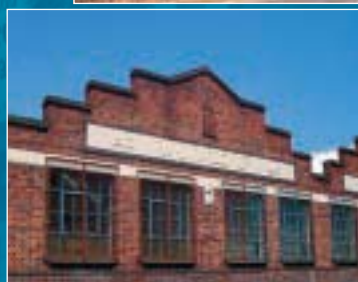
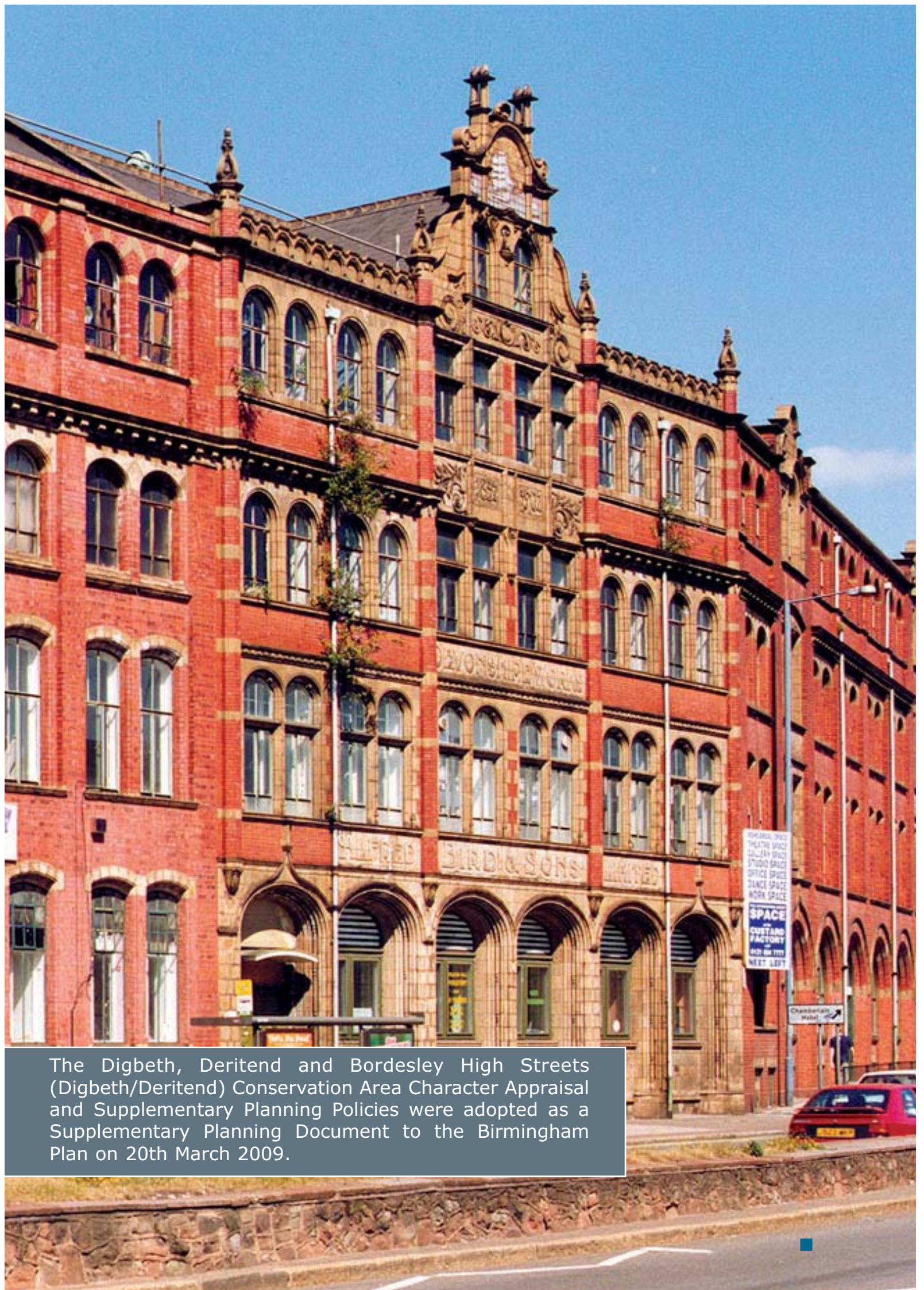


Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area

Character Appraisal and Supplementary Planning Policies





The Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Supplementary Planning Policies were adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Birmingham Plan on 20th March 2009.

Cont

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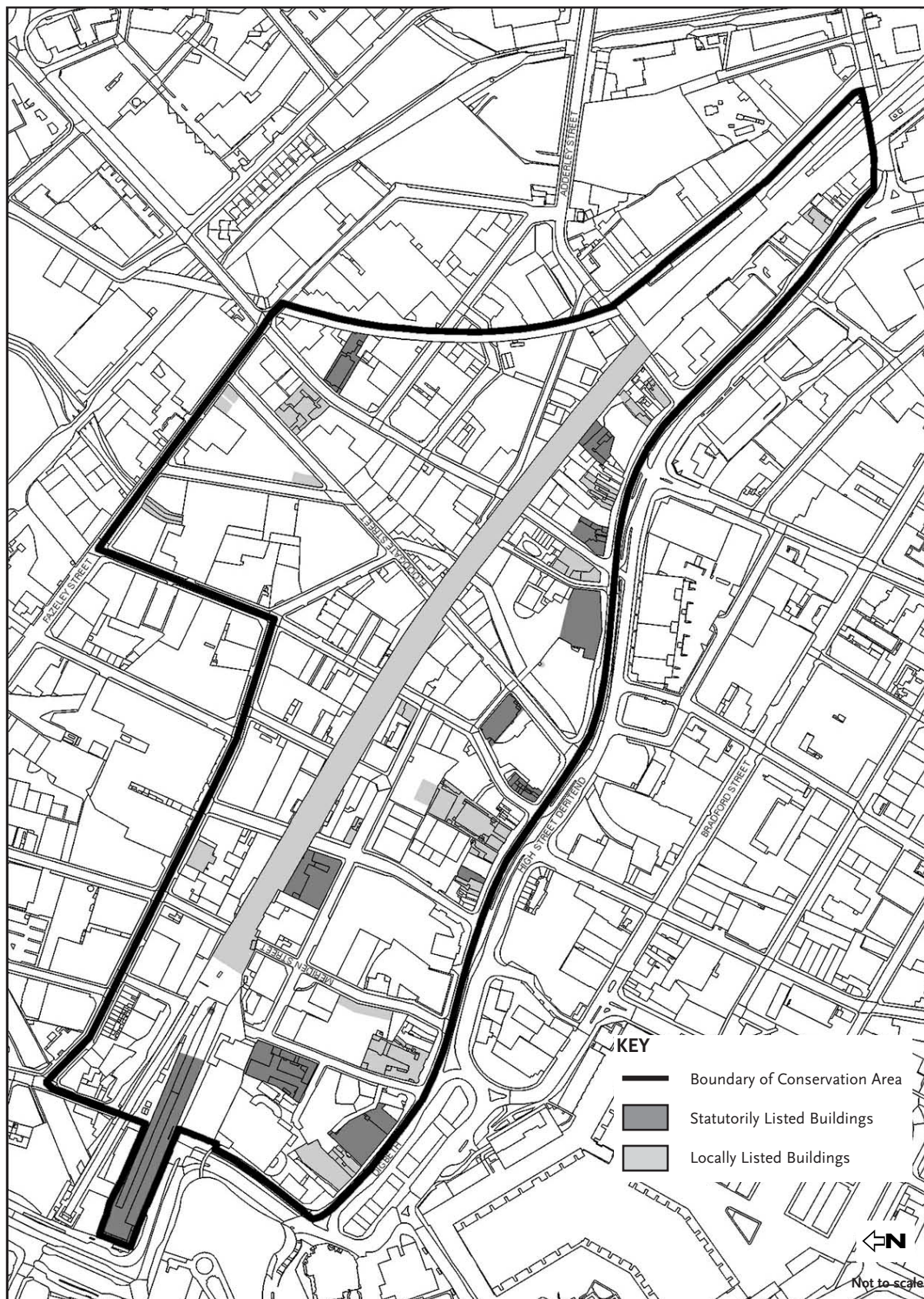
Part A

Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley
High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area

Character Appraisal



Map 1 Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area
Statutorily and Locally Listed Buildings



Int

Introduction

The 1990 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act defines a conservation area as ‘...an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’ The Act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and from time to time to review the extent of conservation area designation within their districts. It also requires them to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

Designation allows the local authority general control over demolition and minor development and the preservation of trees. In addition to these powers the authority has a duty to pay special attention in the exercise of its planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of its designated areas.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) stresses the value of a clear and comprehensive appraisal of the special character which justifies the designation of a conservation area as a sound basis for development control decisions within the area and the formulation of proposals for its preservation and enhancement. As a matter of policy therefore Birmingham City Council has undertaken to produce character appraisals for all the conservation areas within its district (*The Birmingham Plan Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 2005, 2005 para.3.27*).

The Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been prepared in accordance with the national guidance contained in PPG15: *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994). It follows advice set out in *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* (2005) and in *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* (2005) produced by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service.

The appraisal aims to:

- Identify the special interest of Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area and provide a definition of its character.
- Provide a sound basis for the development control process within the conservation area and the formulation of policies and proposals for its preservation and enhancement.


The character appraisal will be kept up to date through periodic review and modification. A dated photographic record of the conservation area taken during the process of appraisal will help in monitoring any change in condition and/or appearance and aid enforcement action. This will be regularly updated.

Part A

1

Designation, Location and Boundaries

Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area was designated on May 31st 2000. The conservation area covers 26.68 hectares (70.86 acres) to the east of Birmingham city centre and is contained within Nechells Ward in Ladywood Constituency. From the corner of Park Street the boundary runs south-east along Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley taking in the north side of the street. It turns east along Coventry Road and then north-west along the south side of Upper Trinity Street and the unfinished GWR viaduct to include the north-east corner of Heath Mill Lane. From here the boundary runs north-west along Fazeley Street taking in the south side of the street and then south down Barn Street taking in the east side. On Bordesley Street it turns west to include the south side of the street up to the corner with Park Street. The boundary runs south to take in the east side of Park Street, cutting up to, along and then down Moor Street to include the statutorily listed Moor Street Station. It then continues to the corner with Digbeth (Map 1).



Digbeth/Deritend Conservation Area lies in the valley of the River Rea on the eastern side of Birmingham city centre. The river flows in an approximately north-north-easterly direction. The city centre itself is perched on a ridge of freely drained Bromsgrove Sandstone (Keuper Sandstone) running from the south-west to the north-east. The ridge falls away to the east where the meandering and probably braided (broken into several channels) channel of the Rea exploited more easily eroded Mercian Mudstone (Keuper Marl). At the junction of the two geologies a series of springs and wells historically provided a supply of water for the local populace. Sporadic glacial drift (material deposited by retreating ice sheets and melt water) overlies the soft clay of the Rea valley and has created a higher and more complex topography.

The topography of the conservation area as seen today is also shaped by man's intervention, its natural form altered by development. The course of the Rea running north through the area divided at a point now marked by the junction of Little Ann Street and Floodgate Street. The existing western river channel was once the flood race for Heath Mill, the manorial corn mill. The eastern channel, which ran beside Heath Mill Lane, is now filled in. Urban growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to a significant rise in land levels on the river flood plain.

Views across the area gained from the Bullring shopping centre immediately to the north of St Martin's Church, give only a faint impression of the earlier topography - the once boggy low lying valley of the River Rea, crossed by minor tributaries, rising on the east towards Camp Hill and the higher reaches of Bordesley.

Part A

3

Archaeology

Recent works in the conservation area have confirmed its high archaeological potential, providing evidence of further settlement and industries and defining areas in which different types of deposit are likely to occur.

A small amount of pottery was recovered during excavations at Park Street and Moor Street, indicating the possible presence of a Roman farmstead in the west of the conservation area.

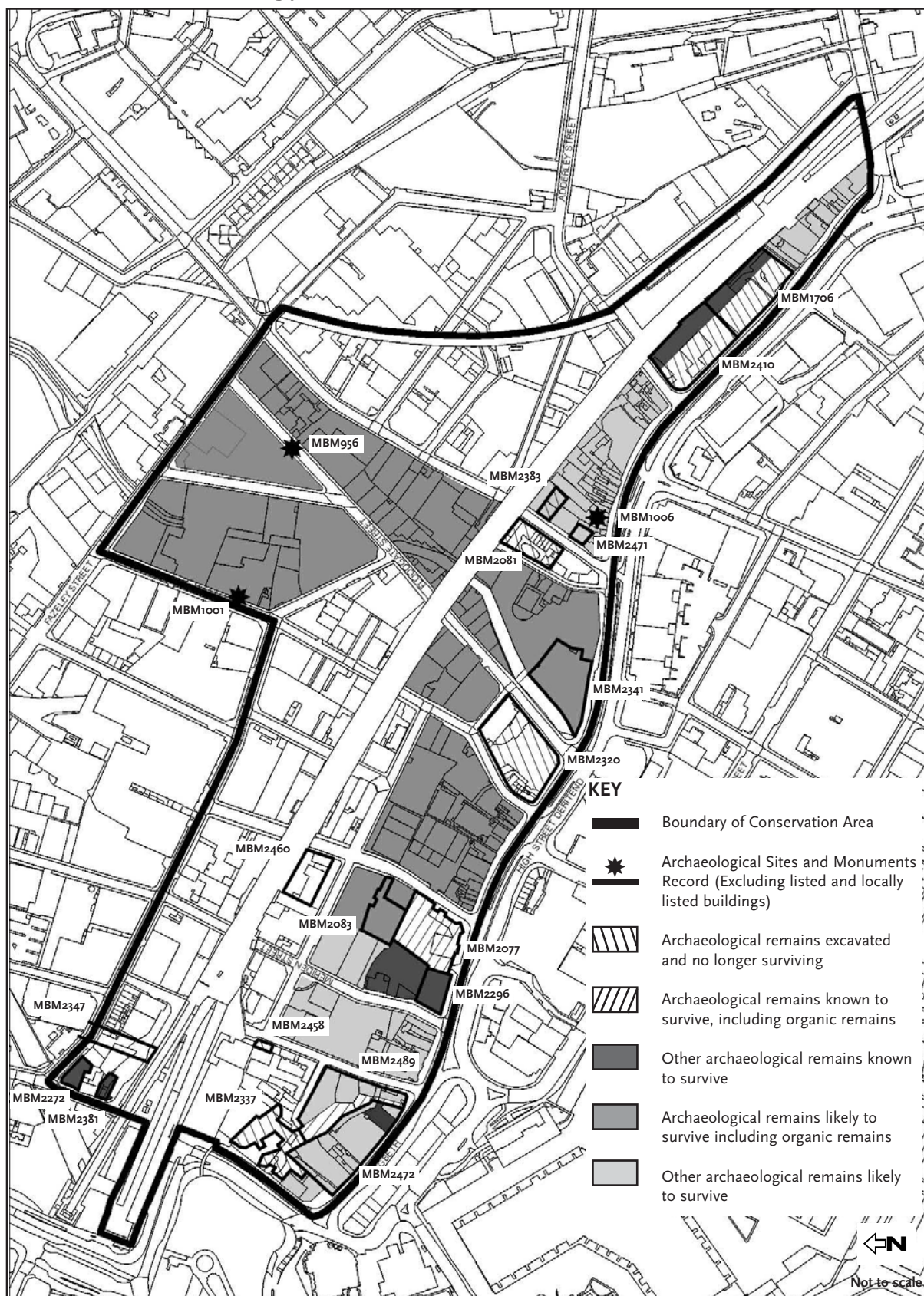
By the end of the mediaeval period there was continuous activity along the Digbeth/High Street Deritend frontage. Evidence of a ditch defining the rear of the mediaeval plots in the west of the conservation area was uncovered during excavations at Park Street and possible evidence of the causeway along Digbeth was found during excavations at Floodgate Street, demonstrating the potential for such features to survive archaeologically elsewhere. Excavations have indicated extensive mediaeval industrial working in the back plots and provided further evidence for pottery production in the east of the conservation area.

