<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT &amp; THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>LISTED BUILDINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>THE LOCAL LIST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>CONSERVATION AREAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>HISTORIC LANDSCAPES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>ARCHAEOLOGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATION TRUST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>APPENDIX 1: UDP POLICIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>APPENDIX 2: PUBLIC CONSULTATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>APPENDIX 3: LEGISLATION &amp; GUIDANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>APPENDIX 4: CITY DOCUMENTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
introduction

In an age of volume house builders, multiple retailers, fast food chains and nationally based leisure groups there is an inevitable sameness about new development across the country. Against this background our historic buildings, traditional street patterns and urban landscapes provide a local distinctiveness vital to our sense of place and of belonging.

They enrich our environment, define our local history and add uniqueness and interest in the face of the homogenising impact of so much modern development.

Birmingham has a huge variety of historic and distinctive urban landscapes. Some, such as the Jewellery Quarter, are unique, others, such as Bournville are nationally renowned. All contribute to the essence of the city, identifying it as a place with its own character and history.

The historic environment often provides the inspiration to raise the standards of new development, to reinterpret local traditions. Such development elicits a positive response, properties are more easily let or sold and interest and investment is maintained.

Historic buildings and townscapes therefore have a high value in urban regeneration. This stems not only from the meaning and depth of interest they add to our surroundings but from the opportunities they provide to initiate regeneration. The provision of low-cost premises to accommodate a first wave of investment is essential and draws in a rich mix of small scale activities which bring life to declining urban areas.
Districts such as Digbeth, the Jewellery Quarter and the areas which surround the city's extensive and historically significant canal network have a wealth of older commercial and industrial buildings looking for a new future. These offer a range of opportunities for conversion – to office premises, studios or restaurants. They can also be adapted for residential use to meet the rapidly growing demand for city centre living within the new concept of the urban village.

Redundant buildings in inner-city suburbs such as hospitals, schools and municipal offices offer a focus for regeneration projects which aim to restore vitality and rebuild communities. Here too streets of Victorian and Edwardian terraces continue to provide that sense of community which so many postwar housing estates have conspicuously failed to deliver.

In this Conservation Strategy we seek to highlight the opportunities provided by Birmingham's historic environment, and in particular its rich industrial heritage, to promote urban regeneration both in the inner city and declining suburban areas.
summary

This is the third Conservation Strategy since the first was published in 1987 and the past twelve years have seen a radical change in attitude towards conservation. Since the publication of the last Strategy in 1992 a stronger legislative and policy base has been framed to provide protection for the historic environment. This Strategy was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 4 March 1999.

The achievements set against the 1992 objectives have been substantial:

1992 Priority Objectives

To secure more statutory protection for the historic infrastructure of the City, including additions and revisions to the Statutory List and further designation of conservation areas. Additions will be made to the Local List and to the Register of Parks and Gardens.

Achievements

Over 40 buildings have been added to the Statutory List. Three new conservation areas have been designated and four existing areas have been extended. Article 4(2) Directions have been introduced in three areas. Over 200 buildings have been added to the Local List. Key Hill Cemetery, Westbourne Road Town Gardens and Sutton Park are now included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens.
2 To provide more guidance through individual advice and through publications to owners and occupiers of historic buildings and buildings in conservation areas on protection, maintenance or alterations to their property.

Leaflets have been produced giving general information and advice on listed buildings and conservation areas and a design guide for Bournville has been published in conjunction with Bournville Village Trust. A shopfront design guide has been produced for Moseley Conservation Area.

3 To prepare an audit of the City Council’s 300 listed buildings, their condition, location, use and future.

A continuous monitoring process for the City Council’s listed buildings has been introduced.

4 To establish a strong policy on buildings at risk, both in terms of targeting resources of manpower and grant aid and adopting a more positive role in enforcement through the use of enforcement notices, injunctions and other means to deter or to stop unauthorised work.

Urgent Works Notices and Repairs Notices have been served on the owners of Listed Buildings at extreme risk.

Close cooperation with Birmingham Conservation Trust has helped achieve two successful schemes. The Trust has been restructured in order to gain access to a greater variety of funding sources, and an administrator appointed.

5 To encourage the establishment of additional building preservation trusts and other organisations in the private and voluntary sectors to assist in the conservation of the city.
To stimulate environmental awareness of conservation issues among school children through the work of the Environmental Awareness Unit.

Publications, exhibitions, talks and guided walks have been provided for the general public, schools, colleges and universities. Courses and seminars have also been held for those with a professional interest in conservation. A recent seminar on the philosophy underlying conservation area character appraisals attracted practitioners in a variety of fields.

To secure more resources for conservation from a range of potential funding organisations, including English Heritage and other grant giving bodies.

Three Conservation Area Partnership Schemes have been successfully completed, jointly funded by the City Council and English Heritage. Heritage Lottery Fund assistance has been secured for Moseley School, St Philip's Churchyard, Ruskin Buildings and City Arcade.

To encourage more research on the history of Birmingham's buildings, its architecture and its architects, adding scholarship and understanding to our work on the built heritage and involving the City's higher education establishments in the conservation of the built environment.

An award winning series of leaflets on 20th century buildings has been published. Building recording and analysis has been commissioned and research into the historical development of private gardens in Edgbaston has been sponsored.

To develop and consolidate the policy framework for dealing with listed building applications and conservation area applications and establish a comprehensive package of policy guidance for planning control purposes.

Three Conservation Area Character Appraisals have been published; new 'user-friendly' application forms have been introduced.

To adopt a more pro-active role in archaeology and to consider the appointment of a City Field Archaeologist.

A City Planning Archaeologist has been appointed; 172 areas of archaeological importance have been defined; the Sites and Monuments Record has been enhanced and continues to be updated.
the next five years

Developing a vision for the future of the historic environment in the context of sustainable environmental policies will provide the major challenge over the coming years. Innovative partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors will be sought to fund the regeneration schemes which will act as catalysts for renewal. The City will also continue to protect listed buildings and conservation areas and to promote their sensitive repair and restoration for the benefit of all those who live and work in Birmingham.

