos. 13-15). This is an appealing building with a rather quirky roofline, which adds character to the street. The early left-hand range is single-storey and the mid 19th-century right-hand range is two-storey, but there are three separate roof structures of differing heights and two dormer windows to the left-hand range. The building contained shops before becoming a public house and the fenestration on the earlier range is more characteristic of a shop.

- 5.6.10 Further north, No. 21 is another 17th-/early 18th-century shop, which has retained a characterful mid 19th-century shop front, comprising a small, square window with pilasters and cornice and canopy box and winder.
- 5.6.11 At the junction with Church Street, the listed Tamworth Arts Centre marks the physical and architectural transition between Lower Gungate and Colehill. This striking landmark building, of stuccoed brick, erected in c.1770 as a theatre, became a malt house in the early 19th century and a Baptist Chapel in 1870. A century later it became an arts centre and its gabled front elevation, with three tall round-arched windows above an attractive early 20th-century porch, flanked by full-height pilasters (the left-hand one now obscured by the adjoining building), is highly prominent in views northwest along Colehill.
- 5.6.12 On Colehill proper, No. 1 (Help The Aged) is listed, a smart early to mid 18th-century shop of two storeys plus attic with small-paned casements and late 19th-century shop front. On the opposite (east) side, several large three-storey properties are listed. Nos. 8-9 (The Cooperative Bank and Pickerings) date from c.1820, originally two town houses of three bays each, their rusticated wedge lintels with keystones being a distinctive feature of the street. The adjoining No. 10 is probably 17th-century (and has exposed timber framing), but was re-fronted in the early 19th century. This rather grand but quite plain symmetrical five-window façade with Tuscan porch is of pebbledashed brick with ashlar dressings and stands out in the streetscene. The mid to late 18th-century No. 11 (Optical Express) also makes a contribution through its three-storey height, although its late 20th-century shop front rather heavily detracts from its appearance. This row of three-storey buildings makes an impressive frontage, but is let down by the adjoining 1960s structure.
- 5.6.13 On Victoria Road, set well back from the street frontage behind what is now a car park, is the listed New Meeting House (Unitarian), built as a Presbyterian chapel in 1724. This simple rectangular building in Georgian style with 19th-century added porch is built of chequered brick with a pebble-dash front and hipped slate roof. Beyond the unattractive 1960s shop unit at No. 5a is the listed Nos 3-5, two early 19th-century houses, now offices, of smart and rather dignified appearance and retaining glazing bar sashes, cornices over first-floor windows and bracketed canopy over the door to

No. 3. Both now have 20th-century shop fronts, No. 3's of traditional style but No. 5's with a brick front.

5.6.14 The buildings on the east side of Bolebridge Street are virtually all listed, while none of the buildings on the west side is on either the statutory or local list. They are a mix of 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century buildings of varying scale and style making for an interesting streetscape. The earliest of these, Nos. 5-9 (Lapel/Hunters) is a row of two-storey 17th-century shops with timber-framed cores, although the overly prominent 20th-century shop fronts do little to suggest this. Nos. 2 and 3-4 are taller, of three storeys and much 'grander' than most other structures on the street. They were built around 1780 and 1760 respectively, No. 2 having a pedimented doorcase and Nos. 3-4 a 20th-century shop front with attractive ashlar frieze and cornice taken over the entry to Bolebridge Mews, a group of late 19th-century buildings behind the street frontage, sympathetically restored into a small arcade of shops and cafes, and included on the local list.

5.6.15 At the southern end of the street is No. 10 (The Bole Bridge public house), built c.1810 in a Regency style with stuccoed façade, rusticated ground floor and giant Tuscan pilasters to the upper two storeys. The building's visual impact is most effective on the Bolebridge Street frontage, with the exposed brick of the 20th-century addition to the rear a less attractive addition that conceals the original rear range.

Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

5.6.16 The late 19th-century Nos. 1-3 and 3A Lower Gungate are included on the local list and are important parts of the overall streetscape on its western side. Nos. 1-3 are in residential use, unlike the rest of the street (apart from the almshouses) and, while they have replacement uPVC windows and doors, form an attractive group with No. 3A. Also important to the character of these buildings and to this part of the conservation area, is the rear yard to No. 3A, accessed via a gap in the street frontage between Nos. 3 and 3A. The yard contains late 19th-century outbuildings and workshops which, although in poor condition, are characterful and a rare survival. The yard backs onto the churchyard and fine, picturesque views of the church and its tower with the roofs of the workshops in the foreground, are available through the gap

in the street frontage. The yard and its outbuildings should be protected, although substantial maintenance is clearly needed.

- 5.6.17 Guy's Almshouses play a significant role in the character of the streetscape. These were rebuilt in 1913 (and extended in 1928 and 1936 to form the current quadrangle) on the site of the late 17th-century almshouses established by Thomas Guy. Built of brick in a neo-Georgian style, they have a handsome ashlar entrance bay with round-arched vehicle entry and triangular pediment. An appealing dovecote is perched on the roof above the entrance between brick chimney stacks and is visible in longer views along the street from the south. The long return elevation along Spinning School Lane, with its pairs of gables to the street and symmetrical fenestration, is also of great importance, particularly as the other side of this street was insensitively redeveloped in the late 20th century. Glimpses through the Lower Gungate frontage to the green quadrangle beyond surrounded by arcades of columns supporting balconies are also important to the character of the street.
- 5.6.18 Opposite, No. 19 (Oliver's public house), Nos. 23-25A and the adjoining Nos. 27-33 should be considered for inclusion on the local list. All are important to the character of the streetscape and Nos. 23-33 form an important visual terminus to the view west along Spinning School Lane. The late 19th-century No. 19 is striking for its paired ground-floor windows separated by pilasters and having substantial lintels and sills, and a central round-arched entrance with label mould. Nos. 23-25A (built in 1900 for William Lea to replace an earlier house and shop) is notable for its six-window long frontage with carriage entry off-centre. The character of No. 23 (presumably the original dwelling part of the building) has been diluted by the replacement of an original window and entrance with an insensitive late 20th-century shop front but Nos. 25-25A has retained its original attractive shop front.
- 5.6.19 Nos. 27-33 Lower Gungate comprises four three-storey tall and narrow workmen's terraced cottages built on the site of the old grammar school, which was demolished in c.1867-8. Between the first-floor windows three of the old stone Ionic capitals and a fleur de lys seal from the grammar school have been preserved.
- 5.6.20 Further north on Lower Gungate is the locally listed Globe Inn, built in 1901. The local list description states that it is 'the Borough's best example of the exuberant 'showy'

pub architecture of the period' and it is indeed an appealing building with brick pilasters topped by stone pinnacles, stone label moulds and string courses and a central gable with date-stone and sign. Sadly it is now rather isolated on the street frontage, with a surface-level car park to its north, beyond which the street opens out into the inevitable large traffic intersection (views northwest along the street are not visually rewarding), and a large and unattractive late 20th-century cinema building immediately to its south. Facing it on the west side of the street is a row of domestically-scaled two-storey shops with some late 20th-century infill, many blighted by modern shop fronts and signage.

- 5.6.21 Little Church Lane is a significant element of Lower Gungate. It runs southwest off this street into the churchyard and views along it in either direction are rewarding. Despite alterations to the buildings that line it (all small shops, several probably timber-framed), the lane retains historic character with better-quality surfacing and lighting and well-maintained buildings. A particular characteristic is the bowed multi-paned shop front windows to buildings on the south side. It may be considered appropriate to include all the buildings in the lane on the local list in order to better protect its distinct historic character.
- 5.6.22 On Colehill the building which has the greatest visual impact apart from the Arts Centre is No. 5 (the Co-op). This was erected in 1897 (with a 1903 extension to the south in the same style) on a prominent corner site and is of red brick with copious stone dressings, including a heavy sill band to the third storey bearing the words 'Tamworth Industrial Cooperative Society' on the Church Street elevation. It has attractive round-arched windows to the two upper storeys, with large windows beneath the central gables, and has a restored 1903 shop front with attractive Art Deco lettering and decoration. The building is on the local list and should be considered for inclusion on the statutory list.
- 5.6.23 No. 13 Colehill (Co-op Milk Bar) on the corner with Victoria Road is on the local list, an early 19th-century two-storey house with modern shop front, used in the late 19th century as a vicarage.

