

Droitwich Spa Conservation Area



Droitwich Spa

The Droitwich Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted by Wychavon District Council as a document for planning purposes on 3rd September 2013. Minute 42 of the Executive Board meeting of 3rd September 2013 refers.

Wychavon District Council
Planning Services
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Persore
Worcestershire
WR10 1PT

Tel. 01386 565000
www.wychavon.gov.uk

Droitwich Spa

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Part 1. Droitwich Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

What is this Appraisal for?

1.1

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, usually the historic part of a town or village, where we wish to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Part of Droitwich is a conservation area.

1.2

Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 we must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This appraisal identifies the special interest and character of the Droitwich Conservation Area, and provides guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of its character or appearance can be achieved. The first part of the appraisal identifies its special interest and character. The second part sets out management proposals for addressing the issues identified in the appraisal.

1.3

The Droitwich Conservation Area was designated in November 1974 and extended in 1980. The boundary was reviewed during the preparation of this appraisal. The current conservation area boundary is shown in the appraisal.

Planning Policy Framework

1.4

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the national, regional and the local planning policy framework, particularly:

- National Planning Policy Framework which set out Government policy and guidance on the protection of conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment;
- Policies CTC19 and CTC20 of the adopted Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011, which seek to protect and enhance conservation areas; and
- Policy ENV12 of the Wychavon District Local Plan (June 2006) which is intended to ensure that development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas.

1.5

Broadly, these policies seek to ensure that the conservation area is preserved by:

Refusing permission for:

- the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage its character or appearance
- the extension or alteration of a building where the change would damage its character or appearance
- development which would be harmful to its setting or character or appearance
- development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of historic plots, layouts and street pattern, important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the conservation area
- signage which would be harmful to the character or appearance of the conservation area, and requiring new development to:

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- respect its context in design, including scale, form, proportion and detailing
- use materials in accordance with those traditionally used in that particular part of the conservation area, and maintain a similar mix
- be located on their sites in a similar way to the general pattern of building in that part of the conservation area
- boundary walls, railings and hedges should be incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence in that part of the conservation area, and these should use similar materials and detailing, or species, and
 - signs to respect the character of the buildings and quality of the historic environment in their siting, size, materials and design.

1.6

In accordance with the new planning system introduced in 2004 we are preparing a South Worcestershire Development Policy. This will contain conservation area policies that will supersede the Structure and Local Plan from 2013.

1.7

This appraisal supplements Structure Plan and Local Plan policies CTC19, CTC20 and ENV12.

Summary of Special Interest

2.1

Droitwich has considerable architectural, historic and archaeological interest with more than two thousand years of settlement history. Droitwich is known for its salt. The Droitwich salt industry is exceptional in preserving evidence for salt production from the Iron Age until the 19th century.

2.2

Droitwich has been a small Roman town, an important Anglo-Saxon, Medieval and post-Medieval commercial centre, a busy Georgian and a Victorian industrial town and latterly a popular Victorian and early 20th

century tourist spa resort. Each of these phases of development has left its mark, with a legacy of historic buildings and structures overlaying an historic settlement form, with much evidence of its early origin and changing role in history and a very high significance of archaeological interest and potential.

2.3

Droitwich today is a small regional town. It is a place of contrasts, with an obvious divide between the old town and newer planned areas linked to its development as a spa resort. Its old streets are a lively mix of timber frame, brick and rendered buildings dating from the 13th to the 21st centuries. The medieval town is still readily apparent in its layout, with a back lane and well defined rectangular plots divided and defined by brick walls behind tight lines of buildings fronting narrow streets. The later planned areas are readily identifiable in large detached Victorian and early 20th century buildings set in generous plots in tree lined avenues, reflecting the wealth of new visitors and residents.

2.4

The integrity of the historic town has been badly affected by 20th century development but nevertheless retains elements of its historic plan, many of its historic buildings and a strong local identity.

2.5

The conservation area is focussed on the surviving historic areas of the town centre and nearby residential areas.

The special interest of Droitwich that justifies its designation as a conservation area includes:

Its long history, still evident in the layout of its streets, in its buildings and other structures and in visible archaeological remains

The strong survival of the medieval street pattern, urban form and buildings,

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including burgage plots and rear ancillary buildings

The distinct identity of the Spa town development phase

Its significant archaeological interest and potential

The number and quality of historic buildings

The high level of survival of historic fabric and architectural detailing

The contribution of trees, gardens and open spaces

The conservation area boundary is drawn to reflect this special interest.

3 Assessing Special Interest

Location & Setting

Location

3.1

Droitwich sits astride the River Salwarpe roughly mid-way between Worcester and Bromsgrove on the A38 road linking the two.



Landscape Setting

3.2

The historic core of the town lies on rising ground to the south of the river, with a fragment of old settlement, and St Augustine's Church at Dodderhill standing high on a spur, to the north.

3.3

The fringes of much of the historic town have been enveloped by 19th and 20th century suburban expansion. The exception is the remnant fields to the south of Lido Park (St Peters Fields), where a sense of its former rural setting is preserved.

Historical Development & Archaeology

The Origins & Development of Droitwich

3.4

Droitwich has considerable architectural and historic interest, with over two thousand years of settlement history dating back to the Iron Age period and earlier.

3.5

Mesolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman finds around the town suggest a long history of settlement in the area.

Archaeological investigations have revealed a large scale and well-organised Iron Age salt production centre in the vicinity of Friar Street and there are extensive buried remains of a salt making industry along the River Salwarpe covering a period of over 2000 years. Salt was a rare and important commodity in history, and it is likely that the presence of brine springs in the area attracted early settlement and was the reason for development of the town. The Droitwich brine springs are particularly pure and highly concentrated, providing ideal conditions for the development of a salt manufacturing industry.

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3.6

Archaeological evidence indicates that urban occupation had commenced by the end of the 1st century AD, probably developed from the nucleus of an Iron Age industrial centre.

3.7

There is much evidence for Roman occupation of Droitwich. Shortly after invasion in AD43 the Romans built a temporary marching fort at Crutch Lane at Dodderhill to guard the crossing of their military road over the River Salwarpe. A second more permanent fort was built around AD 61 where St Augustine's Church now stands at Dodderhill. This was strategically placed on high ground overlooking the junction of roads between the fort at Metchley to the north and camps at Greensforge to the west, and the river crossing and salt-making areas in the valley below. Archaeological evidence indicates a small Roman town at Hanbury Street to the south of the river and up to three small Roman farmsteads existed along Crutch Lane.

3.8

By the middle of the 2nd century there was a Roman villa complex near Dodderhill, overlooking the salt making areas and the town. Finds at the site include jewellery, seal stones and elaborately decorated everyday objects. The range and quality of finds is exceptional compared with other Roman sites in the region, suggesting the residence of a wealthy imperial administrator or an entrepreneur. Archaeological evidence shows a cessation of Iron Age methods of salt production around the same time and may indicate a change to direct Roman control over the salt industry, with the villa possibly the industry's administrative centre.

3.9

The Roman town is thought to have ceased functioning by the end of the 4th century,

although salt production continued on a substantial scale into the Saxon period.

3.10

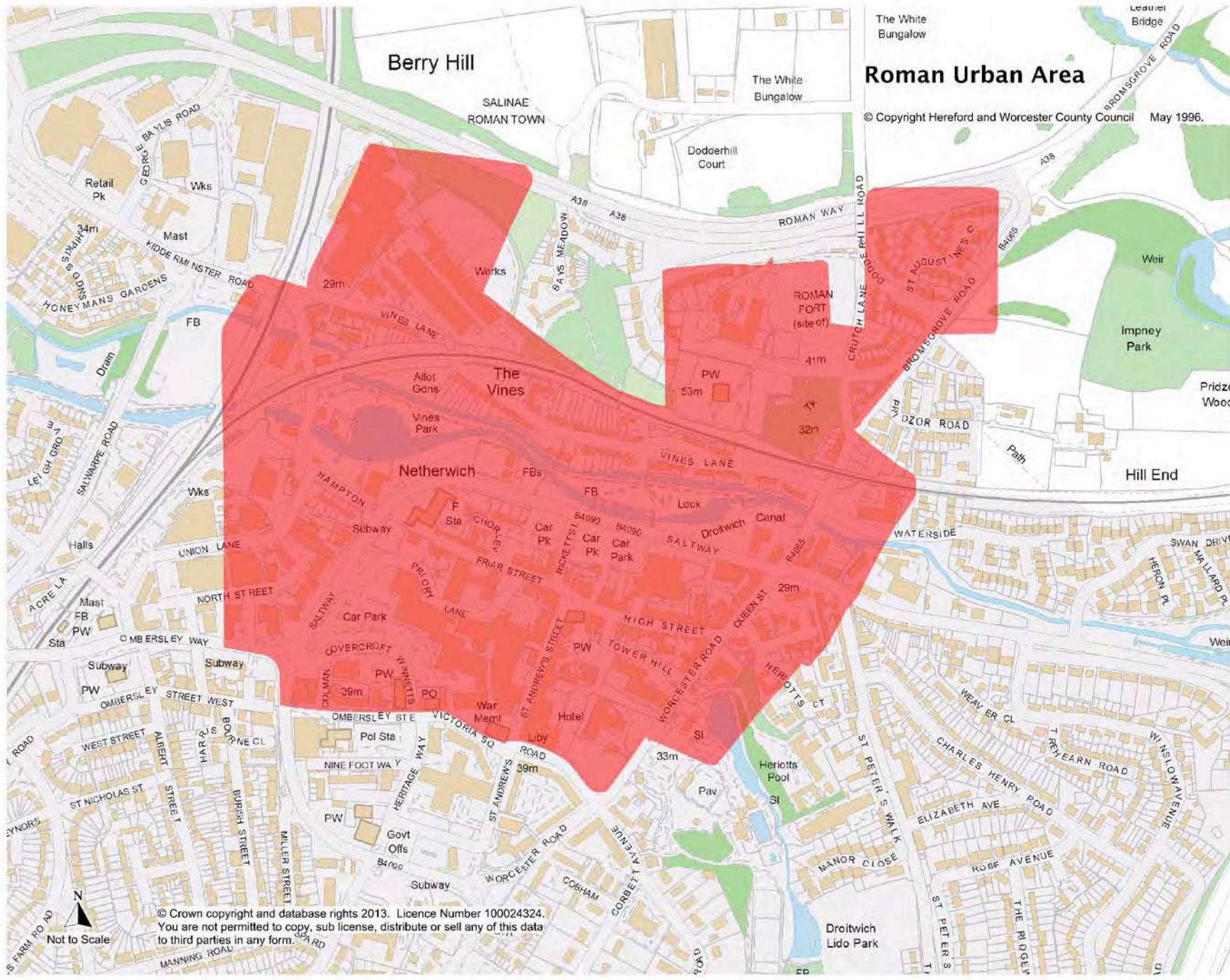
By the 7th century Droitwich was the property of the Saxon King of Mercia, and there is Anglo-Saxon charter evidence from the late 7th century to suggest a commercial centre, possibly associated with the royal palace at Wychbold to the north-east. Droitwich at this time was known as Wic, a name usually indicating a coastal/river trading or industrial centre. Trade in such a rare commodity as salt would have been important and a source of considerable wealth. The Mercian King controlled the industry and owned the largest single group of salt-making buildings. Salt rights or salt-making buildings were granted to individuals and institutions. Many of the more powerful institutions of the day were favoured in this way, including the early Abbeys at Pershore and Worcester.