Evidence of post mediaeval structures and industrial working in back plots has also been uncovered during recent excavations. These have provided evidence of industries located on the flood plain of the River Rea, taking advantage of the water supply, such as tanning and ironworking on Floodgate Street and tanning at the former Devonshire Works (now the Custard Factory) on High Street Deritend. It is possible that these industries used parts of the flood plain farther to the north of the Digbeth/High Street Deritend frontage, although no recent archaeological works have taken place in these areas.

Archaeological works have defined areas where waterlogged conditions might have preserved organic deposits. The presence of waterlogged deposits where Digbeth meets Meriden Street but not farther to the west has confirmed that the break of slope visible on the frontage today represents a real boundary between the flood plain of the River Rea and the higher drier ground to the west. Recent works have also demonstrated that land reclamation took place on the flood plain, raising the ground level and protecting earlier archaeological deposits from later intrusions.

Deposits will have been disturbed by eighteenth century and later construction works but are likely to survive in islands in most areas of archaeological potential within the conservation area. Such islands are intact areas of stratigraphy, comprising the remainder of originally more extensive deposits which have been partially destroyed by modern intrusions, forming discrete areas of archaeological interest (Map 2).

Map 2 Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area
Archaeology



Part A

4

Development History


The Domesday Survey of 1086 contains the first documentary record of Birmingham, when it appears as a manor of little value held under the Lords of Dudley. When trading first began there is not known, but following the purchase of a market charter by Peter de Birmingham, the manorial lord, in 1166, confirmed in 1183, the town began to emerge as a market centre. The mediaeval settlement of Birmingham was set on the lower slopes of a gentle sandstone escarpment overlooking the marshy valley of the Rea and the river crossing which served the local routeways. It was centred on the markets above and below the parish church of St Martin, itself probably a twelfth century foundation. The town was carefully planned and the major thoroughfares were laid out in a series of burgage plots. These were properties or holdings which allowed toll free access to the market, making them an attractive proposition for potential settlers.

The plots opposite the upper and lower markets and the church, just above the present day Allison Street and up towards Moor Street, would have been among the first to be laid out, sometime in the late twelfth century. The Hersum or Lord's Ditch defined the rear of these properties and formed the boundary between the town and the manorial park, known as the Little Park, between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries. The ditch contained a watercourse and may have crossed the main route (Digbeth) to and from the river crossing to feed the manorial moat below St Martin's. Its course necessitated plots of decreasing length towards its junction (just above present day Allison Street) with the routeway. Park Street (Little Park Street) and Moor Street (Overpark Street, Moule Street) were planned late twelfth or early thirteenth century incursions into

the park in order to enlarge the town and burgage plots were laid out at their southern ends. By the middle of the fourteenth century the Little Park itself was divided up as meadowland.

The small meandering River Rea formed the boundary between the parishes of Birmingham and Aston. The narrow strip of land along the east bank of the river, later known as Deritend, was originally in the manor of Bordesley in Aston parish. It was probably granted to the de Birmingham by the Dudley overlords of Aston in the twelfth century and became part of the manor of Birmingham. The grant not only gave the de Birmingham control of both sides of the river crossing it also allowed them to locate their manorial corn mill (Heath Mill) to best advantage. The mill straddled the river as it left Birmingham to flow into Aston, picking up the maximum volume of water to power the wheels and well out of the way of the crossing farther upstream. The higher ground on the east side of the river could also provide a safer drier route (Heath Mill Lane) to the mill site than the low-lying boggy ground on the Birmingham side of the Rea. Just above the crossing the river broke into two channels which joined again almost immediately below it. The western channel or Deritend Brook (running along the lower end of present day Milk Street and behind the mediaeval plots lining the main road) formed the parish boundary here and the land between that and the main course of the river was later known as Deritend Island.

By 1381 Deritend was sufficiently populous to be granted the use of its own chapel, St John's (demolished) in the parish of Aston, shared with the township of Bordesley. At the end of the fifteenth century the Deritend Guild of St John the Baptist established a guildhall and school with



accommodation for two priests (The Old Crown public house) on the corner of Heath Mill Lane with the main street. There is some slight evidence for a market in Deritend but it is not possible to say when it was established or how long it lasted.

In 1536 Birmingham manor was forfeit to the Crown and the 1553 survey of Birmingham as Crown property indicates the extent of its development in the mid sixteenth century. It reveals that the street frontage on the north side of Well Street (present day Digbeth from Park Street to Allison Street) and Deritend (present day High Street Deritend) appears to have been largely built up. On Digbeth (below present day Allison Street and down towards the river) the holdings were larger than the burgages and tenements in Well Street and in Deritend, reflecting the lower value of the boggy, frequently flooded land here. Tanners, reliant on a good supply of water to practise their trade, are prominent among the holders and occupiers of these plots. The southern ends of Moor and Park Streets were lined with properties but the meadows in the Little Park remained undeveloped. In Deritend fields and pastureland lay behind the main street on either side of the lane leading to Heath Mill. The Guild of St. John had been dissolved in 1549 and its guildhall became the property of the attorney Richard Smallbroke. In the sixteenth century two bridges spanned the Rea, Deritend Bridge over the western channel or Deritend Brook and Rea Bridge over the main watercourse. These can be identified as the 'two great stone bridges' maintained by the Birmingham Guild of the Holy Cross before its dissolution in 1549. In 1557 the Crown sold its Birmingham possessions to the Marrow family who held the property until the early eighteenth century.

The sixteenth century scholars and authors, John Leland and William Camden, give useful descriptions of contemporary Birmingham. Leland, riding through in 1538, describes it as 'a good market towne' with 'one strete [Digbeth] goynge up alonge almoste from the lefte ripe (bank) of the broke up a mene hille by the lengthe of a quartar of a mile'. Deritend (Dyrtey) was a 'praty strete' divided from Birmingham by a brook, the River Rea, crossed by both a ford and a bridge. Camden, published in 1588, observes a town 'full of inhabitants', the lower part (the valley bottom) very wet, 'the upper adorned with handsome buildings'. Both note the number of metal workers. Leland remarks on the great numbers of smiths, cutlers, lorimers (bit makers) and nailers so that 'a great

parte of the town is mayntayned by smithes'. Camden finds it 'echoing with forges' with 'most of the inhabitants being iron-manufacturers'. Metalworking was well established in Birmingham by the end of the thirteenth century and by 1600 the town was well known for the production and supply of a wide range of metal goods. Other important industries evident at that time and during the mediaeval period include clothworking and tanning, both dependent on Birmingham's abundant supplies of water. The route up from the river crossing through the boggy land where many of these earlier industries were based must have been wet and frequently flooded. The first reference to a 'cawsey' or causeway here (Digbeth) comes from the early seventeenth century.

In the mid-seventeenth century Birmingham ironmongers were beginning to appear among the town's elite and the growth of the metal trades had replaced older industries such as tanning and clothmaking in economic importance. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the smiths and cutlers themselves had been surpassed in economic importance by the 'new' trades, guns, brassware and the manufacture of 'toys', small easily transportable items of relatively high value such as buttons and buckles. Industrial growth was linked to the town's ancient, and now expanding, role as a regional market centre. New building following the increase in population which resulted from this expansion of commercial and industrial activity was confined at first to the higher ground within the 'old' town. Demand for housing was such however that development soon spread to the north and north west running along the hillsides above the Rea. A new church was built, high on the ridge, to supplement the accommodation offered by the old parish church of St Martin's. St Philip's (now Birmingham Cathedral, Colmore Row) was consecrated in 1715.

The Marrow family began to dispose of their Birmingham estate in the sixteenth century, finally selling the remaining demesne, including the former Little Park, to Dr Thomas Sherlock, Dean of Chichester, in 1720. The immediate development of this large property was arrested by Sherlock's refusal to grant building leases.