5.6.24 The buildings on the west side of Bolebridge Street follow a fairly uniform roofline and form a generally attractive streetscape, if blighted in places by excessively prominent 20th-century shop fronts.

Negative Features

5.6.25 The Precinct on Lower Gungate is clearly a negative feature of the street and conservation area, and is now earmarked for redevelopment. This C-shaped 1960s development around a rather bland 'courtyard' open to the street, comprises two-storey shopping units of brown brick with bright green copper roof and projecting concrete canopy over shop units. The shop units also spread some way along the Lower Gungate frontage and are adjoined to the south by the unappealing and rather box-like mid to late 20th-century Yates's Wine Lodge building (No. 2).

5.6.26 The paving (artificial stone setts) on Lower Gungate does not accord well with the historic character of the buildings on the west side of the street. The street lighting, although not of the lowest quality, could be improved, as the large lamps appear out of scale with the buildings, notably so on Lower Gungate and Bolebridge Street. There is a proliferation of bollards, too, on Lower Gungate and Colehill, not all of which appear strictly necessary to a pedestrianised street. Some of them, along with a change in paving material, serve to differentiate notional 'road' from 'pavement' but, as part of a new surfacing scheme, the definition between these elements could be more strongly achieved - the existing flat expanse works against the historic shopping street character of Lower Gungate. The current paving scheme on Colehill is particularly patchy and detracts from the character and appearance of the street.

5.6.27 The single-storey building (Travelcare) sandwiched between the Co-op building and attractive No. 48 is basically little more than a large and loud shop front. This detracts from the appearance of both its neighbours, and exposes the blank return elevation of the Co-op building, also allowing views of the tall brick parapet to the 1960s extension to the Co-op above and behind it.

5.6.28 On Bolebridge Street many shop fronts are overly prominent for the scale of the buildings, including for instance Bairstow Eves, Cloud 10, and The Bed Shop on the east side. The south end of Bolebridge Street, in views from the south, is not

particularly attractive, dominated as it is by the heavily altered south side elevation of Cartridge World, which has a number of identical inserted windows set into a wide expanse of render and the long additional range to the Bole Bridge Inn. These are viewed from the traffic intersection across a grassed and planted island, which would fare better visually without the ubiquitous enormous black-tubbed towers of planters, of which more black plastic can be seen than the flowers within them.

- 5.6.29 The listed Unitarian chapel on Victoria Road suffers from its current setting behind a tarmac-surfaced car park and the blank side elevation of the adjoining 1960s shop. This early 18th-century building could add far more to the character of the streetscape if its immediate setting was improved.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.6.30 The outbuildings behind No. 3A Lower Gungate are rare survivors, and an attractive part of the view to the church from the street, forming a strong visual link to the past use of the rear plots along Lower Gungate. However, the buildings appear unused and in poor condition. Their restoration and sensitive reuse may be beneficial to the character of this part of the conservation area.
- 5.6.31 In terms of more general improvements, renewal of the paving scheme along Lower Gungate and Colehill would be beneficial to the character and appearance of these streets. Equally, removal of some of the visual clutter created by overuse of bollards and other street furniture would be beneficial. The lighting poles throughout these streets are very tall in comparison to the buildings, which makes them overly visible in the streetscape – this situation could also be improved upon. Similarly, consideration could be given to a scheme of shopfront improvement where necessary.

CHARACTER ZONE 6: LOWER GUNGATE/COLEHILL/BOLEBRIDGE STREET



View north along northern section of Lower Gungate. The historic character of this end of the street has been diluted by late 20th-century development and the ring road intersection at the north end



The view south along Lower Gungate demonstrates a better retention of historic character



View southeast along Colehill



View west along Little Church Lane



Tantalising glimpse through Guy's Almshouses to green inner quadrangle



View southeast along Bolebridge Street



View east along Victoria Road, with the listed early 19th-century Nos. 3-5 on the left



The listed Nos. 9-11 Lower Gungate; its exposed timber framing causes it to stand out in the streetscape



The listed Nos. 3A, 5 and 7 Lower Gungate, with attractive late 19th-century shop fronts



The interesting roofline of the listed Sir Robert Peel public house adds character to the street



The listed No. 21 with characterful mid 19th-century shop front



The listed Tamworth Arts Centre, a striking building in a prominent position facing down Colehill



Nos. 10 and 11 Colehill; the adjoining 1960s building detracts from the character of the street frontage



The listed early 18th-century Unitarian Meeting House on Victoria Road. Its setting has been compromised by the car park to the front and blank side elevation of the adjoining 1960s building



Behind the prominent shop fronts on the listed Nos. 5-9 Bolebridge Street are 17th-century buildings with timber-framed cores



The Bole Bridge public house, with unattractive 20th-century addition obscuring the earlier rear range



Attractive and significant view through gap in the street frontage to St. Edith's Church, with historic outbuildings in foreground



The locally listed Guy's Almshouses, an important element of the streetscape



Nos. 23-25A Lower Gungate, recommended for local listing. The detrimental impact of street furniture is apparent



Nos. 27-33 Lower Gungate, also recommended for local listing



The locally listed Globe Inn, a somewhat isolated but important survivor on the northern part of Lower Gungate



The locally listed Co-op building on Colehill. The Co-op has a strong architectural presence in Tamworth and this is the finest of its buildings, with potential for inclusion on the statutory list



The 1960s Gungate Precinct, earmarked for redevelopment



The paving and street furniture on Lower Gungate do not enhance the character and appearance of this historic shopping street

5.7 CHARACTER ZONE 7: LICHFIELD STREET/SILVER STREET

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.7.1 This character zone includes Lichfield Street and Silver Street. Lichfield Street is the main vehicular route into the town centre from the west and is a busy road. The junction with Silver Street is thus busy also, but Silver Street itself is quiet, continuing south into Holloway towards the Castle.
- 5.7.2 Lichfield Street is of mixed character, generally retaining historic frontages, which include smaller two-storey buildings towards the east end, and larger buildings to the west, primarily dating from the 18th and 19th centuries with one or two earlier structures, all standing hard on the pavement. However, behind the south frontage is a vast 1960s housing development, which extends south to the River Tame and includes six high-rise blocks of flats, one of which stands very close to the Lichfield Street frontage. All this development is understandably excluded from the conservation area. Richard Stone in his *Tamworth, A History* (2003) states that the tower blocks, built in 1967-8, 'are thoughtfully designed and among the best of their type'. Be that as it may, they still have a deleterious effect on many important views into and within the conservation area by virtue of their sheer scale. Also at the eastern end of the street is the equally high and unappealing Marmion House, the Borough Council offices.
- 5.7.3 Alongside this late 20th-century development Lichfield Street retains some vestiges of its original Georgian suburban character in the gaps between buildings, particularly on the south side of the street, allowing glimpses through to what would once have been open countryside beyond.
- 5.7.4 While Lichfield Street's 18th- and early 19th-century history as an important commercial street on the way into the town is still apparent in its architecture, the street today is suffering from incipient neglect, mostly created by the lack of maintenance to some of its buildings, and notably a low level of occupancy of some of the larger buildings, identified by the many 'To Let' signs.