The Conservation Strategy complements and reinforces the Economic Strategy, as a vital contribution to policies which will regenerate and diversify the City's economy. Conservation must also help to achieve Birmingham's Tourism Strategy objectives, improving the experience of visitors and reinforcing the City's role as a regional, national and international centre for tourism and cultural events. Birmingham's rich industrial heritage, its factories, workshops and canals, can play a major part here.

Priority Objectives

To place conservation at the heart of City Council policies for regeneration.

To relate conservation decisions to evolving policies for a sustainable environment.

To maximise financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, the Regional Development Agency, the European Regional Development Fund and other relevant funding sources.

To focus on reducing the number of listed buildings at risk, paying particular attention to the City Council's own listed buildings.

To produce additional conservation area appraisals for the City's conservation areas giving priority to those areas under development pressure or at risk.

To continue improvements to the fabric and the built environment of the Key Hill and Soho Hill Conservation Areas.

To ensure that conservation is a major element in the development of the Jewellery Quarter Urban Village.

To promote the economic regeneration of Digbeth through the use of positive conservation policies and skills.
sustainable development
and the historic environment

Since the last Conservation Strategy was published sustainability has emerged as a new theme which has particular relevance to the conservation of the historic environment. The issue was brought to prominence with the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 when the Government committed itself to the principle of sustainable development which has since been addressed in new planning legislation and guidance.

Essentially, sustainable development can be defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

This definition not only encompasses the most basic requirements such as fresh air, clean water, food, shelter and energy but also the protection of the cultural heritage in its widest sense. The historic environment is an important part of that cultural heritage and sensitive planning policies and decisions can ensure that this valuable resource will be handed on to future generations.

Sustainable development is a means of managing change within the environment with a view to the effect such change might produce in the long term. It involves recognising the interrelationships between the historic environment and the natural environment and between these and wider economic and social issues.

Valuing the Historic Environment

There is an understandable tendency for conservation activity to concentrate on those elements of the built heritage which are recognised as important – listed buildings, scheduled ancient
monuments, conservation areas and historic landscapes. A view of the historic environment which focuses only on its ‘finest assets’ however, provides an incomplete picture of what the past can offer the future and is insufficient to sustain our heritage. In its widest sense the historic environment includes many other elements which combine to give more significant sites meaning and context and contribute to a sense of place and to local distinctiveness. These everyday and unregarded historic buildings, archaeological sites, landscape features and gardens often remain undervalued and unprotected and may be lost before their value can be properly realised. The concept of character to which they contribute is important in understanding and valuing the historic environment as a whole.
Local Agenda 21

Planning and managing the historic environment is not just a job for the experts. Public involvement and participation are encouraged through the planning process, through environmental education and through the City’s Local Agenda 21.

Local Agenda 21 provides a focus for communities to help plan a truly living city and to ensure that improvements made today can be sustained into the future. Participants are invited to explore a wide variety of subjects from education and poverty to energy efficiency and transport. Appreciation of and care for the historic environment form an important part of this educative process.

Environmental Capacity and Managing Change

It is only through understanding the historic environment that the elements which sustain it can be determined. Its capacity to absorb and accommodate change without unacceptable or irreversible damage can then be measured. Where the level of change threatens to erode the essential character of a building or area then the environmental threshold has been reached and change becomes unsustainable.

It is important to recognise that change of some sort is not only inevitable, but an essential part of a viable and sustainable future. Each generation has a valid and understandable wish to leave its own mark, ensuring that future generations inherit new assets which, in their turn, they may choose to conserve.

Priorities

Devise and implement a sustainable development strategy including plans, policies and the assessment of specific proposals for change within the historic environment.

Encourage the re-use of historic buildings and building materials.

Monitor the character and condition of the historic environment to determine the effectiveness of these policies.

Participate in Local Agenda 21 activities.

Improve the understanding and appreciation of the historic environment and its value through interpretation, improved access and initiatives such as Local Agenda 21.

Gather information upon which to make informed judgements about the level of change or activity which can be accommodated within the historic environment without unacceptable damage or risk to integrity.
listed buildings

Birmingham’s historic buildings are a valuable resource, an evocative history of its social, industrial and commercial development. Important not just as individual examples of architectural style or historic significance but for their contribution to the overall character of the city’s rich and varied urban landscape, they provide interest and enjoyment for citizen and visitor alike.

The process of statutory listing encourages the identification of significant historic buildings and protects them from demolition and from inappropriate and insensitive alteration. It does not prevent every alteration or potential re-use but guides and controls the way in which a building might change to meet the needs of its occupiers.

In practice local authorities and English Heritage have initiated the listing of buildings but anyone can request the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to consider the addition of a building to the Statutory List. Birmingham has over 1800 listed buildings, 60 of which have been added since the publication of the last Conservation Strategy in 1992. Over the last few years there has been a notable trend towards the addition of more recent 20th century buildings. These have included the Odeon on Birmingham Road in Sutton Coldfield built in 1936, the prefabs erected in 1947 on Wake Green Road in Moseley and the New Street Station signal box built in 1964.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and
the Historic Environment (PPG15) provides local authorities with a clear and precise framework within which to control the development of listed buildings. The City Council will encourage and advise on the restoration and adaptation of an historic building, but it will always apply the principles put forward by the 1990 Act and PPG15. Any proposed alterations or additions to a listed building must therefore always preserve and enhance its character.

The City will take every opportunity to raise the standard of applications for listed building consent which are often inadequate in terms of the quality of proposals and supporting information. In line with the guidance given in PPG15 applicants are asked to provide full information so that the impact of their proposals on the architectural and historic interest of the listed building and its setting can be properly assessed. This might include a documentary history of the building to establish its evolution and past uses with a related analysis of the historical fabric and structural recording by photographic and/or measured survey. In 1995, with the help of a grant from English Heritage, the City commissioned a detailed building analysis of Court 15, Inge Street, listed Grade II and the last surviving back to back court in Birmingham. This is intended to ensure sympathetic repair and re-use of the court and provides a basis for future public interpretation. A building analysis of the Grade II* listed gas retort house complex in the City Centre has also been recently undertaken at the City's request to provide a framework for appropriate repair and refurbishment.