The earliest cartographic evidence for the area comes from the mid-eighteenth century. William Westley's 1731 plan of Birmingham shows Digbeth, including Cock or Well Street (which then constituted its upper end), and Deritend as built up. The east side of Park Street, which, up to the

late eighteenth century defined the eastern limits of the town, is laid out with buildings. Aside from some small incursions, mostly occupied as garden ground, beyond the line of the mediaeval Hersum Ditch, the Little Park remains undeveloped. A fieldroad (later part Bordesley Street) runs down Lake Meadow Hill from the fordrough or foredrove (field access road) on Park Street across the fields to two footpaths, one leading towards Heath Mill, the other towards a footbridge across the Rea and to the fordrough (later part Floodgate Street) giving onto Digbeth by the river crossing. Deritend Brook has disappeared and there is only one bridge over the river.

Samuel Bradford's plan of Birmingham, surveyed in 1750, shows the floodgates and part of the floodrace (River Rea) belonging to Heath Mill. The erection of the floodgates and the construction of the floodrace appear to have been undertaken about 1649. The diverted river looped through fields and meadows to rejoin its original course in Aston. Bradford's plan also shows the beginnings of development in the Little Park. Two parcels of meadowland, sold by the Marrows in 1704/5, are defined by new roads. Water Street (later part Floodgate Street) and Rope Walk (later part Milk Street), both indicated on Westley's map, run into the park from either end of an undeveloped and as yet unnamed Moores Row. Water Street leads up to the river and the mill floodgates while Rope Walk joins three roads, running north into the park (later Barn Street), east to the floodgates (Ann Street, Little Ann Street) and west into the park (later part Bordesley Street). Farther east Bordesley (High Street Bordesley) is partly built up.


Thomas Hanson's map of 1778 charts the further development of the meadowland by the Rea. The north side of Moores Row is built up, the southern side, in different ownership, still laid out as gardens. Building has begun on the north side and southern end of Milk Street (formerly Rope Walk, now part Milk Street) and development is shown on both sides of Floodgate Street (formerly Water Street, now part Floodgate Street). At the time of Hanson's map the built up area, Digbeth, Deritend (High Street), Bordesley (High Street), was occupied by a broad range of small tradesmen, including suppliers of food and drink, clothing and metal goods. The innkeepers included the landlord of the Old Crown, the former Guildhall of St John, in use as an inn since the seventeenth century. Tanning survived on the north side of Deritend (High Street) right up to the early nineteenth century. The ancient tannery on the site of the

former Devonshire Works (now the Custard Factory) was broken into lots and sold in 1816.

Thomas Sherlock's lands passed to his nephew, Sir Thomas Gooch, a Suffolk landowner, in 1764 and were released for building in 1766. The development of the Gooch estate in the former Little Park began in 1783 when the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal Company (merged with the Company of the Proprietors of the Birmingham Canal Navigations or BCN in 1784) obtained an Act to allow the construction of a canal which would join the Birmingham Canal to the Coventry Canal. This included a collateral cut or branch towards 'the lower part of the....town of Birmingham' which would lead out of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal and terminate in a wharf to be built on land leased from Sir Thomas Gooch in the former Little Park. The canal company purchased property on Park Street and in Digbeth and by 1784 had cut (upper) Fazeley Street and Oxford Street to allow access from different parts of the town to the projected canal and wharves.

The Digbeth Branch Canal was completed in 1790, terminating in a wharf on the north side of Bordesley Street. The construction of the Warwick and Birmingham Canal was allowed under an Act of 1793. In Birmingham the canal was to run through the Gooch estate by Heath Mill to a junction with the Digbeth Branch Canal. It crossed the mill floodrace (River Rea) by means of an aqueduct. The original course of the Rea, known here as the Back Brooke, was channelled beneath the canal embankment behind the mill. The canal opened in 1799.

The two new streets cut by the canal company prompted the development of the Gooch estate. Development spread east from Park Street and north from Digbeth in a planned grid of streets. Bordesley and Coventry Streets were laid out in the 1780s. Bordesley Street followed the line of the ancient track through the park to join the road down to the mill floodgates (Ann Street, Little Ann Street) cut a few years earlier. Coventry Street, laid south of and parallel with Bordesley Street linked a series of streets running north behind Digbeth and ending in Bordesley Street, Milk Street and Oxford Street, and then Meriden Street and Allison Street. At this time neither Meriden Street nor Milk Street had any direct access onto Digbeth, where other property ownership blocked the way. Allison Street joined Digbeth through a narrow alleyway known as Crooked Lane. Well Lane was opened about 1809 by the Inge Estate to allow access onto Allison



Street from its properties on Park Street and Digbeth. Its name was derived from the springs or wells on the corner with Allison Street. Park Lane, joining Allison Street to Park Street, was formed around the same time. Urban development was relatively slow, reflecting the economic downturn of the early nineteenth century. Barn and Trent Streets weren't laid out for building until 1826 and, throughout the built-up area as a whole, plots remained unlet into the 1830s.

From 1791, in addition to corn milling, Heath Mill began to produce metal goods, necessitating a greater supply of water. In 1804-5 a new mill pool was dug just downstream of the mill in the meadow between the floodrace and the old mill pool on the original course of the Rea. The mill was converted to steam power about 1841 and the pool was no longer needed, allowing an extension of Fazeley Street (Lower Fazeley Street), proposed by the Corporation in 1851. Under the same improvement scheme the old eastern course of the Rea was filled in and Floodgate Street was extended over the river and up to (Lower) Fazeley Street. At the same time River Street was cut across the filled-in mill pool. The work was complete by 1860. Nineteenth century street improvements in the area included a widened approach from Allison Street onto Digbeth (1852-1854) and from Floodgate Street onto Deritend Bridge (1881) and the extensions of Meriden Street (1837) and Milk Street (1881) onto Digbeth.

Development behind the High Street in Deritend and Bordesley began in the 1790s when Adderley Street was cut. The west side of Heath Mill Lane was largely built up by 1805. Lower and Upper Trinity Streets were laid out in 1823/4. The development of the Heath Fields which had once belonged to Heath Mill was related to the draining of the nineteenth century mill pool and building on Allcock Street, Penn Street (now Bromley Street) and William Street (now Hack Street) commenced in 1851.

A railway system linking Birmingham with London and Liverpool had been planned as early as 1824, but it was not until the 1830s, following the success of the line between Liverpool and Manchester, that any progress was made. The Grand Junction Railway, running from the Manchester and Liverpool line at Newton-le-Willows, reached the town in 1837, the London and Birmingham Railway from a terminus at Euston in 1838. The two railway companies had agreed to approach Birmingham from the east, through the Rea valley where access

was easiest, and to terminate in a shared station on Curzon Street. In 1846, together with the Manchester and Birmingham, the companies merged to form the London and North Western Railway Company.

The Birmingham and Oxford Railway Company (B&O) was incorporated in 1846. The line approached Birmingham from the east and a junction with the LNWR was planned near Curzon Street. The company was taken over by the Great Western Railway Company (GWR) in 1848 and work was started on a viaduct (GWR viaduct, unfinished) from Bordesley Station to the proposed junction. The LNWR refused to surrender land so work was completed only as far as the GWR boundary on Montague Street. Under the Birmingham Extension Act of 1846 the GWR built a short line from the unfinished viaduct to a new station at Snow Hill in the north of the town. The extension required the construction of a long viaduct across the Rea valley from Adderley Street to Moor Street where the line entered a tunnel. Snow Hill Station opened in 1852 and Bordesley Station, on the same line, in 1855. Bordesley was an important cattle station as well as providing passenger and goods transport.

Gibb Street was laid out in 1852, in connection with the construction of the railway viaduct and the widening of Heath Mill Lane. Shaw's Passage, running alongside the viaduct between Allison Street and Park Street, was cut around 1882 and originally gave access to the premises of Henry Shaw, manufacturer of iron goods. Orwell Passage, at the south-west end of Allison Street, was made about 1900 when Allison Street was widened above the junction with Digbeth. It follows part of the line of the twelfth century Hersum Ditch.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the River Rea, always prone to flood, had become seriously polluted. A scheme for improvement was first put forward in 1888. In 1890 it was decided to improve the river along its course through the city, a distance of approximately four miles, to prevent flooding and the accumulation of toxic sediment. The works, completed in 1893, were considerable and included deepening the river channel, constructing a brick culvert and rebuilding bridges.