Architectural Quality of Buildings and Building Materials

- 5.7.5 Virtually all the historic buildings that survive on the south side of Lichfield Street have been statutorily listed. These range in date from the early 18th century to 1837. The earliest building in the area, however, the Grade II* listed late 16th-century Moat House (essentially a rural vernacular building), stands outside the conservation area close to the River Tame, accessed from a long driveway off Lichfield Street.
- 5.7.6 The early 18th-century No. 19, a distinguished-looking two-storey house with a long five bay frontage and symmetrical appearance with three dormer windows on its pitched tile roof, built of chequered brick with vitrified headers and has an attractive modillioned eaves cornice. Nos. 17-18 adjoining is of very different character, a former school with a chapel-like coped gable with pinnacles to the street (at No. 17) and large pointed-arched traceried window and label moulds over the ground-floor window and entrance. It was built in 1837 for Sir Robert Peel.
- 5.7.7 Nos. 20, 21 and 22 form an attractive row of early 19th-century three-storey houses, now offices and a club, of brick, but Nos. 20-21 having a stucco façade. No. 22 has Venetian windows to the ground floor and all have glazing bar sashes and splayed lintels with keystones. No. 20 has a rather unfortunate two-storey addition with horizontal 20th-century ground-floor window, but overall these buildings make an important contribution to the streetscape. No. 29 (Masonic Rooms) is similar in style albeit narrower and has a round-arched entrance with open pediment and fanlight. No. 28 stands out for its long five-window stuccoed façade, built in the 18th century with 19th-century bays to the right, and of classical proportions with six full-height pilasters articulating the bays and low pitched roof behind a parapet. These buildings, of different periods and styles, form a visually interesting street frontage.
- 5.7.8 On the north side is an equally eclectic frontage, dominated at the western end by large early 19th-century Georgian-style properties which give way towards the east end to much smaller buildings, including the timber-framed Nos. 110 and 111, which date from the late 16th/early 17th century. No. 111 is jettied and has exposed timber-framing, while No. 110, the former 'hall' range of the structure, has 19th-century rendered re-fronting. Nos. 116-117 (Offsprings and Caroline Jane) also date from the 16th century and are timber-framed, although the framing is only exposed in the long rear range, the front being rendered. No. 117 has a small-paned bow shop window.

- 5.7.9 Larger early 19th-century properties include No. 92, similar in style to Nos. 20-22 and 29 opposite while the White House at No. 93, built in c.1810, stands out for its unusual long façade incorporating a two-storey large bow window with pilaster strips in the left-hand bay and gabled section to the right. Also dating from this period is the Manor House, a symmetrical remodelling of an earlier house of 17th-/18th-century origins and reputed to be the home of Sir Thomas Guy. Nos. 103-104 (The Royal Bengal/Tony's Fish Bar) is distinctive for its elliptical-arched carriage entry with rusticated jambs.
- 5.7.10 East of No. 98 is the late 20th-century Shannon's Mill sheltered housing development, mostly behind the street frontage, although the rather bland, undetailed No. 100 stands on the frontage by the drive in. On the other side of the drive is the listed former Peel School, erected in 1850 to replace the earlier school across the road. This building, too, is now a dining room for the housing development behind. It was designed by Sydney Smirke in the Tudor style and has attractive stone mullioned windows, ashlar-dressed buttresses and is of red brick with blue brick diapering. Like its fellow former school it seems out of place in this streetscape but certainly adds interest to it.

Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

- 5.7.11 It is recommended that Nos. 97, 97A and 98 be added to the local list for the contribution they make as a group to the streetscape. All three appear to date from the early 19th century, Nos. 97 and 98 being of three storeys and No. 97A of two; this latter (Jailhouse Café) has been altered to its detriment with replacement uPVC window frames and a 'fake' entrance to the left. No. 97 is stuccoed with a high parapet and of three bays with unhorned glazing bar sashes, while No. 98 is a tall, narrow brick house of two bays with pitched roof and doorcase with cornice and fanlight.
- 5.7.12 Opposite these buildings, No. 27 (Riversmeet Veterinary Centre) is already on the local list, a probably mid 19th-century two-storey plus attic single-bay house with tall chimney stack to the left, with a long rear range.

- 5.7.13 Also recommended for inclusion on the local list (and inclusion in the conservation area) is Offa House, which fronts Orchard Street opposite the long side elevation of Marmion House. This is a rather decorative, mildly Arts and Crafts influenced building erected in 1907 for the Cooperative Society, which has a strong architectural presence in Tamworth. It has an imposing, tall, three-storey plus attic red brick façade with copious stone dressings and two coped gables to the street, and early 20th-century shop fronts, the whole rather sadly overshadowed by the looming tower of Marmion House.
- 5.7.14 The two public houses on the south side of Lichfield Street, The Boot Inn and The Three Tuns (the latter outside the conservation area) are perhaps not of locally 'listable' quality but owing to their domestic scale certainly do not detract from the street scene as a whole.
- 5.7.15 On the east side of Silver Street, Nos. 10-13 form a row of three-storey red brick buildings, Nos. 10-11 (early and later 19th-century respectively) being on the local list. Between the later 19th-century Nos. 12 and 13 is a round-arched carriage entry. The shop fronts to Nos. 10-12 detract from the appearance of these buildings which otherwise form a smart visual terminus to views from Lichfield Street.

Negative Features

- 5.7.16 It is of course easy to draw attention to the 1960s housing development on the south side of Lichfield Street as being the biggest crime against the character and appearance of this historic street. Apart from the overshadowing of the street by the high-rise flats, the other negative effect of this development has been in its creation of large gaps in the southern street frontage. These, where they occur, are unfortunate as they leave the remaining buildings on the frontage looking rather isolated and out of context, particularly between Nos. 22 and 27 where a car park has been created (note that these gaps are not to be confused with the 'historic' gaps referred to at paragraph 5.7.3 above). The large concrete structure close to the road with rows of garages behind similarly does nothing to enhance the conservation area.

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- 5.7.17 The negative effect of the towering Marmion House is similar in its overshadowing of buildings both on Lichfield Street and Aldergate, with its long western flank also casting a featureless shadow over Offa House on Orchard Street.
- 5.7.18 While these problems are clearly of the more intractable kind in the absence of any imminent redevelopment schemes for this area, there are other smaller scale negative features which could more easily be remedied. These include the patchy and scruffy paving scheme, overly prominent shop signage, such as that defacing the front of the 16th-century No. 110, and poor-quality or garish modern shop fronts like those to Nos. 103-104 and No. 112. More greenery along the street would also be beneficial.
- 5.7.19 There are also several individual buildings which require external maintenance, including Nos. 20-21, where stucco is in poor condition and peeling off, No. 28, and The White House.
- 5.7.20 The seating area in the pedestrianised section of Orchard Street in front of Offa House is rather desultory and (unsurprisingly) apparently underused. This area could certainly be made a little more inviting.
- 5.7.21 Along the northern boundary of the conservation area, former rear gardens and yards to the properties fronting Lichfield Street have long since disappeared to make way for an incoherent jumble of new office blocks and car parks, as well as the Shannon's Mill development. The historic character of this area would now be difficult if not impossible to retrieve, even if some vestiges still remain.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.7.22 The car park on the south side of Lichfield Street could be better screened from the street with trees and the street as a whole would benefit from more greenery, an improved paving scheme and removal of excess signage. Improvement to inappropriate modern shop fronts would also be beneficial to the appearance of the street and go some way to counteracting its currently rather run-down air. The seating area immediately west of Marmion House could also be made more inviting.

5.7.23 Improvements such as these and better maintenance of individual buildings would lift the area visually and may lead to improved levels of occupancy.