When funds are available, grant aid will continue to be used to help to rehabilitate and adapt listed buildings as part of the overall economic regeneration of the city. Oozells Street School within the Brindley Place development was successfully adapted for use as an art gallery with financial assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the Arts Lottery Fund. The Ikon Gallery, opened in 1998, illustrates the potential for re-use of the historic environment and the part it can play in economic regeneration. The Conservation Area Partnership Scheme too, in Great Hampton Street, Hockley and on Corporation Street in the City Centre has promoted regeneration
of the built environment by allocating grants to such listed buildings as the Pelican Works and the Central Methodist Hall.

The City is committed to compiling and maintaining a register of Listed Buildings at Risk which identifies neglected buildings and encourages their rehabilitation.

Through the continuing regeneration of our urban landscape, many listed buildings considered to be ‘at risk’ can be restored, adapted and reused. Such schemes are actively promoted with guidance from PPG15. Where necessary enforcement action is taken to protect threatened listed buildings through the use of Urgent Works and Repairs Notices. In extreme cases compulsory purchase may be considered in order to protect a threatened building. Work on the Register is carried out in liaison with English Heritage which is now active in the national monitoring of listed buildings at risk and offers advice and financial assistance.

Although many listed buildings at risk have been saved and taken off the Register, notably the Old Crown in Deritend and Sheldon Hall in Tile Cross, many problem buildings remain. Churches give most cause for concern. Diminishing congregations and higher maintenance costs are making many of these frequently outstanding buildings redundant. Their size, layout and arrangement of space make them difficult to adapt and reuse. St Gregory’s (Grade II) and St Oswald’s (Grade II*) in Small Heath have both recently been made formally redundant by the Church of England while St James, Edgbaston, sold several years ago, lies derelict.

It is vital that new and appropriate uses are found for these important listed buildings such as that devised, for example, for Christchurch Baptist Church (Grade II) at Six Ways, Aston. This prominent building, which was partly destroyed by fire, has been converted for residential use and now enhances its inner city neighbourhood. In partnership with the Birmingham Conservation Trust and the Diocese of Birmingham the City intends to explore and establish more of these imaginative and sustainable new uses for these landmark buildings.

The statutory listing of buildings is a continuing process. The List is now being further enhanced by thematic surveys undertaken by English Heritage. Listing is not however intended to stifle or prevent the regeneration and development of the urban environment. Controlled by legislation and guided by

carefully devised local policy, the adaptation and reuse of listed buildings can encourage economic and environmental revitalisation.

Priorities

- Improve the quality of applications for listed building consent following the guidelines laid down in PPG15.
- Encourage the sympathetic use and adaptation of listed buildings.
- Pursue Heritage Lottery funding for work to listed buildings.
- Continue to monitor all listed buildings at risk, working closely with English Heritage.
- Establish a new database to enable early recognition and revision of the condition and status of listed buildings on the ‘at risk’ register.
- Submit a policy document on the use of redundant churches to the City’s Urban and Economic Regeneration Group Committee.
the local list

The City's Local List of Buildings, Structures and Features of architectural, archaeological or historic interest is now well established as a means of protecting and conserving Birmingham's historic landscape.

The Local List identifies those elements within the fabric of the city which make a significant contribution to local character and history and which sustain local distinctiveness and a sense of place. While it confers no statutory protection, inclusion on the Local List ensures that the advice of the City's Conservation Areas Advisory Committee is sought on any application which may affect character or setting.

Buildings, structures and features are selected for inclusion on the Local List according to established criteria and graded A, B or C.

Grade A

Grade A buildings or structures are potentially of sufficient quality to merit addition to the Statutory List and are submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for consideration. Where a Grade A locally listed building is threatened by development the City's Development Control Committee may serve a Building Preservation Notice under the 1990 Act.

Grade B

Grade B buildings, structures or features are important in a city wide context or make a significant contribution to the local environment. Positive efforts will always be made to retain them.

Grade C

Grade C buildings, structures or features are of local historical significance and worthy of retention.
At present there are 383 locally listed buildings, structures and features in the city, their variety reflecting its size and the diversity of its historical fabric. Some, such as the barn range at Langley Hall Farm, bear witness to a rural past, others such as the site of the Aston Blast Furnace in Newtown and the canal aqueduct over the River Rea at Bordesley to a more immediate industrial history. All make their own contribution to the character of the city.

Locally listed buildings recently added to the Statutory List cover a wide range of types and styles. They include the late 18th century ice house in Moseley Park, an early 19th century house and workshop ranges on Mary Street in the Jewellery Quarter and the Edwardian Baroque library and swimming baths in Stirchley.

It is intended to develop the Local List and to widen its scope to include archaeological features or sites, historic parks, gardens and landscapes and interiors. Criteria have been approved in respect of archaeological sites and features which might warrant addition to the Schedule of Monuments and which will now be included on the City's Local List at Grade A. There is particular concern over interiors which are an important part of our cultural heritage and merit recognition but which are within buildings or structures which are unlikely ever to be listed. The Grosvenor Suite in the Grand Hotel on Colmore Row and the Shakespeare Room in Birmingham Central Library provide particularly good examples. It is important that owners and developers are made aware of the significance of this type of feature and can adapt proposals accordingly at an early stage.

Priorities

Extend the Local List to include all archaeological sites known or likely to survive, gardens and landscapes of historic importance and significant interiors.

Include a wider range of structures and features representing Birmingham's industrial history.

Include a greater variety of buildings, structures and features to represent the growth and development of the City in the 20th century.

Publish a leaflet giving information and advice on the Local List.

Aston Council House, Albert Road, Aston, locally listed Grade A
The first conservation areas in Birmingham were designated in 1969 and a total of 28 areas within the city have now been recognised as meriting the special protection that designation brings.