Behind the High Street frontage, housing, largely composed of courts of back to backs, was the principal form of development in the nineteenth century. From the mid-century onwards, a range of community facilities was provided by religious

charities and by the Corporation to serve the large local population. These included Birmingham's first branch library, opened on Heath Mill Lane in 1866, the Free Christian Sunday School and Chapel of 1865 and 1876 on Fazeley Street, the Medical Mission of 1878-80 on the corner of River Street and Floodgate Street and the board school built on Floodgate Street in 1891.

Manufacturing in the area was mostly related to the metal trades. The Birmingham Battery and Metal Works was established on a site between Digbeth and Coventry Street in 1836/8, for example, the Viaduct Works, producing safe and security doors, on Oxford Street in 1860 and the Allison Street Works, built as an umbrella rib manufactory, on Well Lane in 1870. A tube mill, a rolling mill, an iron and brass foundry and a galvanising and tin works were all established on River Street in the 1860s. Food production and warehousing and animal processing were also locally important. Food and food related manufactories included Alfred Bird's Devonshire Works (the Custard Factory), established on Gibb Street in 1886, and the ice factory and cold store, built on Digbeth in 1900 for the Linde Refrigeration Company, to provide cold storage and supply ice to butchers and fishmongers as well as to hospitals. The pig market, built on Bordesley Street in 1891 and out of use in 1897, was later occupied by a mineral water manufacturer, the Birmingham Syphon Co. Ltd., and by a confectioner, Pattinson and Co. Ltd. Midland Cattle Products Ltd., producing tennis gut strings and later fertiliser, opened their factory on Bordesley Street in 1921.

Commercial uses in the area included a large number of public houses and, along the High Street corridor, a variety of retail shop and warehouse premises, such as Bonser's Iron Warehouse, 85 Digbeth, constructed in 1860 or 224-225 High Street Deritend, the large establishment built for Thomas Fawdry, corn and flour dealer, in 1869. Banks were opened to serve local businesses, on High Street Deritend in 1872, for example, on High Street Bordesley in 1889 and on Digbeth in 1936.


Public concern for the welfare of the local population in the early twentieth century was reflected in the continuing provision of facilities promoting health and moral improvement. The Coventry Street Cottage Baths and the adjacent recreation ground were constructed by the Corporation in 1908. In the same year the Digbeth Institute was opened on Digbeth to provide

recreation as well as religious instruction for the poor of the surrounding area and in 1912 St Edmund's Home for Working Boys with its chapel and workshop was established on High Street Deritend.

Moor Street Station was opened in 1906 to take extra traffic and relieve the pressure on Snow Hill Station when the GWR line was opened to Stratford. The viaduct across the Rea valley was widened in 1910. The station buildings were constructed from 1911 to 1916 with warehousing and stabling beneath the platforms and goods yard and part of the viaduct, exploiting the local topography. Between Allison Street and Park Street, Park Lane and the housing courts and works surrounding it were replaced by large railway warehouses.

From the interwar period onwards the closely packed housing courts which characterised almost every street increasingly gave way to industrial premises on larger building plots. These were mostly connected to the metal trades with a significant number related to the motor industry and component production. In 1935 for example, WJ Wild Ltd., component manufacturers, moved into the first of a series of new premises on Floodgate Street and in 1946 Perfecta Motor Equipment opened its first works on Bordesley Street. Both factories replaced nineteenth century housing courts. In 1943 the creation of inner city industrial zones through the removal of housing in order to relocate displaced factories and allow room for expansion became council policy. By the early 1950s clearance in the Digbeth area was almost complete and only pockets of housing remained. This was gradually demolished. The municipal housing on Rea Terrace, built in 1900, was knocked down in 1966, for example and the last back to backs in the area, on Floodgate Street, in 1989. The influx of larger purpose built works into the area led to the loss of the junction of Hack Street (William Street) with Lower Trinity Street, the houses and roadway replaced by the expansion of a waste paper depot in 1960.

The loss of housing took with it the infrastructure of the local community. Shops offering a range of goods and services disappeared. The schools, baths and library, the churches and chapels were all gradually closed and, in most cases, demolished to provide land for industry. Some buildings, such as the chapel and Sunday school on Fazeley Street, the Medical Mission on Floodgate Street and River Street and the branch library on Heath Mill Lane



were converted to industrial use. The Digbeth Institute was acquired by the Corporation in 1955 to extend the accommodation available for public assembly in the city centre. St Basil's Church on Heath Mill Lane is now a centre for youth work.

The High Street corridor had suffered some coarsening of its urban grain in the early twentieth century. Narrow building plots were amalgamated to provide sites on Digbeth for the Digbeth Cold Store in 1900, the Police Station in 1913 and the Smithfield Garage from 1920 and on Deritend High Street for the expansion of the Devonshire Works in 1902, 1908 and 1913. It remained largely unaffected by the mid-century industrial expansion in its hinterland however, and was still busy with active retail and commercial uses into the 1970s. Increasing congestion in Digbeth and High Street Deritend was addressed in 1935 by an Act to demolish the south-west side of the road and provide a dual carriageway with a central reservation. The Rea bridge at Deritend was rebuilt in 1937 at double its previous width in preparation for the road widening. The scheme was authorised by central government in 1953 and the road completed in 1955. In 1961 a flyover, removed during the major roadworks at Camp Hill in the late 1980's, was constructed to take out of town traffic from High Street Bordesley to Camp Hill.

The decline of local industry from the mid-1970s onwards combined with the severance from both the central business district and the market area caused by the post war road system has resulted in changing uses and vacancy in the area, including the High Street corridor. There are a large number of gap sites. Under the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act the Council designated an industrial improvement area in Digbeth and the surrounding district in an attempt to halt decline and maintain local employment. Local businesses were offered grants for building works and the Council itself carried out a number of environmental improvements. In 1984 the Central Area Local Plan recognised the Digbeth district (including Warwick Bar Conservation Area) as one of the six distinctive areas or quarters around the city core where regeneration should seek to enhance the existing urban environment. The Digbeth Millennium Quarter Plan, containing specific economic development policies for the area as a whole, was produced in 1997.

Recent road schemes on the western boundary of the conservation area include the downgrading of the postwar Inner Ring Road (Moor Street Queensway) outside Moor Street Station. The ring

road's new role as a 'city street' is intended to extend the central area, linking the outlying quarters and their activities to the city core. The diversion of Moor Street to meet a widened Park Street was undertaken to provide space for the new Bullring shopping centre, opened in 2003.

Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area was designated in May 2000 in order to preserve the most significant remains of Birmingham's mediaeval townscape and its setting within a distinctive inner city industrial quarter. The large size of the area affords the opportunity not only to include important historic buildings and structures but sites of lesser quality where sensitive redevelopment will be actively encouraged in order to create a harmonious street scene. Following designation a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS), funded jointly by English Heritage and the City Council, was targeted at the High Street corridor. Between 2001 and 2005 buildings such as the former Deritend Branch Library on Heath Mill Lane and 224-225 High Street Deritend were carefully repaired and now have viable new uses. Others, including the Rainbow public house on the corner of Bordesley High Street and Adderley Street and the Kerry Man (formerly the Old Bull's Head) on Digbeth, had historic features reinstated.

The conservation area is included in the Eastside Regeneration Area. Based on the three concepts of learning, heritage and technology, the Eastside Development Framework (2001) seeks to encourage city centre expansion, regeneration and the creation of a new quarter. The heritage value of Digbeth/Deritend Conservation Area is seen as an important element in the drive to achieve sustainable economic regeneration.

Part A

5

Townscape Character

Buildings

The built fabric characteristic of the conservation area encompasses a variety of building types and dates mostly from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The Old Crown public house on Deritend High Street provides an early exception to this characteristic date range. Constructed in the 1490s as the Guildhall of St John, it is the oldest surviving building in the city centre after the twelfth century Church of St Martin. There are few surviving domestic properties. 1 to 8 Bordesley Street (1895), a three storey, one room deep terrace of houses is still in residential use. The dwelling house at 6 Well Lane was built as part of Corder and Turley's umbrella rib manufactory and works (1870). The house, with typical workshop ranges behind, is now in use for the manufacture of pewter.