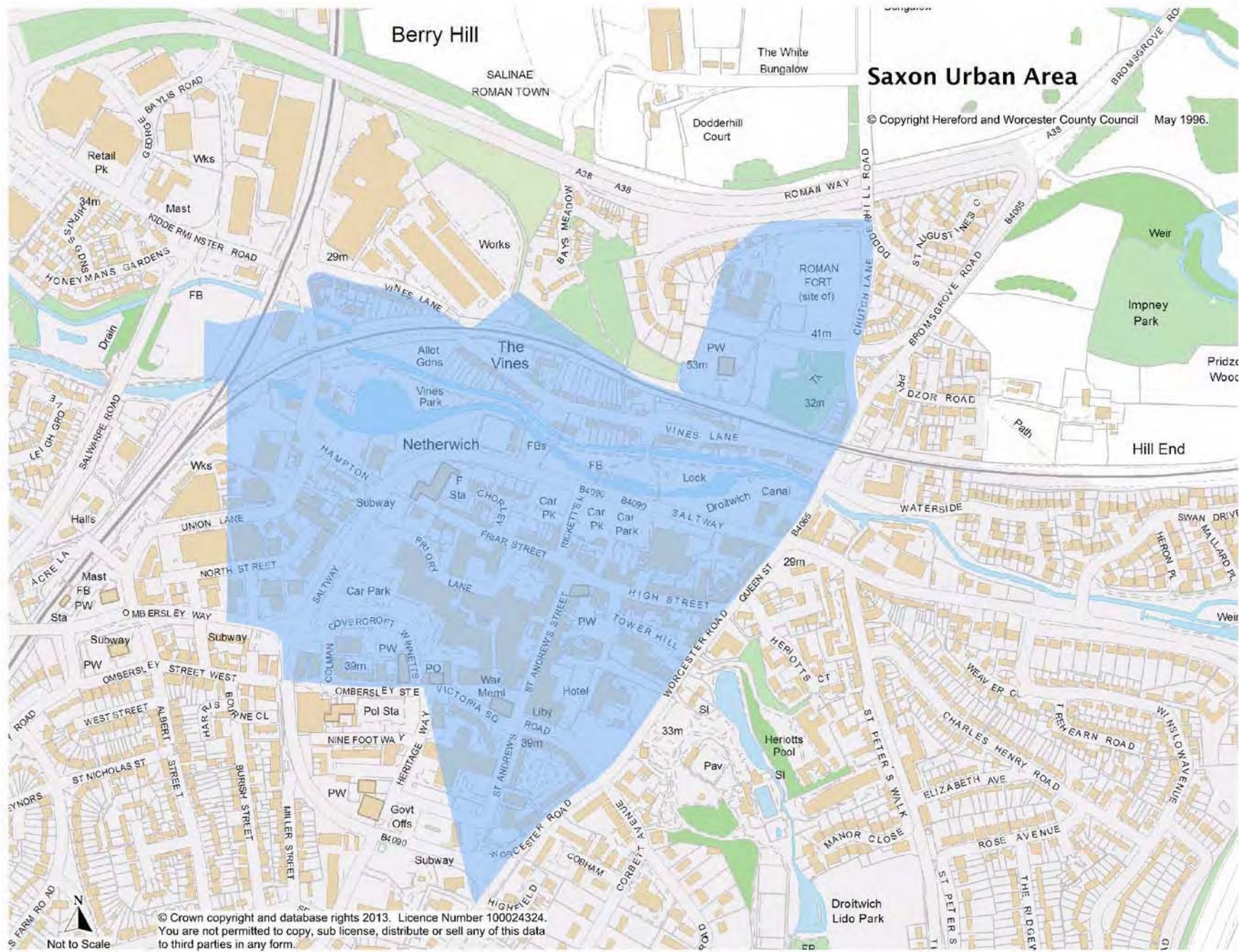
3.11

By the late Saxon period a large number of manors in Worcestershire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire and Warwickshire had acquired salt rights in Droitwich and salt was being made on a very large scale. It was traded over long distances using a complicated network of routes (saltways) radiating from the town. The importance of Droitwich at this period is evident from its tax yield, which, in 1066, placed it second only to London. The influence of the Droitwich salt industry at the time was such that the area comprised of modern Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Warwickshire was known by the Saxons as the Kingdom of the Hwiccas (Kingdom of the Saltmen).

3.12

Little is known about the layout of Saxon Droitwich. There may have been three individual settlements focussed on each of three main brine wells along the river, at





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Upwich, Middlewich and Netherwich, rather than one larger settlement. Archaeological evidence indicates that there was settlement in the area of the present town and on either side of the river, and that Friar Street may already have been laid out by the 11th century.

3.13

Domesday Book of 1086 indicates the size and importance of Droitwich by the early medieval period. Five brine wells, about 250 salt-making buildings, 125 burgesses and 35 houses are recorded. The industry was producing on a large scale. Droitwich is called a "burgus" for the first time in 1155-6 and by this time must have been a single settlement. In 1215 King John granted his salt interests to the town in return for an annual payment worth more than double the payments of Hereford and Worcester, ranking it on a level with important medieval commercial centres of the period, indicating it to be of great economic importance.

3.14

Most streets of the present town centre are recorded by the 14th century. High Street, Friar Street, St Andrew's Street, Winnett's Lane, Tower Hill, Rickett's Lane and Queen Street were in existence, and there were burgage plots fronting High Street, Friar Street and St Andrew's Street, forming a T-shaped plan to the west of the main north-south road crossing the River Salwarpe. Friar Street developed into a wealthy residential area with a cobbled road, notable for the size of its medieval townhouses. One, Priory House, survives. The location of a central medieval market place, outside St Andrew's Church, is still recognisable in the widened junction and alignment of buildings. Its small size may reflect the low importance to the town of trade other than salt. The earliest surviving buildings in Droitwich date from this period. Nos. 31-35 High Street contains remnants of a medieval building, and St Augustine's Church and St Andrew's date from the 12th and 13th centuries. Remains of other medieval

houses have been uncovered in areas off Friar Street, High Street, Hanbury Street and Vines Lane.