Since the publication of the last Conservation Strategy in 1992 Anchorage Road Conservation Area in Sutton Coldfield, Steelhouse Conservation Area in the City Centre and the Austin Village Conservation Area in Northfield have been designated and there have been extensions to Bournville Village, to Key Hill, to St. Paul’s Square and to Edgbaston conservation areas. There remain significant areas within the city which, after assessment and appropriate consultation, may warrant designation. Digbeth/Deritend High Street, Handsworth Wood Road, Weoley Hill, Selly Park, Chad Valley, St Germain’s in Edgbaston and Greenfield Road in Harborne are among those which will be considered in the future.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Conservation area appraisal – a detailed analysis of the character of an area and of its interest and significance – provides the justification for the designation of a conservation area and a framework for planning policies and decisions and proposals for preservation and enhancement. The preparation of such assessments is encouraged and supported by PPG15 which states that a clear justification for designation provides the best foundation on which to base local plan policies and development control decisions.

A character appraisal will be produced as part of any future designation and it is a long term...
objective to prepare such assessments for areas already designated. Key Hill, Bournville Village and Edgbaston were early priorities. The preparation of appraisals for existing conservation areas will be dictated by such factors as pressure for development which might result in appeals against the refusal of planning permission.

**Article 4(2) Directions**

In recent years there has been increasing concern over the gradual erosion of the original character of conservation areas, most significantly by the replacement of windows over which there is no control because of existing Permitted Development Rights. It was as a response to this concern that the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 1995 was introduced to allow the local planning authority to impose an Article 4(2) Direction without any requirement to seek the approval of the Department of the Environment. Already an Article 4(2) Direction has been made for Bournville Village Conservation Area following overwhelming support from a full public consultation exercise and with the active support and co-operation of the Bournville Village Trust. A Direction has also been made for the Austin Village Conservation Area in Northfield and for the Ideal Village in Bordesley Green.

The Development Control Committee will be cautious in withdrawing permitted development rights and it is not yet clear how large a workload will be generated through additional planning applications. Clearly there must be a justified need for the increased powers and a reasonable certainty that they are enforceable. The imposition of Article 4(2) Directions may however be the only way of retaining the principal details of the vernacular architecture which is an essential characteristic of many of Birmingham’s conservation areas.

Existing Article 4(1) Directions cover the Old Yardley Village Conservation Area and part of Sutton Coldfield Conservation Area.

**Conservation Area Partnership Schemes**

In 1995 at a time of diminishing resources for pro-active conservation work, the City Council made a successful bid for three Conservation Area Partnership Schemes (CAPS). These were in Lozells and Soho Hill Conservation Areas, concentrating on Soho Hill and the area around Soho House, on Great Hampton Street in the Key Hill Conservation Area and in Steelhouse and Colmore Row Conservation Areas where the funding was aimed at the restoration of original shopfronts and terracotta detail. In each of these areas local authority funding of £35,000 per annum for three years was matched by funding from English Heritage and grants of up to 70% were offered. These CAPS projects concentrated resources on a limited area and achieved significant improvements to the condition of buildings. There have been notable successes although negotiations can be time consuming; the Great Hampton Street CAPS is to be continued until 2002.

**The Townscape Heritage Initiative**

The Townscape Heritage Initiative has recently been established to fund repair and environmental enhancement within conservation areas through the Heritage Lottery Fund. Jointly with British Waterways the City Council has been successful in securing such a scheme for Warwick Bar Conservation Area over a period of three years.

Elsewhere particular commitment will be made to improvements in the Soho area, to repair and enhancement in Edgbaston in conjunction with the Calthorpe Estate, to the Jewellery Quarter in
support of the Urban Village Initiative and to Digbeth in support of Millennium Point.

**Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme**

The newly introduced English Heritage initiative to regenerate declining areas of historic significance through Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (HERS) prompted a bid from the City Council for the Digbeth area which has proved successful. The historic frontage of Digbeth and Deritend, where there are many historic buildings unused or in gross disrepair, is to be the major focus for the scheme.

**Local Areas of Townscape Value**

There are some areas in the City which, while they do not merit full conservation area status, have considerable townscape value and are worthy of retention and special care. Sometimes only a street or part of a street, such areas may be cherished by the local community and add to the unique quality of the locality. Their settings and surroundings should be given particular consideration.

Local Areas of Townscape Value will in future be given the same special consideration as the historic buildings, structures and features on the City's Local List. Local listing is a significant factor in planning and appeal decisions and is recognised by the Secretary of State.

**Development in Conservation Areas**

PPG15 indicates that there should be a general presumption in favour of the retention of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. It also states that the local planning authority should require developers to assess the likely impact of proposals on the special interest of the site or location.

Designation does not need however to prevent or stultify new design and development in conservation areas where an opportunity arises. Replication or pastiche in fact rarely provides a solution. An example of a particularly successful scheme which includes new development can be seen at the School of Jewellery in the Jewellery Quarter Conservation Area. The City's Planning Committee agreed in this case to the demolition of a modest unlisted building to enable the School to expand. An uncompromisingly modern design now stands alongside earlier buildings which have been refurbished and adapted for use by the School. The scheme won a Civic Trust Award in 1996, the assessor commenting: "The School's expansion onto an adjoining site has been handled with great skill and imagination. This project shows how good design can revitalise the built fabric of our cities without the need for inappropriate historic reference or undue reverence for the past."

**Priorities**

**Consideration will be given to further conservation area designations including Handsworth Wood Road, Weoley Hill, St Germain's, Selly Park, Chad Valley, Greenfield Road, Harborne and Digbeth/Deritend.**

There will be a continuing programme for the preparation of conservation area appraisals.

**Article 4(2) Directions will be considered for conservation areas including School Road in Hall Green, Moorpool in Harborne, Bournville Tenants, Barnsley Road and in part of Moseley Conservation Area.**

**The potential for Heritage Lottery funding for repair and environmental enhancement in conservation areas will be explored.**

Local Areas of Townscape Value will be considered.
THE PAST

In 1166 Peter de Birmingham bought the right to hold a market from the Crown and his manor became the foundation of the great industrial city we know today. The position of the main settlement by an important river crossing and the roads which converged there contributed to its rapid development as the major trading centre for the surrounding region. By the 15th century the houses of townsmen trading in cloth, leather and metalwork surrounded St Martin’s Church and Rectory and the manor house of the de Bermingham.