CHARACTER ZONE 7: LICHFIELD STREET/SILVER STREET



View east along Lichfield Street towards junction with Silver Street. Marmion House on the left and the tower blocks on the right overshadow the street



View east along Lichfield Street from further west. The unusual and attractive façade of the listed No. 93 is to the left



View into the 1960s housing development, with car park creating a rather bleak gap in the streetscape



The attractive and individual listed No. 19



The listed former school at No. 17-18, which adds interest to the streetscape but which is sadly dwarfed by the tower blocks behind



The listed Nos. 20-21, in need of some maintenance to its façade



The listed No. 28, also in need of maintenance, stands out for its classical detailing



Nos. 110-111, a timber-framed late 16th-century listed building on the north side of Lichfield Street



The listed Nos. 116-117 also date from the 16th century



The listed Manor House, reputed to be the home of Sir Thomas Guy



The listed Nos. 103-104 with distinctive carriage entry, indicating the commercial origins of the street



The attractive listed former Peel School on the north side of Lichfield Street



Nos. 97, 97A and 98, recommended for addition to the local list for their value as a group in the streetscape



Offa House, another former Co-op building on Orchard Street, is recommended for addition to the local list and to be included within an amended conservation area boundary



Buildings on the east side of Silver Street



There is room for improvement to the seating area at the south end of Orchard Street

6.0 Proposed Boundary Amendments, Recommendations for Listing and Article 4 Directions

6.1 Several minor amendments are proposed to the conservation area boundary. On the western edge of the conservation area it is proposed to widen the boundary to include Offa House on the west side of Orchard Street and to include St. John's RC Church on St. John's Street. At the northern tip of the conservation area it is proposed to bring the boundary further south to exclude the traffic intersection and car park in this area.

6.2 Buildings Recommended for Statutory Listing:

- The Cooperative Society building on Colehill

6.3 Buildings recommended for inclusion on the local list:

- The Pavilion in the Castle Pleasure Grounds
- Nos. 12-13 Market Street
- Nos. 7-8 George Street
- Nos. 1-8 Church Street (Co-op store)
- Nos. 14 and 15 Church Street
- No. 5 College Lane (Aladdin's)
- No. 1 Aldergate (The White Lion)
- Aldergate Methodist Church
- Former Congregational Chapel, Aldergate

- St. John's RC Church, St. John's Street

- Both sides of Little Church Lane

- No. 19 Lower Gungate (Oliver's)

- Nos. 23-25A Lower Gungate

- Nos. 27-33 Lower Gungate

- Nos. 97, 97A and 98 Lichfield Street

- Offa House, Orchard Street

6.4 Under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, a general planning permission is granted for a range of minor developments. These 'permitted development' rights are more restricted in conservation areas for certain types of development, including the addition of dormer windows, some types of cladding, the erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway, and the reduction in size of permitted extensions.

6.5 Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Order enable local planning authorities to make certain directions withdrawing permitted development rights. Article 4(1) directions apply to any type of land or building but need to be approved by the First Secretary of State. Article 4(2) directions may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affects aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. The removal or alteration of a particular type of architectural feature important to the character and appearance of the conservation area, such as distinctive windows, gates and boundary walls, can be specified in the direction.

6.6 Local authorities should notify local people and take account of public views before deciding whether to confirm an Article 4(2) direction.

- 6.7 Article 4 directions applying to features like doors, windows, porches and roof coverings work best in areas of strongly-defined (and well-preserved) architectural character.
- 6.8 In the Town Centre Conservation Area, it is not considered that the imposition of Article 4 directions would be particularly beneficial. This is partly because significant loss of historic features has already taken place, but also because residential properties are relatively few in this area and planning permission is required for alterations to any non-residential building that materially affect its external appearance. Many of the buildings in the central area are also listed and in these cases Listed Building Consent will, of course, be required for works that affect a building's character.

7.0 Monitoring and Revision

- 7.1 As recommended by English Heritage in its 2006 publication, *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, it is essential to monitor the conservation area and to review the published character appraisal on a regular basis.
- 7.2 Changes to the conservation area may occur through the implementation of schemes approved by the Council, such as new development or changes to the public realm, or through both permitted and unauthorised alterations. General deterioration or changes to the condition of the area's physical fabric may also occur over time.
- 7.3 A dated photographic record of the conservation area has been created during the production of this character appraisal. The main aim of this is to provide a baseline for measuring change in the appearance of the conservation area and for monitoring the physical condition of its buildings. The record can also be used as an aid to any enforcement action should unauthorised alterations be carried out. In order to take enforcement action on unlisted buildings the unauthorised alteration must be shown to have been carried out within the last four years, so for these purposes it is important to ensure that the photographic record is updated on a regular five-year cycle.
- 7.4 In the case of listed buildings too, where there is no time limit on when enforcement action can be taken (provided of course that the unauthorised works were undertaken after listing took place), regular updating of the photographic record is equally important, not just as a record of change but as possible evidence in enforcement or prosecution cases.
- 7.5 If appropriate, local community awareness of the conservation area may be maintained by engaging their assistance in the updating of the photographic record. This might be achieved through the use of volunteers from local historical or amenity societies or even groups of schoolchildren or students working on a street-by-street basis. Information could be stored on electronic 'pro formas' which show dated 'then and now' photographs to illustrate where change has occurred. These could be added to every five years with each phase of review.

- 7.6 English Heritage (2006) recommends that a 'virtuous circle' of monitoring, review and action should be established in order to maintain a sustainable equilibrium. Ideally, a five-year cycle of review should be established. With the aid of an updated photographic record, a street-by-street review of the conservation area in five years' time (2012) to establish what has changed (and why) since this character appraisal was produced will enable it to be updated.
- 7.7 Importantly, such a review will also allow an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's current conservation area policy and a measurement of how successful the Council has been at implementing the recommendations for enhancement made in the character appraisal. The reasons for success or non-success can then be appraised and policies modified or specific actions proposed as appropriate. The rate and nature of change identified may also indicate whether it would be desirable to produce 'Design Guides' providing guidance on topics such as extensions and alterations to historic buildings, development proposals and shop front design.
- 7.8 The review may also lead to further alterations to the conservation area boundary, either to bring new areas into the conservation area or remove areas from it that no longer contribute to or reinforce its character and appearance.
- 7.9 The review may either result in a thorough overhaul and updating of the existing character appraisal and production of a new version, or could take the form of an addendum to the existing document, which focuses specifically on changes that have occurred over the last five years, what effect these changes have had on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and updated recommendations for enhancement.

Appendix 1:

Extracts from historic Ordnance Survey maps



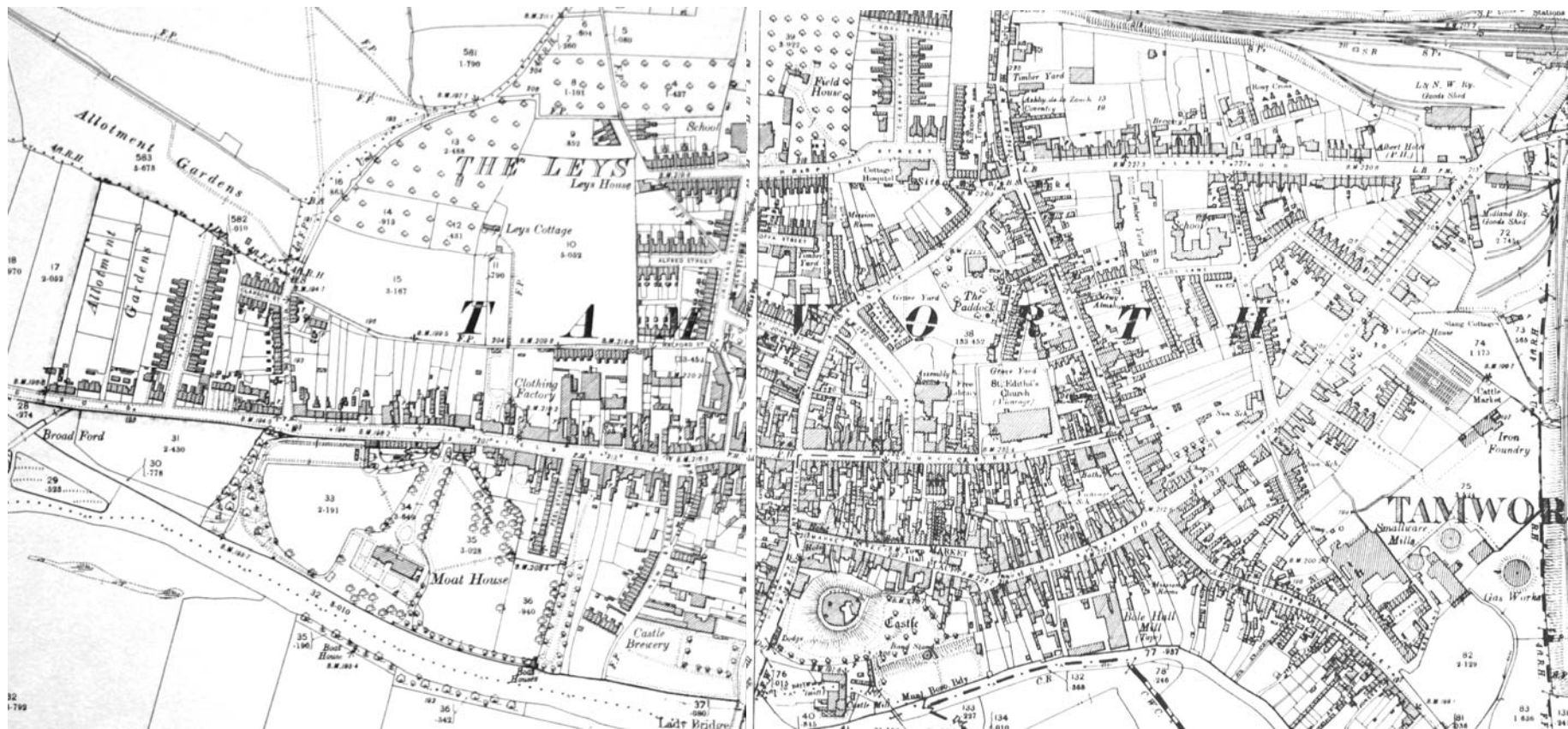
1810 map extract



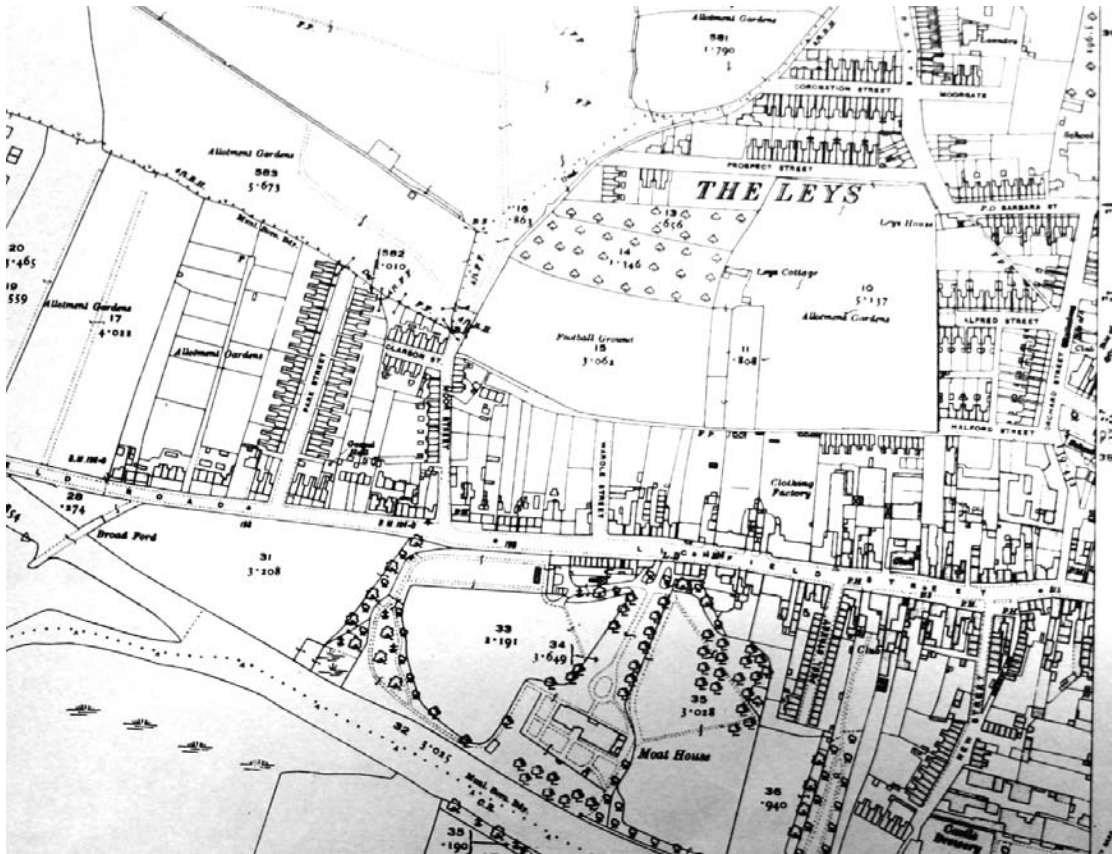
Detail of Colehill and Bolebridge Street from 1884 Ordnance Survey map



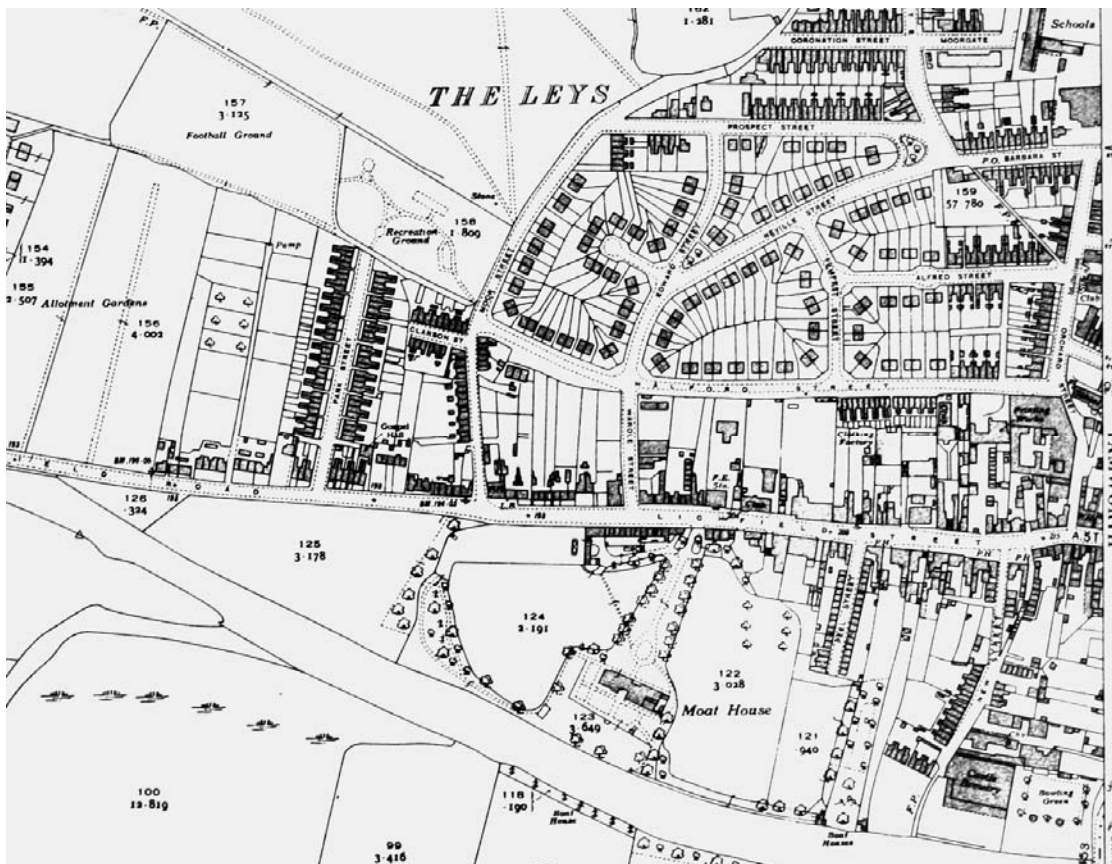
Detail of Aldergate from 1884 Ordnance Survey map