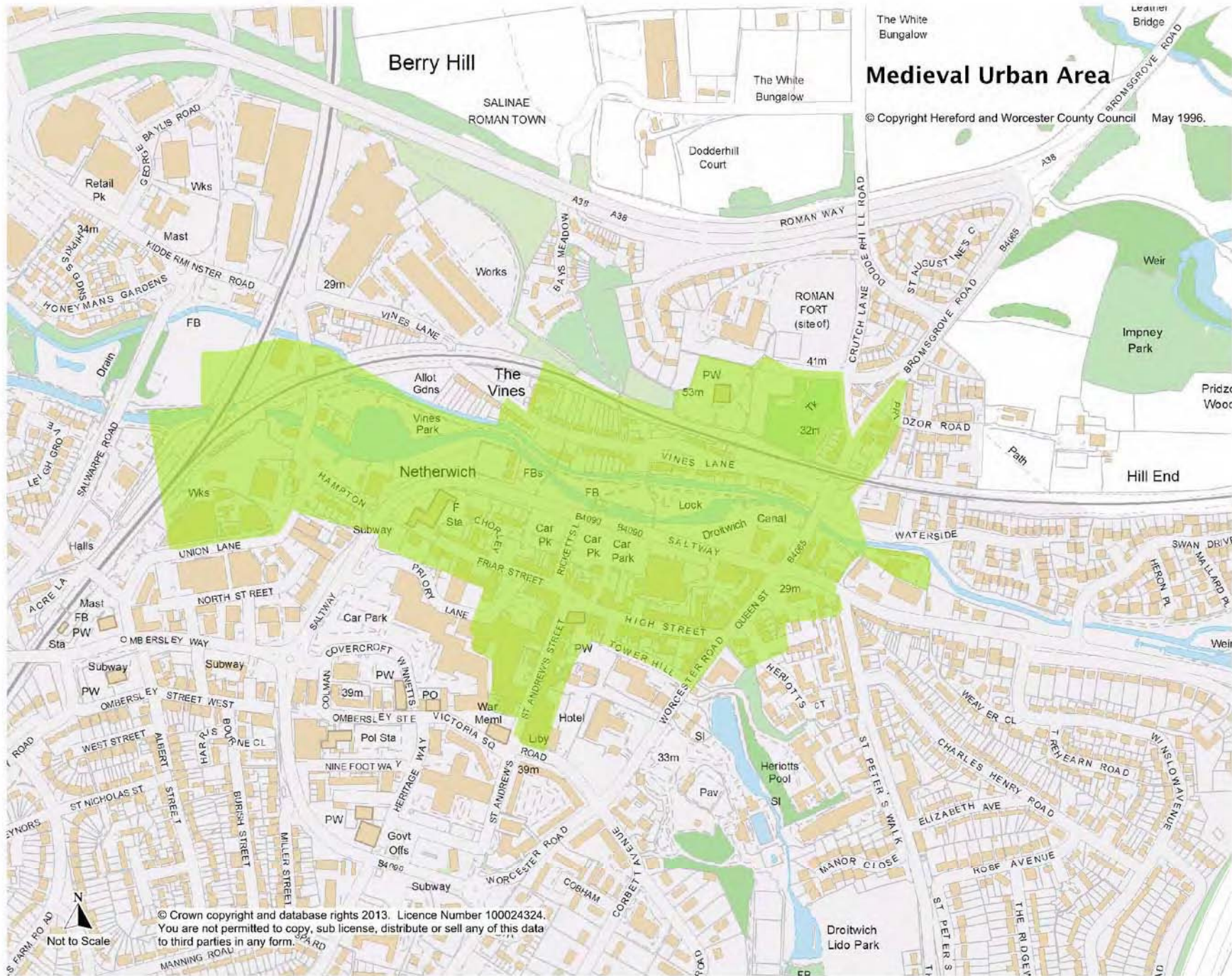
3.15

During the 16th and 17th centuries advances in brine extraction and salt making technology, and the breaking of the town monopoly on salt production, allowed a proliferation of wells, some of which were deep enough to reach the underground brine stream itself. Annual salt production increased to up to 3000 tons with a larger market than ever before. Droitwich salt was being sent as far as Ireland for the salting of herrings and to the West Country where it replaced French sea salt. Despite the profits being made from salt, the antiquarian, Leland, commented in the mid-16th century that these went to the gentry, while the townspeople (the workers) were poor and the town itself unpleasant and dirty.



3.16

By the end of the 18th century steam engines were pumping brine and salt making was a year-round activity. Annual production rose to 15,000 tons. The Droitwich Canal, completed in 1771, joined Droitwich to the River Severn and enabled the import of coal for powering the steam engines and wider and more rapid distribution of salt, with export as far as America. The canal head was lined with



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wharves and bordered with saltworks. An extension to the canal to link it with the Worcester and Birmingham Canal in 1852, and the construction of a rail link in the same year, enabled still wider distribution. Large salt factories were constructed alongside so that salt could be loaded directly on to boats, and dense tenements were built nearby to house an influx of workers. Whole families were involved in production and output was maintained day and night throughout the year, with production reaching a peak of 120,000 tons in 1872. Census records reflect the influx of workers. The 1801 census records a total of 1,845 residents; there were 4,201 recorded in 1901.

3.17

The town's buildings still reflect something of the wealth generated in the 18th and 19th centuries. The appearance of the old medieval town was transformed, as many of the timber framed buildings were re-built with new Georgian and Victorian buildings, or improved by the addition of brick or stucco frontages. The canal is still present and there are standing remains of salt production from the 19th century in Gurney's Lane and Tower Hill.

3.18

In the 19th century John Corbett, the leading Droitwich salt maker, had a vision for the town. Corbett was determined to change its image from that of a dirty industrial town to a tourist spa resort. Droitwich had taken the first step to becoming a spa town soon after the therapeutic properties of brine had been discovered during a cholera epidemic in the 1830's. The first brine baths, the Royal Brine Baths, were opened in 1836 in Queen Street, and a brine baths hospital had been built in Friar Street.

3.19

Corbett amalgamated Droitwich salt production under his own control and re-located much of it to nearby Stoke Prior.

Having rid the town of much of its polluting industry he set about his task of giving it a new identity. Corbett's additions to the old town included a large new square (Victoria Square), Brine Baths Park (Lido Park), St Andrews Brine Baths, the Worcestershire Brine Baths Hotel, St Andrew's Road and the avenues of street trees in St Andrew's Road and St Andrew's Street that are still there today. He also re-developed the Royal Brine Baths and Hotel and bestowed the town with St John's Hospital, its railway station and a concert and public meeting hall.

3.20

Corbett's strategy was a success. Spa bathing caught on and Droitwich enjoyed a new popularity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a tourist spa resort. A genteel atmosphere of hotel guests and holidaymakers co-existed with the harsh environment endured by the salt labourers. The contrast between the two identities of Droitwich is still evident today in its layout and buildings.

3.21

Salt production in the town finally came to an end in 1922. By then the pumping of brine was causing serious subsidence, particularly evident today in the High Street.

3.22

The later 20th and 21st centuries have brought significant change to Droitwich. The remnants of the old salt factories and workers' housing alongside the river and canal were cleared in the 1930's and the area laid out instead as a park. (Vines Park). The development of the Saltway relief road, St Andrews Shopping Centre, and road widening at the junction of Hanbury Street with Queen Street, in the 1960's, resulted in the loss of some of the old street layout and removal of many old buildings. There are replacement buildings in the core of the historic town in High Street, Friar Street and St Andrews Street.

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The Worcestershire Hotel and Royal Hotel and Brine Baths, and large gardens behind Tower Hill and St Andrews Street, have been re-developed for housing, and buildings and yards behind the High Street have been cleared for car parking and new retail development.

3.23

Despite these more recent changes Droitwich has retained much of its architectural and historic interest. Many of its historic buildings are still present. It retains the principal streets of its Medieval plan form, evident archaeology of its salt making days and many of the features of its re-development as a spa town, so that its early origins and development through history are still readily apparent.

Archaeology

3.24

The earliest evidence of human activity recovered in Droitwich are flint tools found to the north of the River Salwarpe at Bays Meadow near Dodderhill Church, believed to date to the Mesolithic period (12,000 to 4,000 BC).

3.25

Iron Age roundhouses have been found under the Roman villa building at Bays Meadow, possibly the site of temporary houses related to seasonal salt production. Excavation at 45 Friar Street has revealed a continuous sequence of occupation dating from the Iron Age to the present.

3.26

Excavations at the Old Bowling Green and Upwich brine well sites have revealed evidence of organised exploitation of the brine springs and methods used for the extraction and production of salt from the Romans to the 18th century. Early wells, timber-lined brine tanks, hearths for boiling brine and briquetage (rough clay vessels designed to dry and transport salt), Roman timberwork, including parts of a crane, organic deposits such as rope and barrels,

and Saxon stone-lined channels and lead pans, are just some of the surviving buried features.

3.27

A considerable number of Roman finds, deposits and remains have been discovered throughout the town. Excavations have revealed two Roman villas and associated features at Bays Meadow, a Roman fort at Dodderhill, a Roman cemetery at Vines Lane, evidence of Roman domestic occupation at Hanbury Street, a salt industry along the Salwarpe valley, and a network of Roman Roads and tracks. Part of a rampart of the Bays Meadow villa complex survives as an earthwork.

3.28

The sites of the forts, villa complex and salt producing area are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

3.29

Anglo-Saxon pottery recovered from the salt making area, and excavations and chance finds have produced evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation to the east of Dodderhill Church and over a wide area to the south of the river, including the area of the present town.

3.30

Remains of medieval houses and other features of occupation have been uncovered in areas of Friar Street, the High Street, Hanbury Street, Vines Lane and Dodderhill, as well as evidence of industry and salt making.

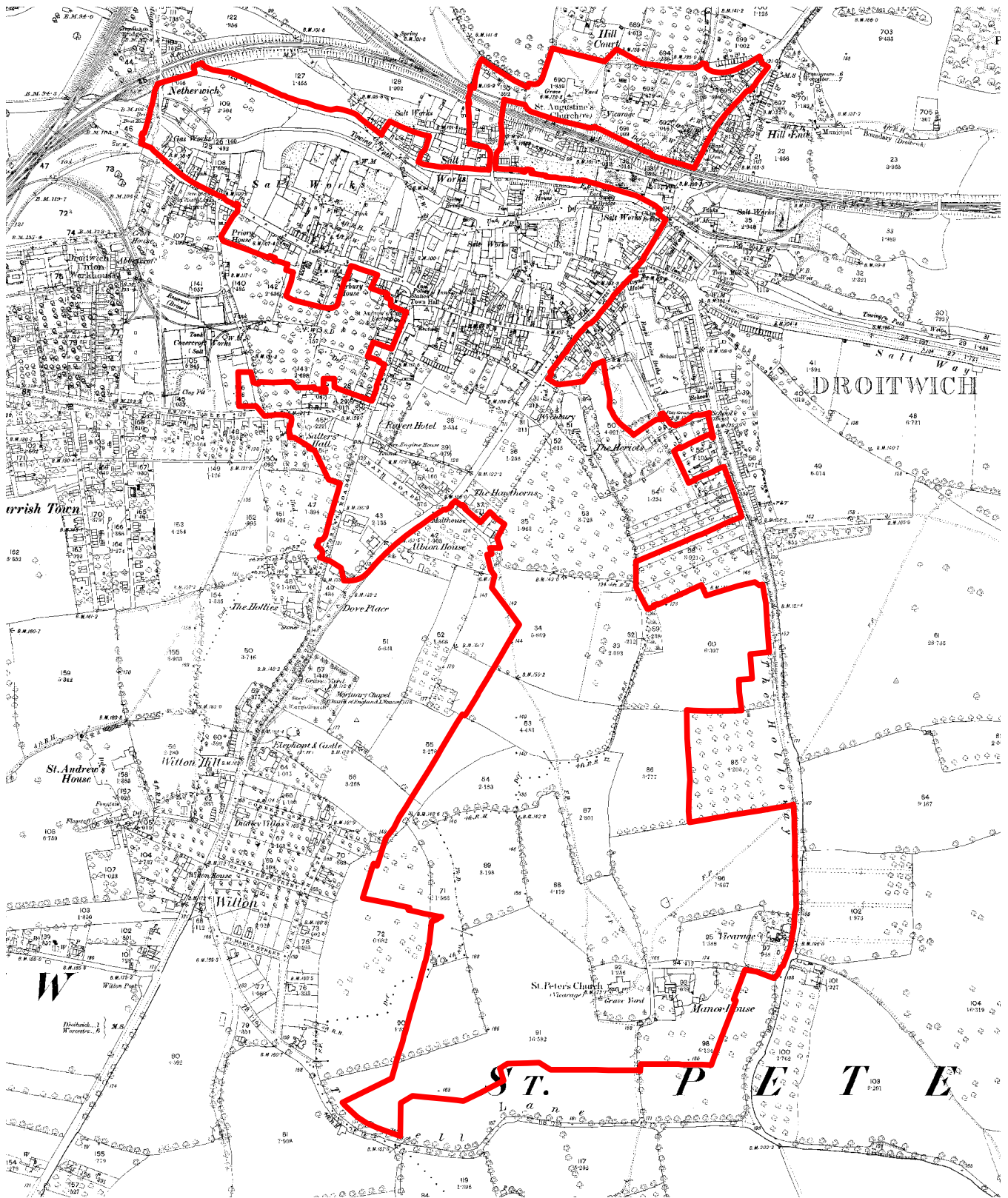
3.31

Evidence of post-medieval occupation has been observed in Friar Street, Hanbury Street, Rickets Lane and Gurneys Lane, and other sites have produced evidence of 18th century canal wharfs and buildings and residues from post-medieval salt production.