It is not known exactly when settlement spread down the hill towards the River Rea. Deritend, a hamlet on the opposite bank separate from Birmingham, is first recorded about 1200. The hall and school built by the Guild of St. John is better known today as the Old Crown.

The origins of the town’s metal trades can be traced to the mediaeval period and by the early part of the 16th century the road into Birmingham was lined with the workshops of smiths and cutlers. By the 18th century metal working was a major industry. Watermills which had once been used for grinding corn and fulling cloth were converted to grind and roll metal. In the 1790s the ancient cornmill on Heath Mill Lane in Deritend was adapted to manufacture blades, swords and wire.

The first map of Birmingham in 1731 shows dense occupation along Digbeth and Deritend with meadows and gardens behind. The area was wet and prone to flooding by the River Rea however, a problem not solved until the late 19th century, and 18th century development spread onto the higher ground to the north of the town.

THE PRESENT

Canals brought new life to the area. The Digbeth Branch Canal was cut through from the northeast in 1790 and traffic began on the Birmingham and Warwick Canal in 1793. Attracted by the opportunity for cheap, efficient transport, industry soon clustered around them. The railway followed: Curzon Street, Birmingham’s first station, opened in 1836. By the end of the century factories and houses had covered the pastures and gardens by the Rea and surrounded the ancient highway.

The historic fabric of the Digbeth area is a reminder of the city’s mediaeval past and its more recent industrial history. It contains buildings and structures, topographical features, urban growth patterns and archaeological remains, all of which testify to Birmingham’s beginnings and development. Digbeth exemplifies several conservation issues and practices which apply throughout the city.

The historic importance of some of the buildings in the area has been recognised through listing. These
include the former goods office at Curzon Street Station, New Canal Street, Grade I, and the Old Crown Public House on Deritend High Street, Grade II*. Following a survey in 1992 such buildings as the former umbrella manufactory on Allison Street, the Digbeth Cold Stores and Bordesley Railway viaduct were added to the City's Local List.

In 1987 the Warwick Bar Conservation Area was designated along a section of the Grand Union Canal. It safeguards an important group of canal-side buildings and preserves the setting of two early industrial structures, both Grade II: the Gun Barrel Proof House, built in 1813 and the warehouse, stop lock and dock at Warwick Bar, built about 1840.

The City has always recognised the importance of below-ground archaeology in Digbeth. The survival of remains has been demonstrated throughout the area, providing evidence of domestic, agricultural and industrial activity from the 13th century onwards. In 1994 an evaluation of the yard behind the Old Crown unearthed late 13th century pottery. The following year the City commissioned an assessment of the corridor along Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets to appraise the impact of new development on archaeological remains. Evaluations based on this assessment have since uncovered the waterlogged remnants of wood and leather dating from the 15th and 16th centuries and claypits dating from the 17th century.

**THE FUTURE**

Future plans for conservation in Digbeth include designation of a new conservation area along Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets to show how one of Birmingham's earliest streets developed. A detailed character appraisal will provide guidelines for new design and development. The Digbeth Industrial Heritage Project will record the physical remains of the area's industrial past, ensure their protection and illustrate the part they can play in sustainable economic regeneration.

The regeneration of Digbeth has already begun. The refurbishment of the Custard Factory and Old Crown Public House are welcome indications of investment in the area. As the Digbeth Millennium quarter is redeveloped its history offers an enormous opportunity. Re-use and historic interpretation will complement new buildings and new attractions, creating a desirable area with a vibrant economy rooted in the beginnings of a great city.
The General Cemetery, Kay Hill, registered Grade II: opened in 1836
The importance of landscapes in the history of Birmingham's development is only now being realised. Their part in the City's cultural and environmental heritage is however well established, as is their value as a recreational, educational and ecological resource.

Birmingham has an immense variety of historic landscapes. A small sample could include the mediaeval commons of Hodge Hill and Billesley; the village greens at Kings Norton and Minworth Green; the virtually complete mediaeval deer park of Sutton Park; private parks such as those at Moseley and Highbury Halls and public parks such as Aston and Cannon Hill. The city contains burial grounds and cemeteries including the early cemetery at Key Hill, allotments such as the town or 'guinea' gardens in Edgbaston and a wide range of suburban garden styles from the early 19th century up to the present day, of which the Calthorpe and Four Oaks estates contain the best examples so far discovered.

English Heritage maintains the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England and has outlined the basic criteria by which a site may be identified for inclusion. As with listed buildings gardens are graded I, II* or II. The Garden History Society must be consulted on any planning application affecting a registered park or garden.
Birmingham has seven sites on the Register at present.

These are:

**Aston Hall and Park**  Grade II

**Birmingham Botanical Gardens**  Grade II

**Edgbaston Hall and Park**  Grade II

**General Cemetery, Key Hill**  Grade II

**Highbury Hall and Park**  Grade II

**Sutton Park**  Grade II

**Westbourne Road Town Gardens**  Grade II

Buildings or structures within a registered landscape may be separately statutorily listed.

The Register is currently under review with the object of extending its coverage to all parks and gardens of national or regional importance. It is hoped that this process will be largely completed by the year 2000. English Heritage recognises that all landscape is to some extent historic and, with the Countryside Agency, is working on the criteria by which the term ‘historic landscape’ may be more widely defined. It is likely that landscape appraisals based on these criteria will be more effectively integrated into the planning process than any attempt to define selected areas for additional control. This project should eventually enable the City to protect its own wider historic landscape.

There is clearly a need to identify, survey and, where possible, conserve Birmingham’s rich variety of historic landscapes. The City is currently working with English Heritage on the completion of the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest for Birmingham, suggesting potential sites and providing information. The recent addition of the General Cemetery at Key Hill to the Register at Grade II was a result of this continuing cooperation.