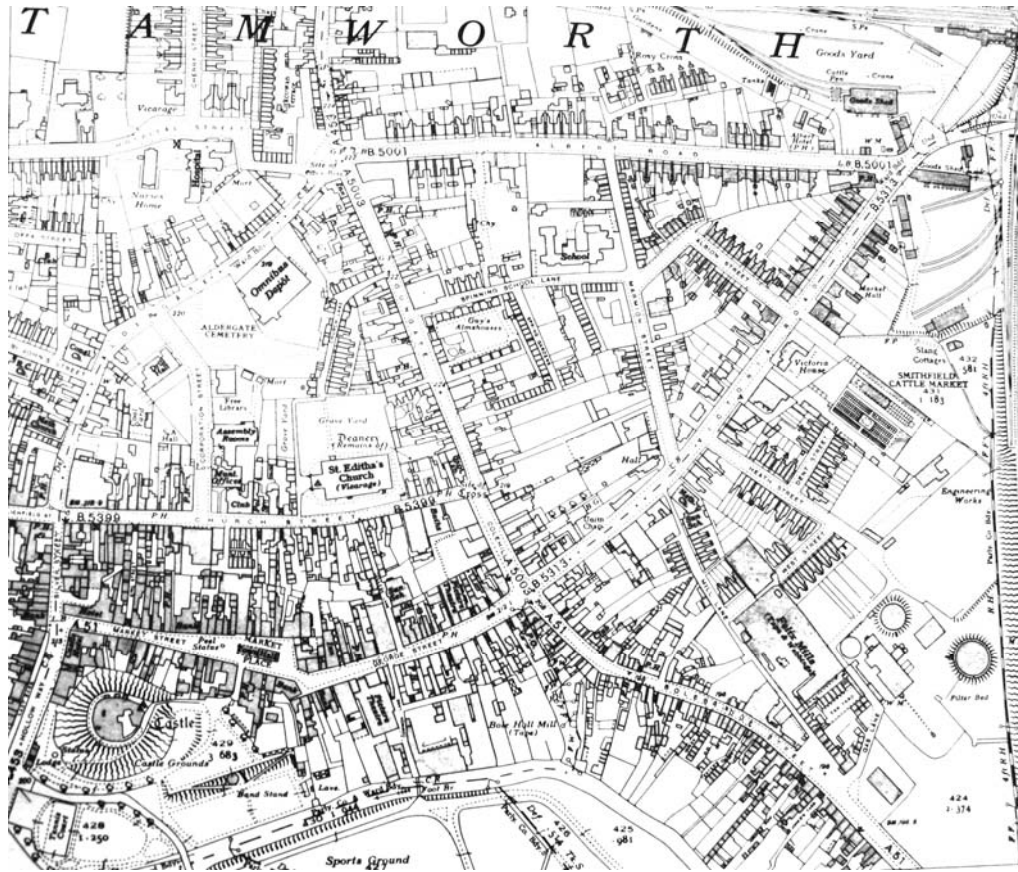
1902 Ordnance Survey map extract



Detail of Lichfield Street from 1923 Ordnance Survey map



Detail of Lichfield Street from 1937 Ordnance Survey map



1938 Ordnance Survey map extract



1956 Ordnance Survey map extract

Appendix 2:

Plan 1a – Existing Designations (north)

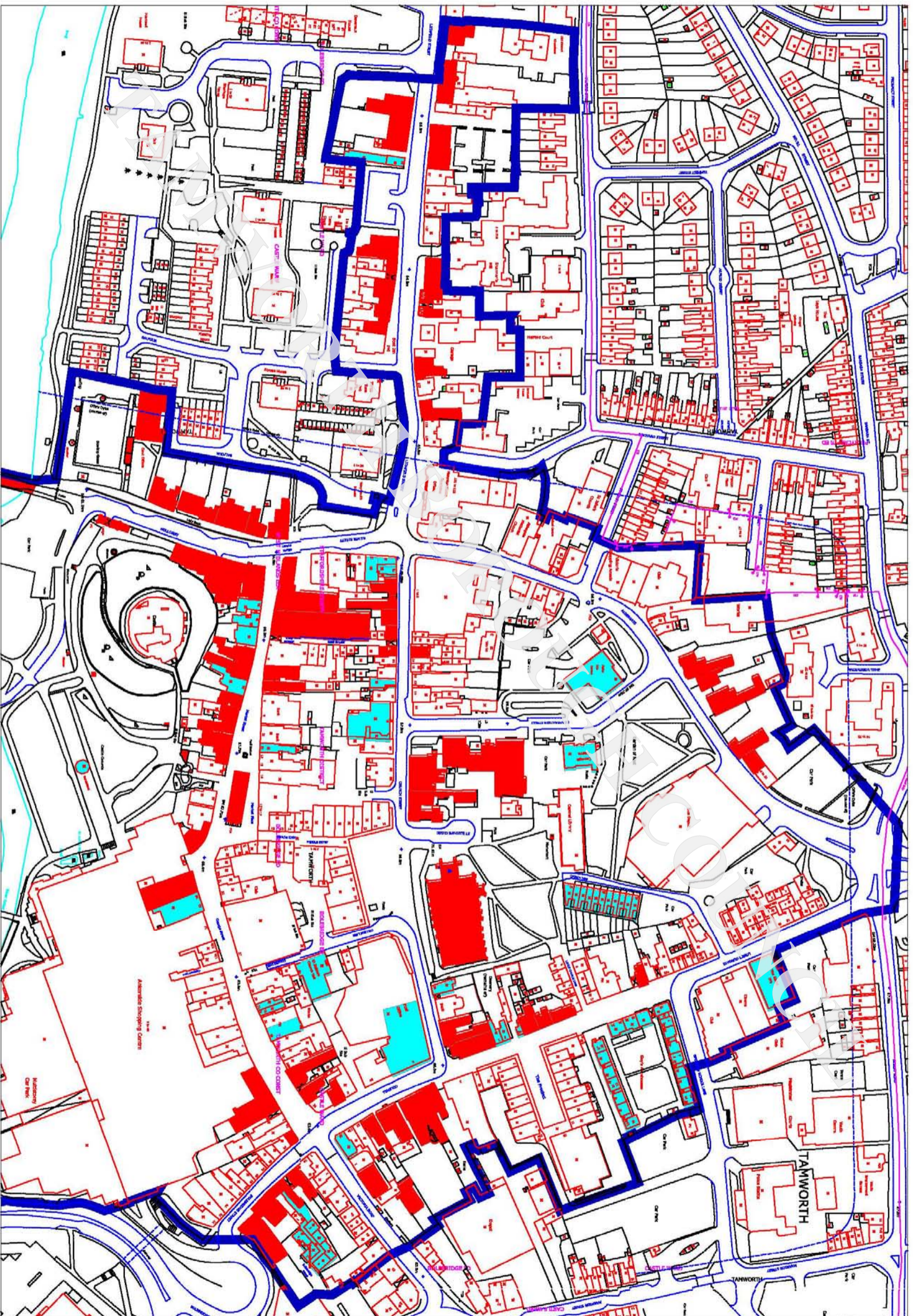
Plan 1b – Proposals and Recommendations (north)

Plan 2a – Existing Designations (south)

Plan 2b – Proposals and Recommendations (south)