3.32

This is only a brief summary of the known archaeology of Droitwich. A fuller account

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Extract from 1st Edition
Ordnance Survey map c1886

 Conservation Area boundary

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and analysis is given in the Archaeological Assessment of Droitwich by The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey.

Plan Form

3.33

Droitwich has an east-west main street linear axis lined in part with narrow burgage plots and a parallel back lane. A market place half-way along its length is met by a north-south road to form a "T"- shaped plan at its historic core. This core framework of narrow roads, back lane, plots and market place is likely to be Saxon/Medieval in origin. The former Roman road leading to the river crossing takes a roughly north-south line to the east of the main street along the route of the present Worcester Road/Queen Street and defines the eastern extent of this early town.

3.34

Many of the plots in the historic core are well defined and characteristically rectilinear with narrow frontages. Frontage buildings are set on a consistent building line, sited immediately behind the pavements to form tightly packed lines of buildings flanking both sides and following the lines of the roads. The majority of buildings face the road with their ridges carried in alignment. Many have rear ranges or ancillary buildings stretching from the main building into the rears of the linear plots, with their roofs set at right angles to the frontage building and often defining a side boundary. These rear ranges and ancillary buildings are frequently simple and subservient in form and design to the principal frontage building.

3.35

This tight urban grain, presence of a back lane and distinctive relationship of building to plot and building to road, are characteristic features of a medieval town plan and distinctive features of the heart of the Droitwich Conservation Area. Modern development has obscured some of the medieval plan in part. Where it survives it is

a significant element of the character and special interest of the conservation area.

3.36

The area of planned expansion of the town related to its era as a spa resort is laid out to the south and east of the historic core, and is clearly identifiable in the wide town square, straight tree lined avenues, generous plots and the open space of Lido Park. Buildings lining the north side of the square are sited immediately back of pavement, continuing the relationship of building to road of the historic core. Elsewhere they are largely set back behind green frontages. In residential areas the development pattern is notable for its consistent pattern of detached buildings set in generous plots behind a common building line, with gardens to front, side and rear. Modern development has broken this pattern in parts, to the detriment of the quality of the conservation area.

Spaces

3.37

There are open spaces in the Droitwich Conservation Area that are important to its character and special interest.



3.38

Lido Park and St Peter's Fields is a substantial swathe of open space adjoining the historic core of the town. Lido Park is the former Brine Baths Park endowed by Corbett for use by spa visitors and many of the main features of the original layout are

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still intact. This area of open space is historically important as a key feature of the transformation of the identity of Droitwich implemented by Corbett in the 19th Century.

3.39

Lido Park was extended in the 1920's by the addition of St Peter's Fields. These fields are the remnants of the countryside setting adjoining Droitwich prior to expansion in the late 19th and 20th centuries. They extend the swathe of open space provided by the park and continue to provide a rural setting to St Peter's Manor House and church. Undisturbed areas contain ridge and furrow (remnants of the medieval open field farming system), possibly associated with former settlement at St Peters.



3.40

The spaces around St Andrews Church and the Raven Hotel are important in maintaining the settings of these key historic buildings in the conservation area. The smaller spaces in the yards behind frontage buildings in the historic core are equally important. Those in the High Street in particular are obvious from several public vantage points and are clear evidence of the town's medieval plan and provide a setting to its historic buildings.



3.41

The sequence of generous house plots in Lyttelton Road and Corbett Avenue illustrates the relative wealth of these newly planned areas in the 19th and 20th centuries and is a key feature of the character and appearance of this area.

3.42

While the full extent of some private gardens and yards may not be entirely publicly visible the lack of interruption by buildings, or presence of planting, contributes to an impression of space around buildings, appreciated from glimpses over boundaries, between buildings and from the rear. These spaces are no less important to the character of the conservation area than those that are more obvious in the streetscene.



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Key Views & Vistas

3.43

There are frequent views into the rears of plots lining the High Street, notably from the car parks on its north side and from Tower Hill, Worcester Road and Vines Park, from where the historic urban form of the early town is apparent.

3.44

The gentle curve of the High Street gives unfolding views that reveal the town's linear form and historic development. From here the buildings in their street setting can be appreciated.

3.45

The preservation of these key views is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4 Character Analysis

General

4.1

Droitwich is a small regional town with a strong local identity. There is much evidence in its form and fabric of its early origin and changing role in history. It is a conservation area of contrasts. There is a sharp divide between the old town, with its commercial core of local businesses in small historic buildings lining narrow streets, and the green and spacious layout of the commercial, residential and park areas of the newer planned spa resort. Buildings are constructed in a variety of materials and architectural styles spanning several different periods.

4.2

Modern development, traffic and car parking pressures have left their mark on the quality of the townscape. Nevertheless it still retains a strong sense of history and identity with each of its later development phases through history still readily identifiable.

Character Areas

4.3

There are distinct character areas within the conservation area:

- Dodderhill
- Vines Park
- High Street, Friar Street, St Andrew's Street & Queen Street
- Victoria Square & St Andrew's Road
- Lido Park & St Peter's Fields
- Lyttelton Road

Dodderhill

4.4

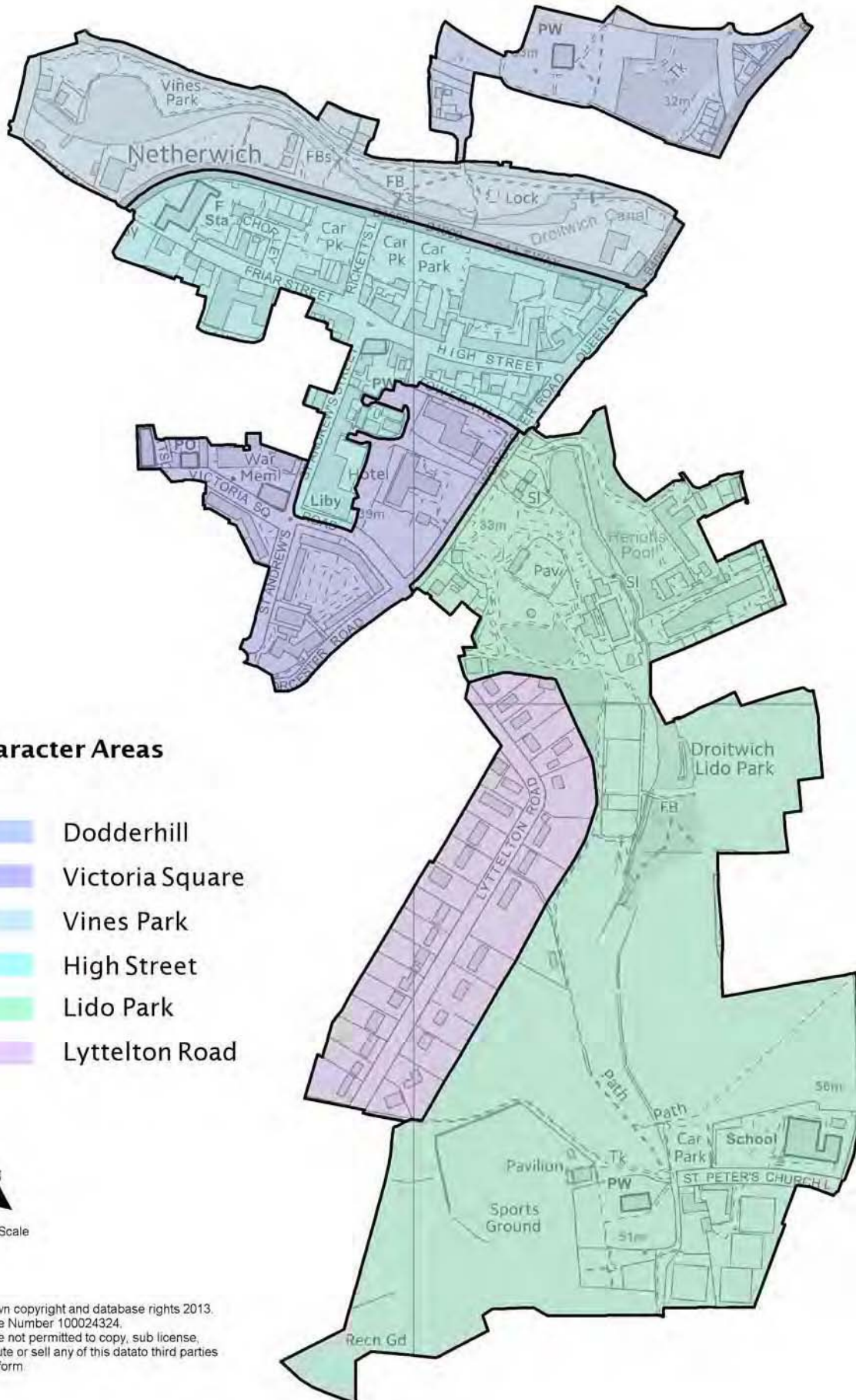
Separated from The Vines by the River Salwarpe, the canal, and by the railway link Dodderhill rises over Vines Park as a visible presence in the landscape on the periphery of the Droitwich Conservation Area. It is connected to Vines Park via a footpath which crosses the railway and footbridge across the Salwarpe, a second easier access is over Chapel Bridge.