Commercial Buildings

The widest range of building types is found on the High Street corridor (Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets). The long street retains a fine array of buildings which reflect its commercial vitality in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These include typical nineteenth and early twentieth century retail shops, wholesale and retail warehouses, banks and public houses. 164 Deritend High Street (rebuilt 1850s), for example, illustrates a common building type, the retail shop with residential accommodation above, reached in this case by a separate doorway off the street. The modest four storey three bay building has a series of workshops of varying dates attached to the rear. The earliest of these (c1823) was built for soap manufacture. 86-87 Digbeth, the premises of Gregory Pank, ironmonger, (1890) provides a later example of the type. The three storey two bay building, with a covered passage leading to the

small yard at the rear, retains its original double shopfront. 179 to 181 Deritend High Street (1906) contains four separate retail shops, again with residential accommodation above, built as a speculative venture. The three storey, four bay building has a central carriage entrance leading through to the yard behind, which contains a separate works.

At 85 Digbeth, the carriage entrance to the former Bonser's Iron Warehouse, (1860) survives, although the complex of warehouses to which it once gave access does not (demolished c.1960). To compensate for its narrow street frontage the one bay two storey tower has considerable architectural presence. 224-225 Deritend High Street (1869), on the corner with Milk Street, is an impressive example of a retail/warehouse complex. Constructed for Thomas Fawdry, corn and flour dealer, the building contained two retail shops with living space and warehousing over and a bakehouse, warehouse and stabling to the rear. A central carriage entrance on the High Street frontage served the warehousing. The property is five storeys in height, reflecting the large amount of accommodation required on a relatively narrow and constricted site, and each elevation is seven bays in width. It is currently occupied by South Birmingham College.

Two properties built as banks survive on the High Street frontage, the former Lloyd's Bank (1874-5) at 2 Heath Mill Lane on the corner with High Street, Deritend and now in use as a retail shop and, at 123 High Street, Bordesley, the former Birmingham District and Counties Bank (1902, later Barclay's), now in office use.



Of the many public houses once scattered throughout the area a representative group remain. Along the High Street corridor, the Old Crown in Deritend, the former Guildhall of St John, has been occupied as a public house since the seventeenth century. 109 Digbeth, the former Castle and Falcon (1838/9-1852), has a long range along Meriden Street (which included 48, 49 and 50 Meriden Street) and was also occupied for the sale of wines and spirits. The building is now principally in use as a retail shop. Later nineteenth century examples include the Rainbow (rebuilt c.1875) on the corner of High Street Bordesley and Adderley Street and the Big Bulls Head on the corner of Digbeth and Milk Street (rebuilt 1885). The Royal George (rebuilt 1962-1964) on the corner of Digbeth and Park Street at one time included Birmingham's only surviving music hall, the former London Museum Concert Hall (1863).

8A-10 Bordesley Street are the only remaining purpose-built retail shops outside the High Street frontage. The substantial four-storey block (1882-4) contains three narrow shop units, each with living accommodation above. All three retain their original single shopfronts. The former pig market (1891) at 18 Bordesley Street was built for Foster, Long and Company, pig dealers. The three tall gabled bays of the market hall front the street. The buildings were only briefly used for their intended purpose since the market was relocated in 1897.

A number of public houses survive beyond the High Street corridor. The earliest of these are the Floodgate Tavern (c.1785, Spring Gardens, White Swan, Horan's Tavern) on Floodgate Street and Little Ann Street and the Spotted Dog (c.1820) on the corner of Meriden Street with Bordesley Street. The Old Wharf (rebuilt c.1866) on the corner of Oxford Street and Coventry Street and Billy's (the Malt Shovel, rebuilt 1922) on the corner of Milk Street and Coventry Street are later examples. A former beerhouse (The Royal Oak, altered 1907), now a café, remains at 1 Barn Street.

Works

The works or manufactories characteristic of the area are purpose built and range in date from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1950s. Most have a two or three storey principal range on the street frontage, containing offices, workshops and storage, with subsidiary ranges of workshops or sheds to the rear. In the twentieth century large clear span sheds behind the street frontage range commonly provided space for heavy engineering and assembly. Some twentieth century premises

are simply composed of one or a series of conjoined sheds set gable end onto the street. Wellington Mills, built for Crane's Screw and Colgryp Castors Ltd., incorporates an impressive run of north-light sheds (1940) with fourteen gable ends on River Street and seven on Floodgate Street. The company also occupied the former Medical Mission on the corner of the two streets.

The former Birmingham Battery and Metal Works at 38 Coventry Street, established in 1836 (now occupied by Arkinstall Galvanising Ltd.), provides an early example of heavy industry in the area. The original engine house (1838) with a truncated chimney stack is visible behind a nineteenth century shed, probably the contemporary rolling and battery mill, on the street frontage. The works' principal entrance was on Digbeth where it occupied the site now covered by the Digbeth Institute. The former Allison Street Works (1870, 1888) built for Corder and Turley, umbrella furniture manufacturers on Well Lane and Allison Street, is an impressive example of a late nineteenth century manufactory. It has two-storey and three-storey frontage ranges which contained offices, workshops and warehouse accommodation. A yard, reached through a central carriage entrance on the Allison Street frontage, and a contemporary workshop range are set to the rear. Additional workshop ranges were added in 1923 for Fawcett Brothers, clothing manufacturers.

The former Devonshire Works of Alfred Bird and Sons (now known as the Custard Factory) clearly illustrates the late nineteenth and twentieth century tendency for manufactories to spread as the scale of production increased. Established on a site between Gibb Street and the River Rea in 1887 and accommodated here in an increasing number of workshops, the factory expanded first south onto High Street Deritend and then farther north along Gibb Street. On the High Street a variety of small buildings on mediaeval plots were replaced by a four-storey principal frontage range of fifteen bays, containing offices and workshops (1902, 1908, 1913). On Gibb Street large workshops (1916, 1930) displaced the mid-nineteenth century development of housing and small scale industry. The works also expanded upwards, with extra storeys (1919) added to the workshops on Gibb Street for example. The factory complex now accommodates a mix of studios, offices and retail shops

The former Ash and Lacy premises on Meriden Street and Allison Street, built for metal

processing, provide another good example of plot amalgamation to extend a single site. The two-storey principal frontage range (1905) on Meriden Street, with office and warehouse accommodation, is nine bays in length with a series of sheds at the rear. One shed ran through to Allison Street. The works were later extended south along Allison Street (1935) where a narrow two-storey workshop frontage conceals steel frame sheds behind. The plant displaced early and mid-nineteenth century development of housing and warehousing.

The former premises of WJ Wild Ltd., component manufacturers, spread along Floodgate Street, River Street and Little Ann Street in a series of numbered buildings, rather than on a single large site, form an interesting complex. Some of the works were purpose built, others reused. These latter included the former Wellington Mills, previously occupied by Crane's Screw and Colgryp Castors Ltd., which Wild's took over c.1985. The earliest purpose-built premises in the series is 96 Floodgate Street, no.1 works, dated 1935, a two-storey seven bay frontage workshop building and sheds to the rear. This was followed by no.2 works at 104-108 Floodgate Street, dated 1938, the two storey frontage workshop ten bays in length and with sheds behind. No.3 works on Floodgate Street, Moores Row and Milk Street, dated 1940, is composed of brick-fronted conjoined sheds running from Floodgate Street through to Milk Street. No. 4 works (1955-1967) on the corner site between Floodgate Street and Little Ann and River Streets and built over the River Rea, has three storeys of office accommodation fronting Floodgate Street with brickfronted single storey workshops to either side.

There are a significant number of private garages and vehicle repair workshops in the area. These buildings vary in scale but generally comprise one or a series of clear-span sheds. The former Smithfield Garage extension (1923), a low shed behind a single storey frontage range, stands at the south-east end of Meriden Street. The garage complex includes the former King Edward VI Branch School (1853), a two storey building in use as a basket factory from 1892, then altered and reused as a garage repair shop (1923). The building was extended for offices and storage (1954). The private garage (1924) built for Bell and Nicholson, warehousemen, on Milk Street has an attached caretaker's house, no. 80 Milk Street. The premises were extended (1953), again for Bell and Nicholson, with the addition of a further garage and are now occupied as a vehicle repair workshop and storage.