Plan 3 – Character Zones

Plan 1a Town Centre Conservation Area (North); Existing Designations

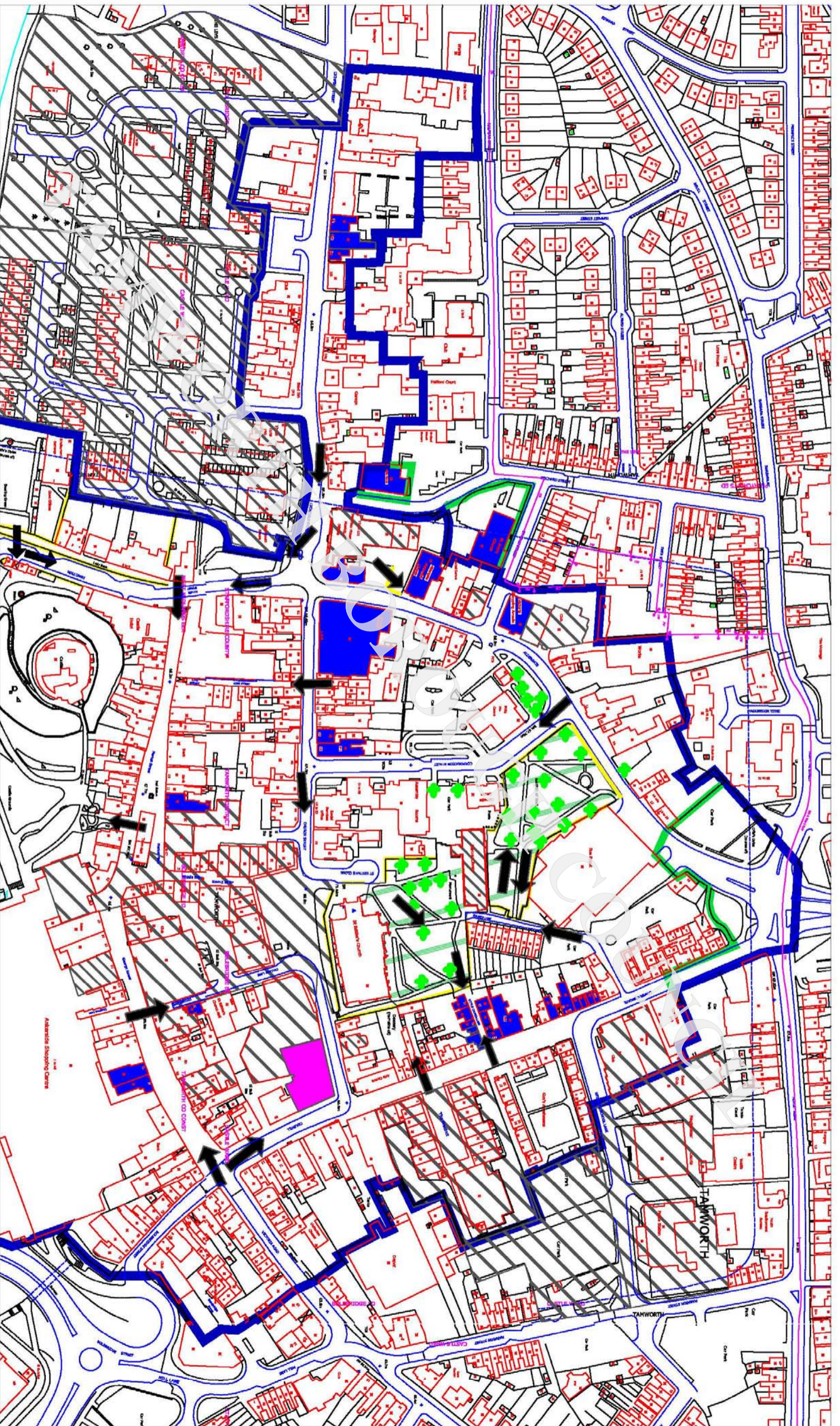


Conservation area boundary

Locally Listed buildings

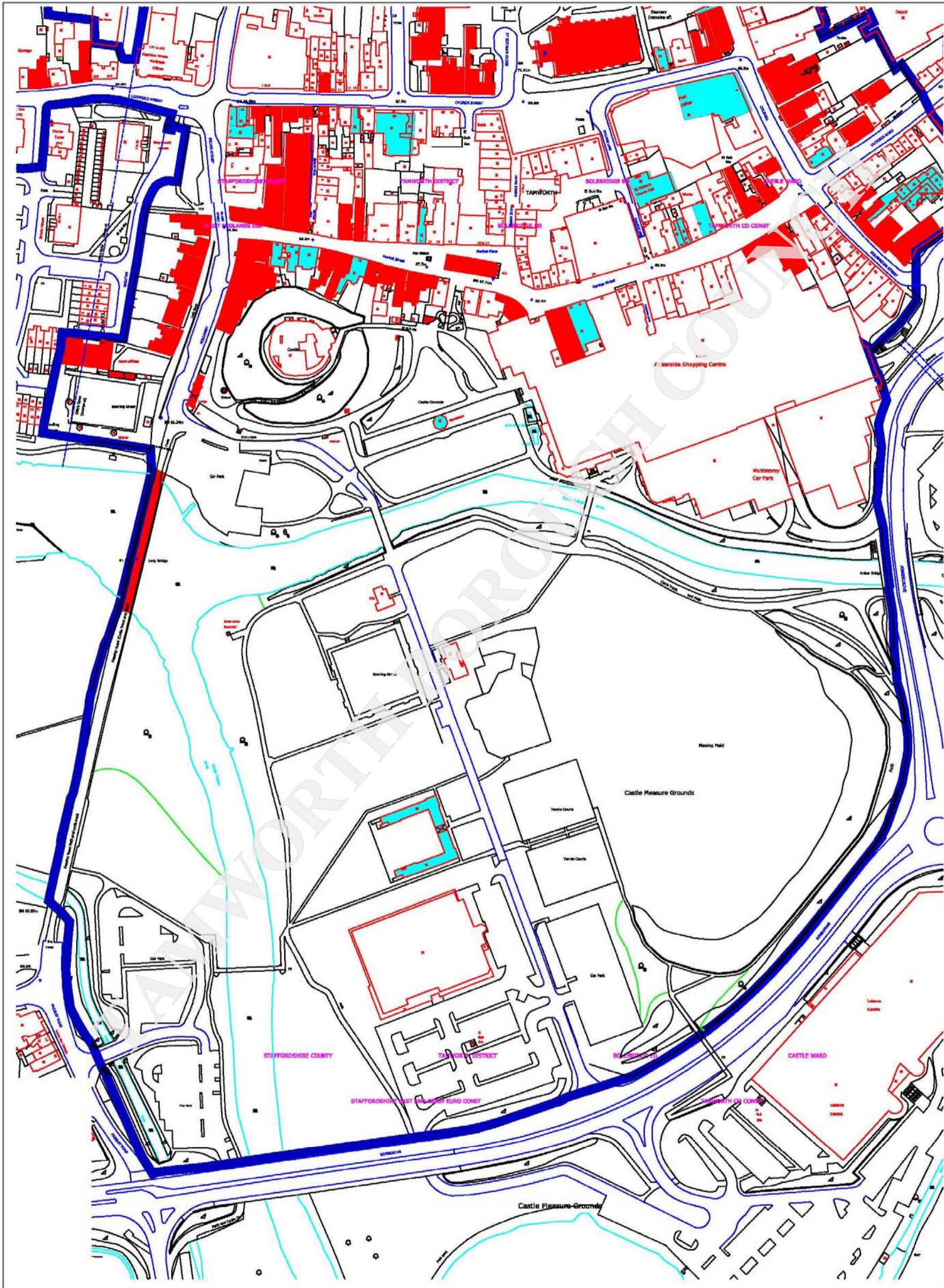
Listed Buildings

Plan 1b Town Centre Conservation Area (North): Proposals and Recommendations



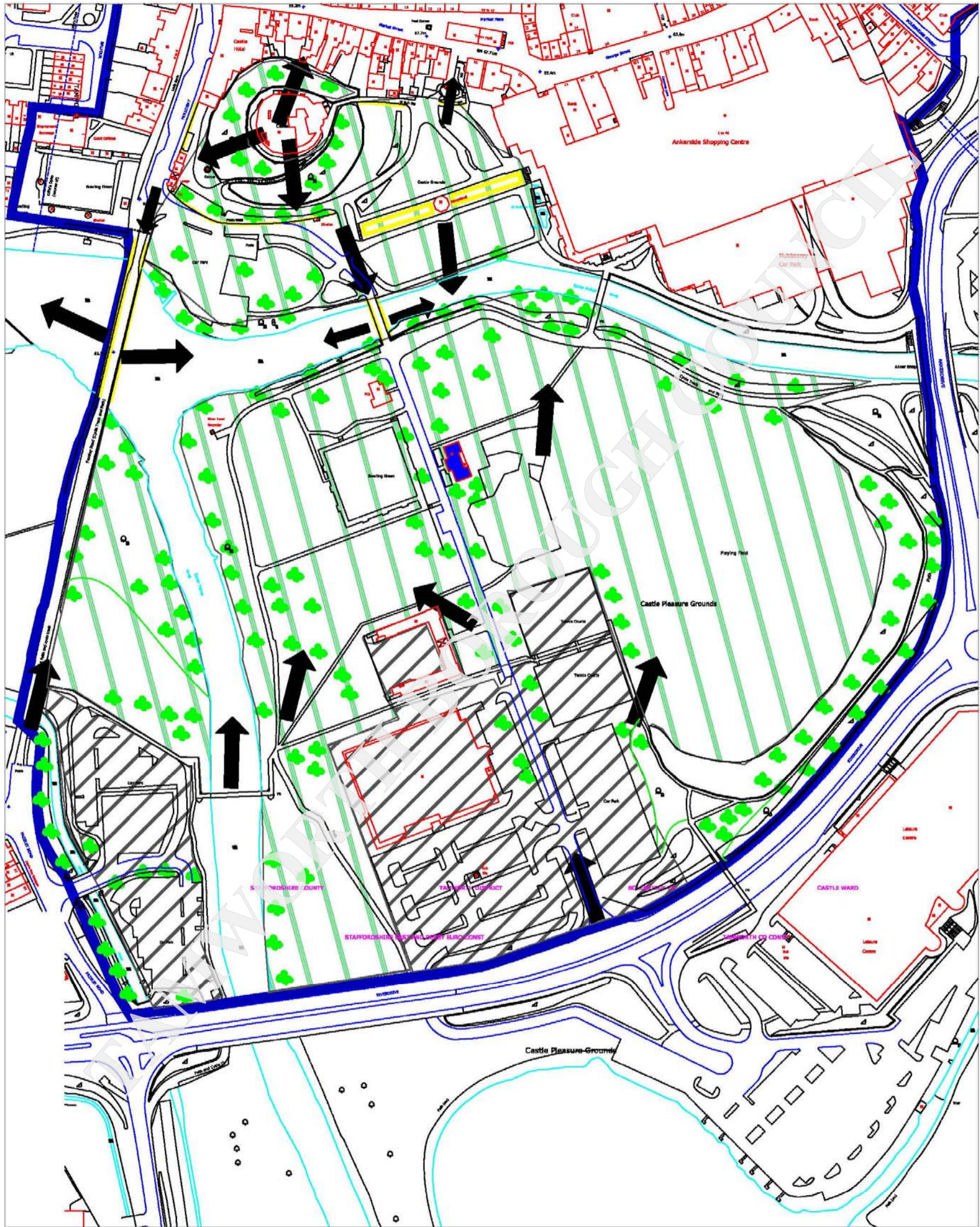
- Conservation area boundary
- Building recommended for local listing
- Building recommended for statutory listing
- Proposed conservation area boundary
- Important Tree
- Significant View
- 'Enhancement' site