4.5

The most dominant feature is the medieval church of St Augustine which towers over Droitwich from Dodderhill. It is on the site of a 1st century Roman Fort which was the earliest known administrative centre for Droitwich salt production. In about 680 the minster church of St Augustine was built on the site of the Roman Fort to serve the very large parish of Dodderhill. Later, new parishes were formed out of Dodderhill with

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their own churches and smaller land units or manors. The medieval church was built on the site of the minster in the mid 12th century. It has had many alterations and additions; during the Civil War Royalists caused so much damage trying to get Parliamentarians out that the nave collapsed.

4.6

Today the church is a dominant feature of this area as in centuries before. The churchyard is flanked by rather overgrown land; a haven for birds. To the east and bordering Bromsgrove Road a mixture of cottages and houses, 17th to early 20th century mostly sit tight against each other and back of pavement or sit within small gardens.

4.7

Dodderhill makes a unique and positive contribution to the conservation area because of its early salt related history, surviving church buildings and open spaces set within the earlier Roman Fort. Preservation of Dodderhill Roman Fort site and the medieval church of St Augustine is important to the special interest and character of the Droitwich Conservation Area.



Vines Park

4.8

This is part of the former brine extraction and salt making areas, encompassing one of the three former main wells and production areas (Upwich), and includes the canal and former areas of 19th century factories and workers' housing. Only the canal, the location of the Upwich brine well and a handful of houses survive as above-ground clues to the history of this part of Droitwich, although there is extensive archaeology below ground and the whole area is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4.9

Much of the area is now a park used for recreation. Preservation of the surviving features relating to the salt industry is important to the special interest and character of the conservation area.

4.10

Vines Park was landscaped in the early 20th century on land between the River Salwarpe and Droitwich canal known as The Vineground. This is also the site where salt was produced from brine wells from at least the Iron Age. Salt making was almost continuous throughout the following centuries increasing during the 18th century and a canal was built along the course of the Salwarpe River. Wharves, locks and buildings associated with salt production were clustered along the banks of the Salwarpe. This continued to be the case throughout the 19th century.



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4.11

In the early 20th century at the Netherwich end of The Vines OS maps show that there were allotment gardens. Vines Park appears for the first time on the 1938-40 OS map. It is shown as a gently curving landscape of deciduous and coniferous specimen trees between the canal and the Salwarpe River starting at Netherwich and continuing along the canal to the lock at Hill End where the Salwarpe and the canal are joined. A circuit walk ran around the whole of the park with occasional pathways from the canal to bridges over the Salwarpe toward St Augustines Church.

4.12

The landscape changed significantly when the canal through Vines Park was filled in with waste from construction of the M5 sometime after 1965. The route of the canal was landscaped over becoming part of the park and later a bowling green was laid occupying part of the line of the old canal bed. The canal was restored in 1985 which involved cutting a new channel for the canal and the construction of a new basin. Much of the west end of the gardens was lost by the construction of the basin.

4.13

The industrial and brine wells area now occupied by Vines Park is of outstanding historic significance due to the concentration of works associated with the industrial processes of salt production from pre historic times. Although there is still some evidence of the original landscaping of Vines Park, it is fragmentary. A good deal of the original landscaped area has suffered considerable change.

4.14

Vines Park makes a positive contribution to the Conservation area because of its historic connection with salt production from pre historic times and because it provides a green edge to the Conservation Area.



High Street, Friar Street, St Andrew's Street and Queen Street

4.15

This is the town's Saxon and Medieval core and its old commercial heart, where narrow streets are lined with shops, food outlets, banks, inns and public houses.



4.16

Individual buildings sit tight against each other and against the back of pavements. The continuous building line is broken only by an occasional gap between buildings. Buildings are a mix of one, two and three storeys, of various scales, increasing more frequently to three storey on approach to the market place. Most buildings appear from their front elevations to date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Many have replaced or re-modelled earlier buildings, with earlier buildings apparent inside or in rear elevations. A variety of building heights and scales gives a variety of ridge, eaves and

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window levels, resulting in a lively roofscape and streetscene.



4.17

Although the majority of buildings date from a later period, the earlier medieval plan is still very much evident in the High Street and in parts of Friar Street, St Andrews Street and Queen Street. This is identifiable in the tight grain of small narrow linear plots, the presence of a back lane and tightly packed buildings sited immediately back of pavement. Many plots, particularly on the south side of the High Street, are still defined by brick walls. These key features of the medieval settlement form, together with the predominance of historic buildings, are essential elements of the historic character and special interest of the area.



4.18

Occasional plots still retain smaller ancillary buildings at the rear.

4.19

Many of the buildings are listed and retain original architectural features. Located in the main commercial area some have been subject to pressure for new or updated shopfronts and signage, which frequently detracts from their quality and that of the wider streetscene.

4.20

The High Street has become a secondary shopping area to St Andrews Shopping Centre and suffers from poor signage and under-investment in building repair and maintenance, and the recent economic downturn has left several shops vacant.

4.21

In the latter part of the 20th century and more recently this area has seen demolitions for car parking and re-development, as well as new development in former gardens. Not all of this new development has respected its context in siting, scale and design. These newer developments, and the gaps that have been created, have undermined the visual and historic integrity of these core areas. Preservation of the remaining historic buildings and plan form in this area is critical to the preservation of the special interest, character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.



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Victoria Square & St Andrew's Road

4.22

This is the area of Corbett's late 19th century planned extension to the old town, where he laid out a new town square and built St. Andrew's Brine Baths, the Worcestershire Brine Baths Hotel and a public hall, together with the Raven Hotel and its gardens.

4.23

On the north side of the square individual buildings are sited tight against the pavement in the manner of development in the historic core, but are larger in size and scale, and in the architectural style of public buildings of their period, befitting their status as banks and post office. In contrast, development on the south side of the square and in St Andrew's Road is set back behind gardens in more spacious plots in tree-lined roads. The presence of the larger buildings, a more spacious layout, gardens, street trees and tree planting in the square, give this area a gentle, polite and spacious character typical of the Victorian/Edwardian and early 20th century eras. The remains of the large gardens at the rear of the Raven Hotel make a significant contribution to the more spacious quality of this area.

4.24

Corbett's Public Hall, some of St Andrew's Brine Baths and the Worcestershire Brine Baths Hotel have been re-developed in recent years, Victoria Square has been pedestrianised with paving and there is new development at the rear of the Raven Hotel. These new developments haven't always respected the character of the area in siting, scale, design or materials, although other historic buildings, gardens and street trees are still present, and there is still a strong sense of the genteel Victorian/Edwardian character of Corbett's development. The retention of the remaining 19th/early 20th century buildings, gardens and trees, including street trees, is essential to safeguarding the character and appearance of this area.



Lido Park & St Peter's Fields

4.25

The former Brine Baths Park was endowed by Corbett for use by spa visitors, it was later extended into St Peter's Fields. This is a substantial swathe of open space abutting the town centre where the formality of specimen tree planting, paths, band stand and planting beds in the park gives way to the wider spaces and more natural environment of St Peter's Fields. Buildings relating to recreational uses in this area are small scale and the natural environment is dominant, enhanced by the presence of extensive tree planting and natural water features and habitat.



4.26

Lido Park provides a green leafy oasis in the heart of Droitwich, originally designed and landscaped in the 19th century for the use of the patrons of the Royal Brine Baths. It was significantly extended on two occasions in the 20th century to improve facilities, provide

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a considerable amount of extra recreation space and The Lido was built. In the mid 20th century, at the request of the residents of Droitwich, the park was purchased by the Borough Council for the enjoyment and use of all residents and visitors. As Droitwich moved away from salt production in the 19th century and began to be recognised as a spa, the former Royal Brine Baths (situated between The Heriots and the Coventry Charity Alms Houses) offered treatments as a cure for rheumatism. Out of this a need arose for a quiet and attractive healthy area for patients to exercise. Salt works made Droitwich a grimey unpleasant industrial place and the Victorian answer to this was the urban park.

4.27

Lido Park, then called Brine Baths Park, was landscaped sometime between 1883 and 1901 on the site of an orchard adjacent to The Heriots. It was bounded by Worcester Road, The Heriots pool and St Peter's Fields, consisting of about 8 acres it was laid out as pleasure grounds and gardens. The original design is still clearly visible today. Entrance to the park was by subscription and ticket via the entrance lodge.

The earlier landscape park survives today in:

- Entrance Lodges and defined boundaries
- A mixture of specimen trees
- A circuit walk
- A circular garden
- Flower beds
- A bandstand

4.28

Although some of the park's original layout has been altered by the addition of car parking, the lido buildings and pool, the park still displays the main features of its layout and it retains a strong Victorian urban park character.

Extensions to the park are visible in the football pitches and tennis courts and St Peter's Fields with its relocated bridge from Impney Park. These areas have been partially landscaped and extensively planted with trees. Remnant ridge and furrow, and the presence of St Peter's Church, Manor House and barns, are clues that a separate settlement and farming community may once have existed in this area. These fields are all that remain of the former agricultural setting of the town prior to its suburban expansion. These areas provide a very significant green space which has since become surrounded by later residential development. Some later inappropriate development has been removed during Local Authority work to restore and update The Lido.

4.29

Today sporting and recreation facilities continue to be improved by the Local Authority and although some parts of the earlier design have been lost the park is an important and attractive feature of the Droitwich Conservation Area.

Lyttelton Road

4.30

This is a planned residential area adjacent to the town centre, begun at the time of Corbett's transformation of Droitwich to a fashionable spa resort. Individual detached houses date largely from the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries and line both sides of tree-lined road in substantial plots. Buildings are set back behind front gardens on a largely common building line. Low density development with a generous spacing of large houses, common building line, substantial gardens, numerous trees and avenues of street trees, give this area a spacious, gentle and leafy suburban character. Many of the 19th and early-mid 20th century buildings are in similar architectural style to Corbett's planned extensions to the town, so that this area has a strong character and a clear historic and architectural link with the town.

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4.31

More recent re-development of some sites has failed to respect the distinctive settlement pattern of the area, in particular the generous building to garden ratios of its plots, and has undermined its character and historic identity to its detriment. This area is under continued pressure for infill housing and re-development and is vulnerable to change.