The former Digbeth Motors, on Coventry Street, has a tall shed (5-8 Coventry Street, formerly the private garage of Nicholl Francis, fruit merchants, 1938) on the street frontage with stores and a workshop behind. The premises were later extended (1955) when a two-storey sales room and office accommodation was built to face a new petrol station forecourt on the corner with Meriden Street. The complex is now in use as a snooker club.

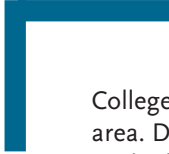
Railway Structures

The redundant GWR viaduct defines the eastern boundary of the conservation area, forming a gentle arc stretching from Adderley Street across Lower Trinity Street, Hack and Allcock Streets up to Liverpool Street. Bordesley Viaduct runs across the area from Bordesley Station, just beyond the eastern boundary, to Moor Street Station in the west. The massive structure, over a mile in length, was built in two conjoined but clearly distinct phases. There are workshop units of various types beneath the arches and, off Allison Street, warehousing, constructed on the Hennebique system, and stabling, now converted for parking and storage. Both viaducts add to the hard industrial appearance created by the traditional building types beyond the High Street corridor and make a vital contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

The former Bordesley Cattle Station lay on the south side of Lower Trinity Street. The station buildings have been replaced by a car park, but the painted signs on the viaduct survive. The former GWR station at Moor Street was closed in 1986. It was refurbished and the buildings reopened in 2002-2003.

Local Facilities

A number of buildings which once served the religious, welfare and educational needs of the local population survive, although almost all have been converted to new uses. They include the Unitarian Chapel (1876-7) and Sunday School (1865) on Floodgate Street, the Medical Mission (1878-80) with its small chapel, on River Street and Floodgate Street, all converted to industrial use and now vacant, the Digbeth Institute (1906-8) on Digbeth, used as an entertainment venue, and St Basil's Church (1910-11) on Heath Mill Lane, now a youth centre. The former Deritend Free Library (1866), also on Heath Mill Lane, converted to industrial use after closure and now a conference centre, and the former Floodgate Street Board School (1891), now attached to South Birmingham



College, represent local authority provision in the area. Digbeth Police Station (1911) on the corner of Digbeth and Allison Street remains in its original use as a police station.

Architectural Character

The Old Crown, built in the late fifteenth century, is the earliest building in the area. The timber-framed former guildhall, schoolroom and priests' house has a centrally placed gabled oriel above the entrance to a cross passage. To the east of the cross passage, the original Wealden hall is now floored and jettied with a gabled and jettied cross wing at the east end. The section to the west of the cross passage originally consisted of two large chambers, the cross wing here also jettied and gabled. Some simply composed early to mid-nineteenth century buildings survive, with domestic proportions and minimal ornamentation. These include the Spotted Dog public house (c.1820) on Bordesley Street and Meriden Street and the former Dolphin Inn (c.1838), 100 Coventry Street. The Floodgate Tavern (c.1785) on Little Ann Street and Floodgate Street is the only remaining eighteenth century example of this type. All three buildings have been altered. The architectural character of the conservation area is otherwise defined by commercial, industrial and institutional buildings dating from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

A representative range of architectural styles is employed from the mid-nineteenth century up to the First World War and Classical, Romanesque, Gothic, Edwardian Baroque and Free Style designs can all be found in the area. Late Victorian and Edwardian buildings in particular are richly detailed. The Arts and Crafts style, particularly associated with Birmingham, is impressively represented by the manufactory (1911-12) built for Thomas Walker and Son, marine instrument manufacturers, at 58 Oxford Street. During the inter-war period Art Deco influences are evident, in Ladbroke House (1919-21) on Bordesley Street for example, built for Midland Cattle Products, and in the careful detailing of WJ Wild's no.1 works (1935) at 96 Floodgate Street. In the immediate post war period up to the end of the 1950's buildings are functionally designed with simple but effective detailing. These are exemplified by Trinidad House (1948) on Coventry Street, built for the Limmer and Trinidad Lake Asphalte Company, the Progress Works (1959), 77 Allcock Street, built for R. Lunt and Company, warehousemen, and Brograve House (1961), 30-31 Allison Street, built for Pyrotenax Ltd. The former Forward House, 49-55

Heath Mill Lane (1950) built for Pollock and Company, grocers, is a late example of Art Deco influenced design.

A hierarchy of elevational treatment is found between the principal and subsidiary ranges within a building plot. Architectural display is reserved for the principal building and, to a lesser degree, workshop and warehouse ranges or sheds with a street frontage. Subsidiary buildings at the rear of the plot have functional elevations with little or no detailing. Whether fronting the street or set at the rear of a plot workshop ranges are characterised by regularly spaced, closely set multi-light windows. Early to mid-twentieth century 'stand-alone' sheds, such as those comprising WJ Wild's no. 3 works (1940) on Floodgate Street, are given well detailed street elevations.

Architectural quality is traditionally high, with a number of notable local practices represented. These include, among many others, Bateman and Corser (Deritend Free Library, Heath Mill Lane, 1866), JA Chatwin (Lloyd's Bank, Heath Mill Lane, 1872-4), Jethro Cossins (8A-10 Bordesley Street, 1882-1884), Martin and Chamberlain (Floodgate Street School, 1890-1), Buckland and Hayward-Farmer (58 Oxford Street, 1911-1912), Ewan Harper Bros. and J.A. Harper (Bell and Nicholson garages and caretaker's house, Milk Street, 1924, 1953), S.N. Cooke (138-139 Digbeth, 1936) and Harry Bloomer and Son (Trinidad House, Coventry Street, 1948).

Building Materials

The traditional building stock in the conservation area is characterised by the use of high quality brickwork. Buildings are enriched by brick, stone, terracotta, faience and clay tile detailing. Banded brick in red and blue is found throughout the area. Pitched roofs are traditionally covered in slate with a limited use of plain clay and Roman tiles. Timber sash and cast-iron workshop windows gave way to steel from the turn of the twentieth century.

The railway viaducts are constructed in red and blue engineering brick with brick copings and fine brick detailing.

Height and Scale

The railway viaducts which run through and bound the conservation area are the most significant structures in terms of height and scale and have a monumental quality. Traditional building heights are variable ranging between two to four domestic storeys and one to five commercial or industrial

storeys. The taller buildings are generally found on Digbeth and High Street Deritend. North of these streets, and on High Street Bordesley, development is generally lower in height, three domestic storeys and one to three industrial storeys.

In the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth manufactories increased in scale and mass, a trend best illustrated by the former Devonshire Works on High Street Deritend and the Digbeth Cold Stores on Digbeth. From the inter-war period onwards early development to the north of Digbeth and the High Streets was increasingly displaced by industrial sheds behind a one or two storey frontage range or opening directly onto the street. This type of development ranges from premises composed of one or two low sheds to relatively extensive complexes of a dozen or more.

The height and scale of buildings on the street frontage is characteristically broken down through architectural treatment with effective use of detail. Architectural emphasis can be either vertical or horizontal, pitched roofs, gables and pilasters emphasising the former, flat roofs with parapets, banding and single long runs of fenestration the latter.