Landscapes of local interest and importance which could have no place on the national Register must however also be protected. It is therefore proposed to establish appropriate criteria for the inclusion of historic landscapes within the city to the existing Local List.

Historic landscapes in the wider sense are often a significant part of the character of a conservation area and should always be included in character appraisals. The City has funded a survey of the landscape of Edgbaston Conservation Area carried out by the Garden History Society and the Warwickshire Gardens Trust. It is hoped to extend these surveys to other conservation areas where the historic landscape is of particular importance. As part of the conservation area appraisal such studies can be integrated into the planning process and provide a vital contribution to the establishment of design and development guidelines for the area.

Securing funding for the identification and conservation of Birmingham’s historic landscapes is of obvious importance. Grants from the Conservation Areas Partnership Scheme, jointly funded by English Heritage, the City and the private sector, have been provided for restocking the garden at the Soho House Museum in the Soho and Lozells Conservation Area and to reinstate a number of front garden plots on Great Hampton Street in Key Hill Conservation Area. The City is also seeking funding from the Urban Parks Programme and from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the preservation and enhancement of Birmingham’s historic parks and gardens. This has already proved successful with a major grant towards the renewal of the landscape and monuments of St Philip’s Cathedral Churchyard.
Priorities

Continue to liaise with English Heritage on the review of the Register of Parks and Gardens.

Establish appropriate criteria for historic landscapes of local interest and importance and add these landscapes to the City's Local List.

Where appropriate to carry out an historic landscape survey as part of the character appraisal of a conservation area.

Integrate the preservation of the historic landscape into design and development guidelines for conservation areas.

Identify sources of funding for the identification, survey and conservation of historic landscapes and maximise the potential of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Continue to liaise with national and local amenity bodies with an interest in historic landscapes such as the Garden History Society and Warwickshire Gardens Trust.

Aston Hall and Park, registered Grade II: detail of John Tomlinson's map of 1758, reproduced by permission of Archives Division, Birmingham Central Library.
Excavations in Edgbaston Street, City Centre, on the site of the Bull Ring development: revealing pits used for leather tanning from the 13th century onwards.
The archaeology of Birmingham’s past ranges from Palaeolithic stone axes to pillboxes and gun emplacements surviving from the Second World War. It includes burnt mounds from the Bronze Age, a Roman fort and Roman roads, mediaeval moats and mills and industrial structures, features and artefacts from more recent times.

Archaeological remains are found above or below the ground by survey, excavation or chance. They provide a sense of history and continuity, contribute to local distinctiveness and form an important educational, recreational and economic asset.

The national and local importance of Birmingham’s archaeology has long been recognised and the need perceived for its protection and proper management within the planning system. In 1994 therefore, with financial support from English Heritage, the City appointed a Planning Archaeologist to identify and record Birmingham’s archaeological heritage and to ensure its preservation and protection.

Scheduled Monuments and the City’s Local List

There are some 800 recognised archaeological sites in Birmingham including ten scheduled monuments which are statutorily protected against damage or destruction under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. A mediaeval moated site and its surroundings at Peddimore Hall in Sutton Coldfield is the most recent addition to the Schedule and other sites are likely to be added in the future. Detailed criteria for the inclusion of archaeological sites and features on the City’s Local List have recently been established and reflect the range and diversity of archaeology in Birmingham.
Local Areas of Potential Archaeological Importance

There are at present 172 areas of potential archaeological importance in the city, defined around known sites and in locations where historic map evidence and other sources suggest archaeological remains may survive. Proposals for development which might affect remains in these areas must be accompanied by an archaeological assessment. Proposals may need to be modified to protect archaeological remains or archaeological recording will be required if preservation is not feasible.

The Monuments Protection Programme

The Monuments Protection Programme (MPP) is a review and evaluation of archaeological sites throughout England administered by English Heritage. Its purpose is to identify nationally important sites which should be either scheduled or protected by other means such as statutory listing.

Following evaluation carried out for the MPP a mediaeval moated site at Peddimore Hall in Sutton Coldfield has recently been scheduled. A detailed review of Sutton Park is likely to lead to the scheduling of a number of archaeological remains, including the boundaries of the mediaeval deer park.

The MPP has led to a greater recognition of the importance of the city’s industrial archaeology, stimulating research on gasworks, brassworks and glasshouses. Eighteen glasshouse sites have now been located, ranging in date from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. These findings have enhanced the archaeological record and ensured the further protection of Birmingham’s important industrial heritage.

The Sites and Monuments Record

A Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) has been maintained for Birmingham since 1993. The database has been recently restructured to make a more efficient contribution to archaeological planning and management. An overall enhancement and a data audit have been undertaken and the under-representation of industrial archaeological sites is now being rectified. The results of new research and fieldwork are incorporated immediately they become available. Information held on the SMR answers a wide range of interests including the owners and managers of archaeological sites, developers, researchers and teachers.

Archaeology and Development

Archaeology is a finite and non-renewable resource which is vulnerable to damage or destruction through new development or inappropriate management. The City Council’s policies for the proper consideration of the archaeological implications of development proposals follow the advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16). These emphasise the importance of prior assessment of potential archaeological impact through a desk-based study and field evaluation which involves small-scale archaeological excavation and/or recording of above ground structures. On the basis of such evaluation a decision can be made in each case as to whether archaeological remains should be preserved in situ through appropriate site layout or foundation design or whether recording of remains in advance of damage or destruction during construction might be acceptable. The City Council advises individual developers of the need for archaeological assessment, prepares site briefs and monitors work to ensure it is undertaken in accordance with agreed requirements. Following assessment, the potential for in situ
preservation and requirements for further archaeological work are discussed and design solutions negotiated.

Archaeological works during development have led to an increased understanding of sites and areas and enhanced our knowledge of Birmingham’s history.

On Edgbaston Street in the city centre for example, 11th century pottery and remains of leather tanning from the 13th to 18th centuries have been discovered. Mediaeval field boundaries have been found at Minworth in Sutton Coldfield and at Metchley Roman Fort defensive ditches and ramparts have been uncovered and interpreted.