Buildings

4.32

There is a range of building periods and architectural styles in the conservation area. Many of the buildings are listed for their special architectural or historic interest and are clearly of early origin. There are other historic buildings which, while not listed, are of architectural and historic interest to Droitwich. Many of the buildings in the town centre have visible earlier origins, with timber framing apparent in rear or side walls. Houses in Lyttelton Road & Corbett Avenue remain much as first built.

Houses

4.33

Houses date through the centuries from the 14th century to modern, each reflecting in their size and architectural style their status and period of construction.



4.34

Early houses are 14th to 17th centuries. The earlier houses in the High Street and Friar Street are two storey town houses with rear bays or substantial linear rear ranges. St. Peter's Manor and the historic core of the Raven Hotel are old manor houses and are substantial buildings with two storeys and attics, prominent gables and substantial wall chimneys, reflecting their former status.



4.35

Later houses dating from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries are typical in plan and style of their periods.

4.36

Those from the 18th and 19th centuries reflect the influence of Classical architecture in their design. These are large to more modest buildings, two to two storey with attic, or three storey, with a rectangular plan

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and frequently with a rear wing. Roofs are steeply pitched with brick modillion eaves a common feature. Fenestration is a careful arrangement of sash windows around a roughly centrally placed panelled door with moulded cases and hoods. Chimneys are ridge and end wall mounted. Barge and fascia boards are the exception.



4.37

Early 20th century houses reflect the Arts and Crafts movement in their design. Substantial buildings are two storey with large hipped or plain gabled roofs, large prominent chimneys, partially enclosed porches, forward projecting gables and bays.

Modern Houses

4.38

Modern houses are a mix of bungalows and houses. They have a form and design that is often at variance with the established characteristics of older buildings in the town, with deeper plans, shallower roof pitches, box dormers, repetitive designs, large windows with a horizontal emphasis, doors set within enclosed porches, insignificant or no chimneys, attached and integral garages.

Other Building Types

4.39

There are commercial buildings in the High Street and Victoria Square dating from the 19th and early 20th Centuries. These are a mix of large formal buildings in architectural

styles of their period such as banks, post office, library, Police Station and Town Hall, and smaller single storey gable fronted buildings.



4.40

There are few surviving historic buildings associated with salt production or ancillary buildings such as workshops, storage buildings, stables or coach houses. These have been largely demolished as a result of re-development and clearance of rear plot areas for car parking. Those that remain are largely 19th century brick buildings which they are typical in form and design of their period and purpose, with simple functional plans and minimal openings in plain walls. The presence of these remaining buildings is a clue to the history and development of the town and an essential element of the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.41

Inns/public houses date mainly from the 18th or 19th centuries, sometimes incorporating earlier timber framed remains. They are typical in their design of their respective architectural periods, with a form, scale, fenestration and features reflecting houses of their period.

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4.42

Two churches in the conservation area, the Church of St. Andrew and Church of St Peter, have undergone phases of construction from the Norman to the 15th centuries. Both have Jacobean fronts.



Listed Building

4.43

Many of the buildings in the Droitwich Conservation Area are "listed" for their architectural or historic interest. Other buildings and structures attached to, or pre-dating 1st July 1948 and forming part of the curtilage of, these identified buildings are also listed by association. While the aim of the listed building legislation is to preserve these buildings for their own sake, any changes affecting them will also be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area.



4.44

Buildings and structures that are listed by association with those buildings included in the list are shown on the appraisal map where they have been able to be identified. The information shown on the map is not definitive. The Council's Heritage Team should be contacted for advice on whether a building or structure is listed by association ("curtilage listed") before any works are carried out to potentially listed buildings or structures.

Unlisted Buildings

4.45

There are many other buildings, which, while not "listed", have qualities of age, style and materials that are locally important and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area



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4.46

That many of these properties retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved them. There is, however, no guarantee as to their future and these properties are vulnerable to future change. The Management Proposals at Part 2 includes a proposal for consideration of Article 4 Directions to provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations. The effect of the Direction would be that certain alterations which formerly did not require planning permission would need permission in future, but only where the change affects those parts of a property fronting a highway, waterway or public open space.

Shop Fronts and Signage

Shop Fronts

4.47

Shopfronts or shop windows are incorporated into the ground floor of many of the buildings in High Street, St Andrews Street, Queen Street and in some in Friar Street. Most date from the 19th and 20th centuries.



4.48

Shop fronts from the 19th century are a mix of individual shop windows, some bowed, most with glass divided by glazing bars and/or mullions, and separate entrance door, and later 19th larger shop fronts framed with stallrisers, pilasters, fascia and deep moulded cornice with large divided plate glass display windows, or smaller panes divided with mullions and transomes, with a side or central door. The retention of the form and fabric of historic shopfronts is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.49

Many buildings have modern shopfronts with deep fascias, large undivided display windows and often no cornice or pilasters. These detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area, particularly where they are inserted into historic buildings. Some echo the design principles of 19th or early 20th century windows, but are less finely executed in detail.

Shop signage

4.50

Shop signage is a mix of fascia and hanging signs. Many of the 19th century shop windows and shop fronts have small fascias and signage on these is generally modest. Some of the 19th and earlier 20th century shopfronts have their original fascia signs or lettering applied direct to the fascia in the traditional manner. Some of the 20th century shopfronts have deep fascias with oversized lettering, to the detriment of the character/appearance of the conservation area.

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4.51

Many of Droitwich's shopfronts have separate modern signage boards attached over the top of the fascia, sometimes larger than the fascia and extending above the shopfront or below into the window. Occasionally separate signage boards are fixed on the building above the shopfront or over or to the side of doors, or buildings are signed with banners. Many of the large fascia signs carry an excess of information or have oversized lettering. These signage details are frequently inconsistent with the quality of the shop front and their host building and detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Poor signage often disguises good quality shopfronts.



4.52

Hanging signs are most commonly fixed at fascia level or at first floor level on larger buildings. Signs are largely modest in size, design and colours. Some brackets date from the 19th century or earlier and are ornate in design. The retention of this historic fabric and modesty in signage is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Materials

4.53

Much of the character of Droitwich comes from the variety of building materials used. The earliest buildings typically use materials that were available locally, while the materials used in later buildings reflects the increasing availability of materials from further afield and changing architectural fashions.

Walls

4.54

There are several surviving examples of timber frame. The most common materials used, however, are later materials of brick and stucco.

4.55

Brick is used throughout the conservation area where buildings have been built or re-fronted from the mid- 18th century onwards. Much of it in High Street, Friar Street and St Andrews Street is painted. Brick is also the material of ancillary buildings and boundary walls.

4.56

Stucco is another common material used in High Street and Friar Street. Scribed stucco frontages would have added prestige to buildings and was a fashionable facing treatment in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The roughcast rendering of some of the houses in Lyttelton Road is a distinctive characteristic of that part of the conservation area.

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4.57

Some of the more recent buildings are constructed with a variety of materials, including buff and grey brick, tile hung elevations and painted horizontal boarding. The use of these materials is at variance with the characteristic more mellow red brick, timber framing, stuccoes and renders of the conservation area.

Roofs.

4.58

Most buildings are roofed in plain clay tile, of the red/brown hue characteristic of the area, and there is a good survival of old hand made tiles. There are a few examples of natural Welsh slate on 19th century buildings and early 20th century buildings and occasional buildings that have been re-roofed. Westmorland Slate occurs in early 20th century buildings in Lyttelton Road reflecting the architectural period and style of these buildings. Slate on buildings is not typical of the conservation area, but is often correct for their period of building.

4.59

Many of the more recent buildings, or buildings re-roofed in recent years, are roofed with plain concrete tiles. The use of this material is at variance with the use of traditional materials in the conservation area.

Windows.

4.60

Casement windows are wrought iron and painted timber, with plain glazing and occasional stained glass. Sash windows are painted timber. The materials used are characteristic of their respective periods, function and status of buildings. The retention of these traditional materials is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



4.61

Some of Droitwich's historic windows have been lost to modern replacements. Some of these are in painted timber to reflect the character of the conservation area, but frequently to different designs and with details that are not always appropriate to the conservation area or the quality of building, such as thicker glazing bars, double glazed units, trickle vents or "storm" casements.

4.62

There are also several examples of replacement windows and doors in uPVC and stained timber. The design of replacement windows often incorporates top-hung hinged opening lights in lieu of side hung casements or sliding sash.

4.63

The materials, finishes and much of the detailing of these replacement windows, are inconsistent with traditional window design,

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detail and finish prevalent in the conservation area, and are harmful to its character and appearance.

Doors

4.64

Are painted timber.

4.65

There is a good survival of cast iron gutters and downpipes. The retention of this historic fabric and detailing is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.66

Plastic and aluminium frequently occurs in some modern shopfronts and signage. The use of these materials is inconsistent with the character of the conservation area.

4.67

Natural stone kerbs, in granite and local lias.

4.68

Many road and pavement surfaces in the commercial centre have been re-surfaced in concrete pavements, which are inappropriate to the character of the conservation area and the setting of its historic buildings.



Local Details

4.69

There are local building details and other features in the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area which contribute to its character and special interest and which are important to retain. These include

- closed eaves
- mortar fillet verges
- dentilled eaves detailing in brick buildings
- local stone kerbs
- tree lined roads

Boundaries

4.70

Boundaries are a significant feature throughout the conservation area. Where they still survive rear and side plot boundaries in the historic core at High Street, Friar Street, Queen Street and St Andrews Street are defined by high brick walls, in the same local rich red/orange brick used in buildings. These boundaries define the remains of historic plot divisions and contribute to the tight urban grain of the conservation area. They are an integral element of its special interest, character and appearance. The consistent use of brick adds to the unity of the area derived from the common use of materials.

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4.71

Elsewhere hedged boundaries are characteristic of side and rear boundaries with hedges or low brick walls for front boundaries.

4.72

In all cases front boundaries are low, permitting views of buildings and gardens.

Natural Environment

4.73

The natural environment makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area.