- Area of important open space
- Wall / railings of note

Plan 2a Town Centre Conservation Area (South); Existing Designations

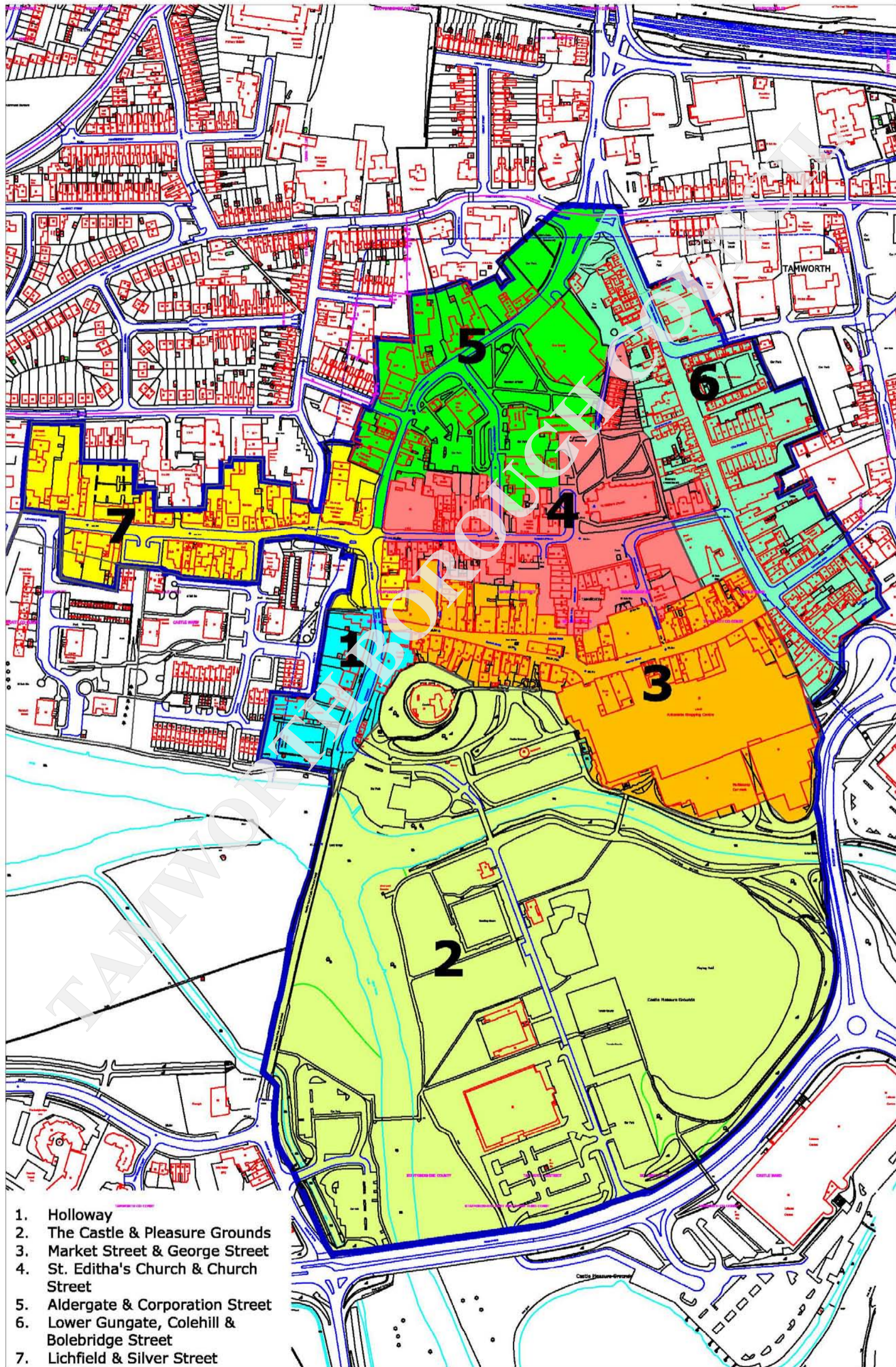


- Conservation area boundary
- Locally Listed buildings
- Listed buildings

Plan 2b Town Centre Conservation Area (South); Proposals and Recommendations



Plan 3 Town Centre Conservation Area



1. Holloway
2. The Castle & Pleasure Grounds
3. Market Street & George Street
4. St. Edith's Church & Church Street
5. Aldergate & Corporation Street
6. Lower Gungate, Colehill & Bolebridge Street
7. Lichfield & Silver Street

Character Zones