Public Interpretation

Publications, exhibitions, lectures and guided walks have made Birmingham’s archaeology more accessible to the general public and raised awareness. Public interpretation has also been provided through agreement with developers who have often benefited from the publicity attracted by archaeological work carried out as a requirement for new development.

Some archaeological work in Birmingham has attracted television coverage. Excavations by the Channel 4 Time Team programme on the former site of Matthew Boulton’s Soho Manufactory brought the city’s industrial archaeology to the attention of a national audience.

Priorities

Develop and promote understanding of Birmingham’s industrial archaeology

Maintain and enhance the Sites and Monuments Record for use as a planning tool, an aid to site management and an educational resource. Digitise site boundaries on Geographic Information System and improve the record of industrial archaeological sites. Publicise the existence of the SMR and encourage its use.

Assess archaeological sites for inclusion on the Local List and identify those of national importance

Produce Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide further advice for developers on the archaeological implications and requirements of development schemes.

Continue public interpretation of Birmingham’s archaeology and seek out possible sources of funding.

Encourage and negotiate funding of archaeological interpretation by developers, through Section 106 agreements where appropriate.

Continue to initiate, encourage and support fieldwork and research by educational institutions and local groups and continue close cooperation and contact with neighbouring local authorities.
Inge Street, City Centre, Grade II
back-to-back houses, reconstruction drawing by
Brian Byron, City of Hereford Archaeological Unit,
from a survey commissioned by the Conservation
Group, Planning and Architecture, 1995
The Trust continues to develop its work in the reuse of historic buildings. It has acted to save and regenerate a number of individual buildings securing their long-term future, helping to create attractive places in which to live and work and encouraging others to do likewise.

Birmingham Conservation Trust is an independent charitable company that acquires historic buildings in need of restoration. Working on a revolving fund basis, completed projects are sold and any financial surplus invested in future projects. The Trust is run by a Board of Trustees representing interest groups in the City and the City Council Planning Department. Since 1994 it has employed an administrator to manage and promote its projects.

69/70 Great Hampton Street in the Jewellery Quarter is the Trust's last completed project. It is now sold and fully let as a small business centre. The scheme received a commendation in the Birmingham Design Awards, a Special Mention in the Civic Trust Awards and was recently highlighted as an example of good practice in the English Heritage publication *The Heritage Dividend*.

BCT has access to Heritage Lottery funds and other grants, as well as to low interest loans and feasibility study grants available through the Architectural Heritage Fund. The latter have been used for studies of the Court 15 Inge Street back-to-backs, and St James' Church, Edgbaston.

Court 15 Inge Street, a courtyard of early 19th century back-to-back houses, is one of the most important complexes of buildings at risk in the city. The Trust has put together an innovative scheme that
will repair the buildings, bring them back into economic use and provide public access through the creation of a history centre open to schools and the general public.

BCT's current project is the refurbishment of an 18th century listed hovel in Erdington. Acting as advisors to the developers who own the building, the Trust has developed a sensitive scheme that introduces modern services whilst preserving the historic character of the building. On completion the cottage will be sold as a private dwelling.

The Trust actively promotes interest in the conservation of the historic environment through its involvement in the Civic Trust Heritage Open Days and through a programme of talks. It also participates in national debate on such matters, through its membership of the UK Association of Building Preservation Trusts.

Facing page right: *The Hovel, Jerry’s Lane, Erdington, Grade II: current restoration project*

Facing page far right: *69-70 Great Hampton Street, Grade II: restoration in progress*

This page: *Station Road cottages, Erdington, Grade II: before and after restoration*
Priorities

Facilitate the repair and renewal of buildings at risk in the City.

Undertake the repair of Court 15 Inge Street and create a Living History Centre.

Launch a public funding campaign for the Living History Centre.

Maximise the potential of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Inform the general public of the work of Birmingham Conservation Trust.

Continue to raise awareness of the potential of the city's historic buildings for reuse and as a focus for regeneration.

Play a leading role in developing Civic Trust Heritage Open Days in Birmingham.
APPENDIX I

Unitary Development Plan Policies

The historic legacy of Birmingham is considered to be of prime importance, especially as so much was demolished during the redevelopment of the 1950s and 60s. Designated Conservation Areas within the City will continue to provide a powerful means of preserving the best of our historic and architectural heritage and within these areas and other areas identified in the Constituency Statements as of conservation importance, the emphasis will be on protecting and enhancing the individual character and appearance of the particular area. Where appropriate the Council will make use of its powers to control unauthorised development and signage. 3.20

Not all the City's buildings or areas of architectural interest enjoy statutory protection and consideration will therefore be given to the designation of new Conservation Areas; details of a number of such proposals are given in the Constituency Statements. There will be a periodic review of the Schedule of Listed Buildings and the extent of Conservation Area coverage to determine whether any additions or amendments should be made. 3.21

Proposals which would adversely affect buildings or areas of architectural interest will not normally be allowed. There are Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and four Gardens of Historic Importance (Highbury Hall and Park, Edgbaston Hall, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, and Aston Hall) within Birmingham and these will wherever practicable be guaranteed continued long-term protection. In addition, a great number of other buildings within the City are of value because of their local, historic, social or architectural interest. Many of these have been included on the Local List which will continue to be revised and updated, and every effort will be made to encourage the preservation of buildings of local interest. 3.22

More generally, the quality of existing buildings and townscape will be taken into account in considering proposals for new development. The City's Conservation Strategy contains more detail on the Council's approach to conserving and enhancing Birmingham's built heritage. The development of the educational, recreational and tourist potential of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings through management and interpretation will be encouraged. 3.23

*Since the UDP was published a further three gardens have been added to the Register: the General Cemetery, Key Hill, Sutton Park and Westbourne Road Leisure Gardens.
More detailed policies towards Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens are set out in paragraphs 3.25 - 3.29 following. 3.24

Applications affecting Listed Buildings will be considered in the light of the following policies:

Special regard will be given to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of the buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

Listed Building Consent will not normally be granted for the demolition or partial demolition of a Listed Building unless it can be demonstrated that every possible effort has been made to preserve the structure of the building and to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use.