4.74

Lido Park and St Peter's Fields form a swathe of green space stretching to the historic core of the town. These are visually important as the settings of historic buildings and historically important as the remains of Corbett's Brine Bath's Park and remnant of the countryside setting adjoining Droitwich prior to expansion in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Vines Park forms another linear stretch of green alongside the canal where part of the town's history is evident.



4.75

Other prominent green spaces include the gardens at the rear of The Raven Hotel and around The Herriots near Lido Park. These areas provide fitting settings to listed buildings and are the remains of once larger gardens to these buildings. Although only parts remain they still provide a setting to the buildings and are evidence of their former role and status.



4.76

Just as important are the many private gardens in Lyttelton Road. These make an important contribution to the character of those areas. While their full extent may not be entirely publicly visible, the lack of interruption by buildings and presence of planting contributes to an impression of openness appreciated from glimpses over boundaries and between buildings.

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4.77

Trees are a significant feature throughout much of the conservation area, particularly those in Lido Park, St Peter's Fields, around The Herriots and the street trees in Lyttelton Road, St Andrews Road and St Andrews Street. Many of those in Lido Park, St Andrews Road and St Andrews Street are historic planting from the 19th/early 20th centuries in these areas laid out by Corbett and are part of his original design of these areas. The street trees in Lyttelton Road are smaller and more recent plantings but nevertheless continue the street planting characteristic of the nearby Corbett developments and make an important contribution to the character of these areas. Other individual trees that make a significant contribution to the quality of the street scene are the Oak and Cedar in Victoria Square.



4.78

In other parts, in particular around Friar Street, Queen Street and Worcester Road, there are mature trees that are remnants of historic planting from gardens that have since been re-developed, and new planting. The retention of these trees is important, for their contribution to the quality of the streetscene, as evidence of the areas prior to re-development and just as importantly for the role they play in screening or softening the impact of new development.

4.79

All trees over a certain size are protected in the conservation area. Written notification must be given to the Council before carrying out any works to these trees. Some trees are individually protected by Tree Preservation Orders and consent is needed from us before any works to them are carried out.

Our Landscape Team can advise on which trees are protected, the type of works which would need to be notified or need consent, the procedures and the likelihood of getting consent for the works. The contribution of the tree to the character and appearance of the conservation area will be a factor in the consideration of a notification or application.

Enhancement Opportunities

4.80

Droitwich has retained much of its historic form and fabric. There are, however, features that compromise or detract from its character and appearance. These include:

- **New Development.** Several sites in the conservation area have been the subject of new or re-development in more recent years. Notwithstanding the harm of the loss of historic buildings, many of the modern buildings erected exhibit design and building to plot characteristics that are quite different to the established characteristics of the area. The purpose of highlighting these

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buildings is not necessarily to aim at their re-development, although discussions to this end would be welcomed, but to guard against them becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations. These buildings will not be regarded by the Council as a guide or precedent for future development proposals

- **Loss of gardens and historic plot divisions.** The loss of these, mainly to modern development and car parking, has undermined the integrity of the historic plan of the town and harmed the setting of many of its historic buildings. The Council will not regard these losses as a guide or precedent for further loss
- **Gap sites.** Several parts of the conservation area, particularly around Friar Street, High Street and Queen Street, have seen buildings demolished, primarily for car parking, leaving gap sites in street frontages, eroding the historic plan and opening up views into service yards and storage areas at the rear of buildings and of areas of parked cars. These sites undermine the quality of the streetscene and historic integrity of the conservation area
- **Modern shopfronts,** particularly in traditional buildings, frequently cause harm to the area and their host buildings, by their size, design, use of materials and associated signage. Some have been inserted into historic buildings without much regard to the quality of the building. These will not be regarded by the Council as a guide or precedent for future shop front development
- **Shop signage.** Over-large fascia signs, excessive or inappropriately sited signage, use of plastics and lighting detracts from the quality of shopfronts, their host buildings and

the conservation area and will not be regarded by the Council as a guide or precedent for future signage proposals

- **Replacement doors and windows.** Some properties have had replacement windows and/or doors, including uPVC, stained timber and double glazed units. Window and door replacements with new ones of a different design, detail, materials or finish, erodes local building detail, which is an essential part of the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area
- **Surface materials.** Concrete block paving for the surfacing of footways, drives and public roads is inappropriate in material and design for the conservation area and detracts from the setting of its historic buildings and quality of the historic environment
- **Public realm design in the old market and Victoria Square.** The amount of street furniture in these spaces detracts from their visual quality and the setting of adjacent historic buildings. Litter bins, planters, signage and bollards proliferate
- **Fences.** Occasional properties have modern timber panelled or boarded fences which jar with the prevailing character and appearance of the conservation area.
- **Replacement roof coverings** in concrete tiles, which are poor substitutes for natural materials.

We would welcome the opportunity of discussing the scope for improving these features.

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Neutral Areas

4.81

There are some parts of the conservation area which, in their present form, neither enhance or detract from its character or appearance, usually because of planting which softens their appearance and helps to integrate them into the historic environment.

4.82

We will be careful, however, to guard against these areas becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations.

Threats

4.83

Droitwich has been much affected by 20th century development and is sensitive to further change. In particular:

- **Development.** All of the conservation area coincides with a defined Local Plan development boundary (Plan policy GD1), which may bring pressure for further infill development or re-development. The Local Plan and emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan also identifies sites for housing development in the conservation area, where design will be an important consideration in the determination of subsequent planning applications. Large gardens have been subjected to speculative development proposals which can dilute the historic plan and settlement pattern and result in loss of important open space. However, private gardens are no longer classified as 'brownfield' so Wychavon is in a stronger position to refuse proposals where they are considered inappropriate.
- **High Street Vitality.** Flooding, retail competition, lack of investment in the maintenance of some buildings, poor

shopfronts, poor signage and economic downturn are all factors affecting the vitality of the historic commercial core of the conservation area and its appearance, and ultimately the success of its longer term conservation.

- **Loss of architectural features,** such as doors and windows and other local building details. The retention of historic and appropriate details is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these remain vulnerable to change.
- **Trees.** Some of the important trees in the conservation area are vulnerable to loss through age, proximity to buildings or their location within the highway.
- **Underinvestment in building maintenance and repair.** Many buildings in the historic core, particularly in High Street, show signs of lack of routine maintenance and repair, to the detriment of their appearance and longer-term conservation

5 Issues

5.1

The appraisal has highlighted the following problems and pressures in the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area.

- **New Development**
- **Visual intrusion of some sites**
- **High Street Vitality**
- **Streetscape quality**

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- **Shop fronts and signage**
- **Loss of architectural features on historic buildings**
- **Introduction of modern paving materials and timber panelled fences**
- **Threat to trees**
- **Building maintenance and repair**

5.2

The Management Proposals at Section 2 consider how these might be addressed to ensure the continuing preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Note

Although it is intended that this appraisal should highlight significant features of the conservation area which are important to its character or appearance, omission of a particular feature should not be taken as an indication that it is without merit and unimportant in conservation and planning terms.

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Department of Culture, Media & Sport, List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest for Droitwich

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"Droitwich. A Pictorial History". L Blewitt & B Field, 1994

Dodderhill Parish Plan 2008

"John Corbett: Pillar of Salt 1817-1901". Barbara Middlemass & Joe Hunt, 1985

Further Information

For further guidance and information please contact:

The Heritage Section
Planning Services
Wychavon District Council
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Persore
Worcs. WR10 1PT

Tel. 01386 565565

e.mail: planning@wychavon.gov.uk

web: www.wychavon.gov.uk

The following websites contain information relating to conservation areas:

Wychavon District Council at www.wychavon.gov.uk

English Heritage at www.english-heritage.org.uk

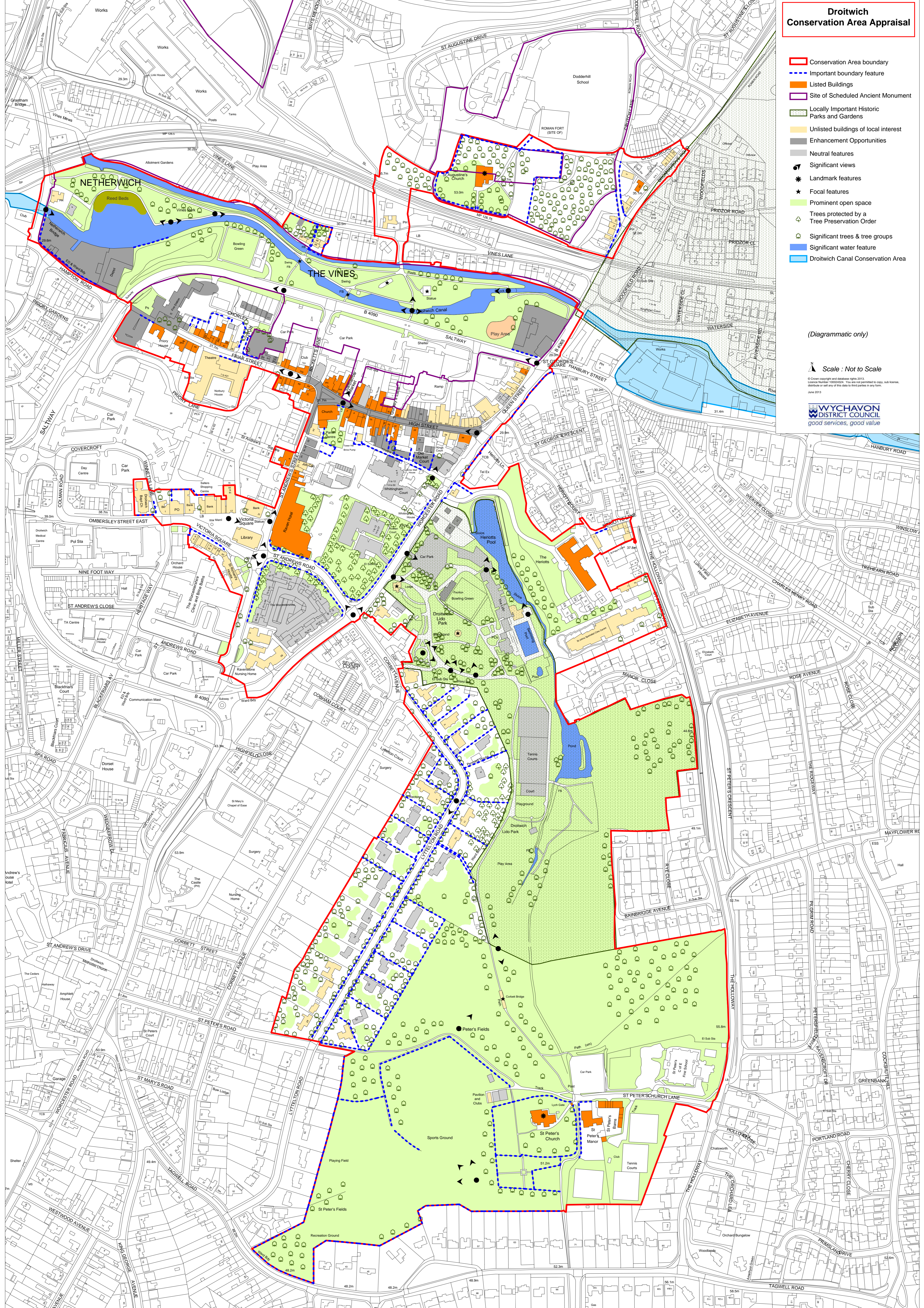
Droitwich Conservation Area Appraisal

- ▬ Conservation Area boundary
- - - Important boundary feature
- Listed Buildings
- ▬ Site of Scheduled Ancient Monument
- ▨ Locally Important Historic Parks and Gardens
- Unlisted buildings of local interest
- Enhancement Opportunities
- Neutral features
- Significant views
- ✱ Landmark features
- ★ Focal features
- Prominent open space
- Trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order
- Significant trees & tree groups
- ▬ Significant water feature
- ▬ Droitwich Canal Conservation Area

(Diagrammatic only)

Scale : Not to Scale

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Part 2. Management Proposals

1 What are these Management Proposals for?

1.1

These management proposals are a mid- to long-term strategy for preserving and enhancing the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area, addressing the issues arising from the appraisal.

1.2

These proposals are prepared in accordance with our duty under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of our conservation areas.

2 Management Proposals

1. New Development

Primarily through its identification as a focus for development in the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy, the conservation area is vulnerable to change through new development, in particular threatening gardens, open spaces, historic plot divisions and existing buildings that make a positive contribution to the character, appearance or significance of the conservation area

Action We will

- Assess new development proposals against the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area Character Appraisal, National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan Policies on conservation areas

2. Visual intrusion of some sites

Some recent developments have not always reflected the value of the historic plan of the conservation area or the scale and architectural quality of its buildings, and detract from the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area.

Action We will

- Seek improvements to these sites where opportunity arises through discussion with site owners

3. High Street vitality

Flooding, retail competition, lack of investment in the maintenance of some buildings, poor shopfronts and signage and economic downturn are all factors affecting the attractiveness and vitality of the historic commercial core of the conservation area and its appearance, and ultimately the success of its longer term conservation.

Action We will

- seek improvements to buildings where opportunities arise through development proposals
- address signage problems through enforcement and encourage better understanding of signage legislation

4. Streetscape quality

Concrete block paving for the surfacing of footways, drives and public roads is inappropriate in material and design for the conservation area and detracts from the setting of its historic buildings and quality of the historic environment, in particular in High Street where the surfacing has worn poorly. In addition, the amount of street furniture, such as litter bins, planters, signage and bollards, in the old market and Victoria Square detracts from their visual quality and the setting of adjacent historic buildings.

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Action

We will

- Seek improvements to these sites where opportunity arises through discussion with site owners
- Provide heritage advice when streetscape works are proposed

5. Shopfronts and signage

Shopfronts and signage that fail to respect the qualities of their host building in their design and use of materials detract from the architectural quality of the building and adversely affect the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Action

We will

- seek improvements to or replacement of shopfronts and signage where opportunities arise through development proposals
- assess new proposals against our Local Plan Policies on shopfronts and signs, listed buildings, conservation areas, and our Shopfront Design Guide
- address unauthorised alterations to shopfronts and signage through enforcement action and Discontinuance Notices where appropriate in accordance with our Enforcement Policy
- consider the use of a Direction restricting Deemed Advertisement Consent to bring under planning control advertisements which could normally be displayed without consent

6. Loss of architectural features on historic buildings

Several of the buildings in the conservation area have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials and replacement of original architectural features with poor quality substitutes, such as uPVC or stained hardwood windows and doors.

Action

We will

- consider the need for Article 4 Directions to bring such works under planning control, to ensure that the special qualities of unlisted buildings of local significance are protected.
- address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our Enforcement Policy

7. Introduction of modern paving materials and timber panel fences

There are several instances where historic surfacing materials have been replaced with modern materials and boundary walls replaced with panel fences, or panel fences erected in new development. These materials and features undermine the quality of the historic environment.

Action

We will

- seek improvements to sites where opportunities arise through development proposals
- consider the need for Article 4 Directions to bring such works under planning control, to ensure that the special character of the area is protected.
- address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our Enforcement Policy
- assess new proposals against our Local Plan Policies on design and on preserving and enhancing the conservation area, preserving the setting of listed buildings and our forthcoming supplementary planning guidance on design

8. Trees

Some of the important trees in the conservation area are vulnerable to loss

Droitwich Spa

through age, proximity to buildings or their location within the highway.

Action

We will continue to seek notification for all tree works in the Conservation and encourage replanting.

9. Building maintenance & repair

Inadequate maintenance and repair of buildings is undermining the quality of the environment and likely leading to deterioration and ultimate loss of historic building fabric. There are also frequent examples of maintenance and repair where historic materials have been replaced with artificial substitutes, and of poor quality re-pointing. The loss of historic fabric and substitution with modern is equally damaging to the quality of the historic environment.

Action

We will

- encourage owners through discussion and advice of the benefits of timely maintenance and repair
- consider the need for Article 4 Directions to bring under planning control works which constitute development
- advise owners/occupiers of buildings of the need for prior consent for works, where relevant, through our advice leaflets
- seek retention of historic fabric where opportunities arise through development proposals
- address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our Enforcement Policy

3 Article 4 Direction

What is an Article 4 Direction?

3.1

An Article 4 Direction is an Order that the District Council can make to provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations to unlisted dwellinghouses in conservation areas by restricting certain "permitted development" rights. This means that alterations that formerly did not require planning permission would need permission in the future. This would only apply to elevations or parts of a property which front public roads, rights of way or public open spaces. It would not normally affect the rear of a property or the rear garden, and does not affect interior alterations.

Why consider them for Droitwich?

3.2

The conservation area at Droitwich has been designated in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest and a desire to preserve its character and appearance.

3.3

Although many alterations to all types of buildings can be controlled in a conservation area by planning permission, changes can still take place to unlisted dwellings and their sites that can damage the character and appearance of the conservation area, but which are "permitted development", i.e. they do not require planning permission.

3.4

There are many buildings in the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area which, although not listed, have qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. That many of these properties retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved them. There is, however, no guarantee as

Droitwich Spa

to their future and these properties are vulnerable to future change.

3.5

The Management Proposals for the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area include Article 4 Directions. This does not mean that the works included would not be allowed. It means that planning permission would be required to carry out these particular changes in future. We would check to see if what was proposed would harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. If not, permission would usually be granted. There would be no planning fee for any planning application required as a result of a Direction.

3.6

Those properties potentially affected would be separately consulted and all views expressed would be taken into account in making the decision on whether to proceed with the direction.

Statement of Community Involvement

Introduction

1.1

This statement is a summary of community involvement and public consultation undertaken by Wychavon District Council in respect of the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and proposed changes to the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area boundary.

Background

1.2

A report to the Council's Development Control (Policy) Committee on 6th December 2012 explains the reasons for preparing a character appraisal and management plan for the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area. Specifically, the character appraisal and

plan is drafted in accordance with the requirements on Wychavon District Council imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to:

- keep its conservation areas under review;
- prepare policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of its conservation areas; and
- pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising its planning functions.

1.3

The preparation and publication of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals is a key step in the Council fulfilling these duties.

Community Involvement

1.4

Community involvement has taken the form of:

- a briefing session with the Droitwich Spa Town Council,
- an exhibition at Droitwich Library

Consultation

1.5

The consultation period began on 5th Feb 2013 and ended on 5th March 2013

Consultation was by:

- An exhibition held at Droitwich Library on 5th February 2013
- Publication of the draft appraisal, management proposals & proposed conservation area boundary changes on the Wychavon District Council website,

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- accompanied by an electronic feedback form
- Placing of the same documents for public inspection during the consultation period at:
 - Planning Reception, Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Pershore
 - Droitwich public library
- Letters to Droitwich Spa Town Council, Droitwich History & Archaeology Society, Droitwich Civic Society, Droitwich High Street Regeneration Group, Droitwich Spa Area Partnership, Droitwich Canals Trust, Worcestershire Archaeological Unit, English Heritage, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire County Highways.
- A public meeting held at Droitwich Library on 5th February 2013
- "News Focus" on Wychavon Council website during the consultation period
- Notice placed with the documents at the Civic Centre, Droitwich public library, and on the Council's website
- Information forwarded to consultees

Consultees

1.6

The following were consulted on the draft

appraisal and management plan:

- Droitwich Spa Town Council
- Droitwich Civic Society
- Droitwich History & Archaeological Society
- Droitwich High Street Regeneration Group
- Droitwich Spa Area Partnership
- Droitwich Canals Trust
- Droitwich Town Plan Group
- British Waterways Board
- Worcestershire County Archaeological Service
- Worcestershire County Council
- Worcestershire County Highways
- English Heritage

Publicity

1.7

Notice of the public meeting and consultation was given by way of:

- Posters placed in Droitwich



July 2013

Droitwich Conservation Area

- Existing Conservation Area
- Conservation Area boundary

Scale : Not to Scale



Droitwich Canal Conservation Area (Salwarpe/Droitwich)

Droitwich Canal Conservation Area (Vines Park)