The change of use of a listed building should not have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building.

Any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building should not adversely affect its architectural or historic character.

The setting of listed buildings will be preserved and enhanced by the exercise of appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features. 3.25
The demolition of buildings on the Local List of architectural or historic interest will be resisted to the extent of the powers available. Proposals for the demolition, alteration and/or extension of a building on the Local List should ensure that the features of historic or architectural interest are preserved and that all new work is in keeping with the character of the original building and its setting. 3.26

Conservation Areas

Development proposals within Conservation Areas will be considered in the light of the following policies:

The development should normally preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, and the demolition of buildings or removal of trees or other landscape features which make a positive contribution to the area's character or appearance will be resisted.

Outline planning permission will not normally be granted for development within Conservation Areas unless supported by detailed proposals showing siting, design, external appearance and means of access.

Consent to demolish a building in a Conservation Area will normally be granted only where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area. Demolition will normally only be permitted where there are approved detailed plans for the redevelopment. Control of premature demolition may also be secured by way of a conditional consent or a legal agreement.

The development should respect the character of the existing architecture, in scale, grouping and materials, and should generally reflect the character and appearance of the area. 3.27

Proposals for development adjacent to Conservation Areas should respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. 3.28

Historic Parks and Gardens

Development that would adversely affect any part of a Registered Park or Garden, or its setting, will not normally be permitted. Similarly, development proposals that would adversely affect the character and appearance of other parks, gardens and open spaces and their settings will not normally be permitted. 3.29

Archaeology

Archaeological remains are the product of human activity over thousands of years and are valuable both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and tourism. There are scheduled Ancient Monuments in Birmingham which are statutorily protected because of their national importance. A range of other sites are included on the West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record.* 3.30

*now Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record
Development proposals affecting areas of archaeological importance will be considered in the light of the following policies:

**The archaeological aspects of development proposals will be examined and evaluated before the planning application is determined. Planning permission will not normally be granted in cases where the assessment of the archaeological implications is inadequate.**

Development proposals which will have an adverse effect on scheduled ancient monuments and other nationally important archaeological sites and monuments and their settings will not normally be allowed.

Developments adversely affecting other known sites and monuments of archaeological significance will be resisted, although permission may be granted if the applicant has demonstrated that particular archaeological sites and monuments will be satisfactorily preserved either in situ or, where this is not feasible, by record. 8.36*

**Canals**

Birmingham lies at the heart of the national network of canals, which played an important part in the town's early industrial development. The historic importance of canals is acknowledged, and wherever possible, important groups of canal buildings and features will be protected. Consideration will be given to the designation of canal settings as conservation areas. 3.34

Most of the City's canals pass through inner city areas. Since 1983, the City has been involved in the Canal Improvement Programme, which has secured improvements to and restoration of canals as part of the strategy for the physical and environmental regeneration of inner city areas. Some improvements are identified in the Constituency Statements, and further improvement and restoration schemes within the City will be supported. 3.35

Canals also offer great potential for tourism, recreation and leisure. Proposals which seek to promote this aspect of canals, and which do not detract from their historic character will be encouraged. 3.36

*At the time of writing, work is underway on a selective review of the UDP. This is expected to be published as a Consultation Draft in the near future.*

38
Public Consultation

The City encourages the community to contribute to the conservation of the historic environment. It promotes interest in and understanding of Birmingham's urban landscape through publications, exhibitions, talks and tours, and exchanges ideas and information with local and national amenity bodies and residents associations.

The Conservation Areas Advisory Committee

The City's Conservation Areas Advisory Committee was established in 1970 under the terms of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and meets monthly. Although it functions in much the same way as a City Council sub-committee CAAC has no delegated powers and its role is purely advisory. At present its membership consists of six local councillors who also serve on the Development Control Committee and sixteen independent experts and representatives of national and local amenity groups including the Civic Society, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, the Victorian Society, the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society and the Jewellery Quarter Association.

The Conservation Areas Advisory Committee advises the City's Development Control Committee on all proposals affecting listed buildings and conservation areas. Its wider remit includes the consideration of archaeological issues and proposals for the designation of conservation areas, for the statutory listing of buildings and for the addition of buildings or sites to the City's own Local List. It also considers and makes recommendations on any environmental enhancement programmes with a conservation element. CAAC visits sites when necessary and, where it is appropriate, monitors the progress of large development schemes.
Legislation and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
National Heritage Act 1983

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16): Archaeology and Planning 1990


Conservation Area Practice: English Heritage guidance on the management of conservation areas. English Heritage 1995

Conservation Area Character Appraisals: Defining the Special Architectural or Historic Interest of Conservation Areas. English Heritage 1996

Sustainability and the Historic Environment
English Heritage 1996

Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification
RCHME (now English Heritage) 1996

The Monuments Protection Programme:
An Introduction
English Heritage 1997

Sustaining the Historic Environment:
New Perspectives on the Future
English Heritage 1997

Analysis and Recording for the Conservation and Control of Works to Historic Buildings
Association of Local Government Officers 1997

Listed Buildings at Risk
English Heritage 1998

The Register of Parks and Gardens: an Introduction
English Heritage 1998

Standards and Guidance Notes
Institute of Field Archaeologists, various dates

Left: Colmore Row, City Centre, Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area
Opposite: The Old Royal Public House, Church St, City Centre, Grade II
The Birmingham Plan, Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 1993


Conservation Areas: A Guide for Owners and Occupiers 1999

Archaeology and Development

Bournville Village Conservation Area Design Guide

Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield Development Guidelines

Moseley Shopfronts Design Guide

Shopfronts Design Guide

The Gun Quarter Planning and Urban Design Framework 1993

Convention Centre Quarter Planning and Urban Design Framework 1994

Digbeth Millennium Quarter Planning and Urban Design for the Future 1996

Bull Ring/Markets Quarter Planning and Urban Design Framework 1998

Nature Conservation Strategy 1997

Draft Canalside Development in Birmingham: Design Guidelines

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