Street Pattern and Streetscape

Three early roads, the ancient curving route followed by Digbeth and the High Streets, Park Street and Heath Mill Lane, both formed in the mediaeval period, run through or bound the conservation area. Otherwise the historic street pattern derives from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and reflects urban development within

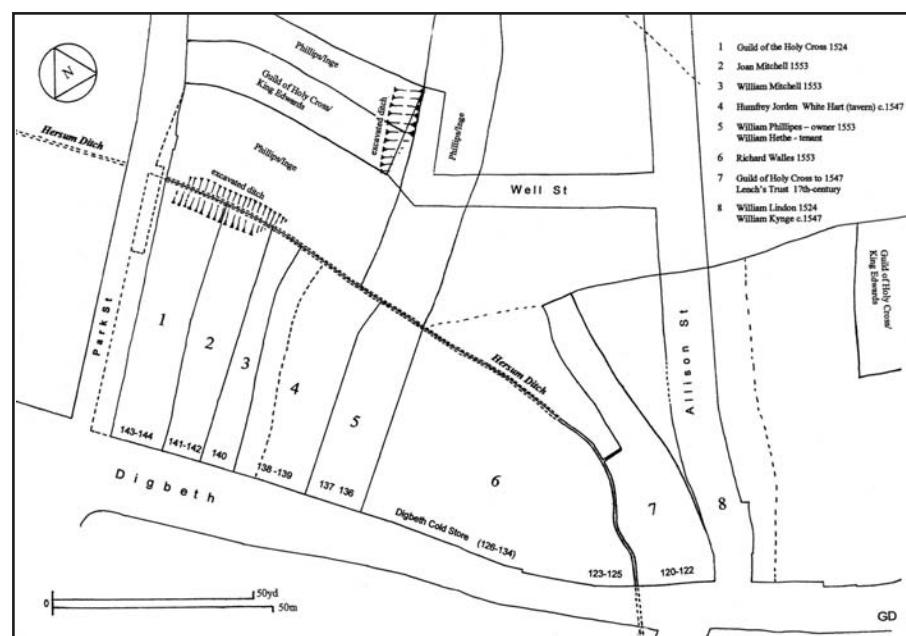
different landownerships. North of Digbeth and west of Milk Street the regular grid plan laid out on the Gooch estate survives. Elsewhere the piecemeal development of a number of landholdings gives rise to an irregular pattern.

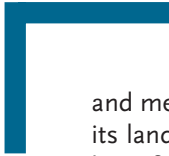
Routes running north-south through the area from Bordesley and Fazeley Streets down to the High Street corridor are coherent and legible. East-west routes are confused and less easy to negotiate. Coventry Street, linking Allison Street to Milk Street, fails to run through to Floodgate Street. Moores Row provides an indirect route. There is no direct link from Floodgate Street to Heath Mill Lane. A spine of development running north from High Street Deritend, and associated with the nineteenth century development of the ancient channel of the River Rea, separates the street network on the west from that on the east.

Street blocks vary in shape and size. To the west of Milk Street and north of Digbeth the series formed by the grid plan is relatively regular. Elsewhere the blocks are shaped by the irregular street pattern. All of the street blocks are composed of a series of buildings and building complexes within varying plot widths. On Digbeth and High Street Deritend in particular, they are further articulated by the variety of the architecture which gives rhythm to the streetscape. Canted or rounded street corners are characteristic of the area and corner treatments have a scale and complexity appropriate to their location.

The High Street corridor largely retains the fine urban grain associated with its earlier development

Twelfth Century Burgage plots 136-144 Digbeth. Sixteenth century ownership.





and mediaeval building plots are still discernible in its landscape. Apart from the plot occupied by the late fifteenth century Old Crown (the former Guildhall of St John) the most important of these are the twelfth century burgage holdings surviving between Park Street and Allison Street (136-144 Digbeth). The characteristic grain is coarsened at intervals by large twentieth century developments on amalgamated plots and by a number of gap sites. A looser more variable grain is found to the north of the High Street corridor, a result of twentieth century redevelopment and of the gap sites which bear testament to late twentieth century decline. A few smaller plots survive to reflect the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century urban origins of this area.

The building line is characteristically set at back of pavement creating a clearly defined street frontage and a sense of enclosure, although this is frequently disrupted by setbacks for parking and by the large number of gap sites. Enclosure along the High Street corridor and the southern end of Park Street has been dissipated by road widening. High brick walls with gated entrances traditionally divide open yards from the street, maintaining both the continuous built frontage and the firm boundary between public and private space. Most of the area is characterised by simple rooflines, generally with a single ridge or parapet.

Buildings face the street and are legible, their function expressed through form. Characteristic signage is simple, incised or planted lettering, painted boards or brickwork. Despite the massive presence of the viaducts the area has a characteristically human scale, traditionally reinforced by active frontages at street level.

Self set vegetation is found throughout the area. Buddleia, birch and various wild grasses and flowers grow on the railway viaducts, on gap sites, in yards and along the river channel.

Views

The topography of the Rea valley provides fine views east and west across and beyond the conservation area (Map 3). The views west along the High Street corridor towards St Martin's Church and the tall buildings of the city centre high on the Birmingham Ridge are particularly significant. The relief of the Rea valley creates an impressive view west from the eastern boundary of the area on Bordesley High Street, while the sinuous alignment of the corridor street frontage, running down and then up the valley sides, allows

a series of good sequential westerly views. A fine view west across the valley towards the city centre is also gained from Upper Trinity Street although this is contained on the south by the bulk of the viaduct. The gentle western slope of the Rea valley provides a good view east down Bordesley Street and up towards Camp Hill and beyond.

The narrow views along the streets to the north of the High Street corridor are generally closed by buildings or terminated by the railway viaducts and there is a strong sense of enclosure. Bordesley Viaduct severs the area and only Floodgate Street and Heath Mill Lane allow long views through. An oblique view south down Heath Mill Lane frames the Old Crown, on High Street Deritend, through the railway arch. Gap sites offer some good, though incidental, views through the area, particularly on Coventry Street.

There are good views down into and across the area from Bordesley Viaduct, which add interest to the approach to Moor Street Station and the city centre.

Landmarks

The massive railway viaducts, which cut across the townscape, are principal landmark features, seen from both within and beyond the conservation area. Key landmark buildings are concentrated on Digbeth and High Street Deritend. At the western end of Digbeth the Digbeth Cold Stores dominate the surroundings while the tower of the police station on the corner with Allison Street acts as an important focal point. Farther to the east the roof of Bonser's Iron Warehouse forms a distinctive townscape feature. The buildings of the former Devonshire Works on High Street Deritend provide significant landmarks, particularly when viewed from the west. The water tower and tall brick chimney stack both punctuate the skyline in long views. The timber-framed Old Crown public house stands out among the surrounding nineteenth and twentieth century buildings. Its survival so close to the city centre is remarkable and it provides a well-known and distinctive focus for the conservation area. At 174 High Street Deritend the chapel campanile of the former St Edmund's Boys' Home is a striking and unusual feature, rising high enough above the railway viaduct to link the High Street frontage with its hinterland here.

Behind the High Street frontage the former Floodgate Street Board School closes views south along Milk Street and east along Coventry Street. The tall ventilation tower rises above the

surrounding townscape, its height and elaborate detail standing out against the surrounding buildings. On Coventry Street the engine house and truncated stack on the site of the former Birmingham Battery Works provides an effective focus for views from Milk Street and Oxford Street and from the southern end of Trent Street.

The workshops and studios of the Custard Factory complex on Gibb Street and Heath Mill Lane (part former Devonshire Works) and the campanile of the former St Edmund's Boys' Home rise above Bordesley Viaduct and are key landmark features on the train journey across the area and into Moor Street Station.

Open Space

There is no formal public open space within the conservation area. The semi-public courtyard (Gibb Square, 1998), which forms part of the Custard Factory complex on Gibb Street, provides a useful space for local congregation.

The River Rea

The River Rea is set in a deep brick lined channel constructed in the early 1890s to address flooding problems. For much of the time the flow of water is low but sudden surges can occur. The river has little presence in the public realm. Walls and buildings screen its course from the conservation area boundary on Deritend Bridge as far as Floodgate Street and from there it runs beneath development to appear again just short of the boundary on Fazeley Street. Restricted views can be gained from the east side of Floodgate Street and from the bridge on Fazeley Street.

Paving and Street Furniture

Street surfaces throughout the area provide an appropriately neutral and subordinate foreground to the buildings. The footways on Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley and Park Street/Moor Street are laid in concrete slabs and buff block paving with textured concrete slabs laid at crossings. There is a blue brick pavement at the northern end of Park Street. Elsewhere in the area the footways are surfaced in asphalt. Kerbstones are granite or concrete and a good number of cobbled crossovers remain. Bus stops are defined with block paving and textured concrete slabs. Carriageways are covered in asphalt. Allison Street retains a short length of cobbled carriageway beneath the viaduct.

Apart from an accumulation of street furniture on Digbeth and High Street Deritend, streets in the

area are uncluttered. Street lighting is simple and functional, entirely appropriate for an industrial area. A number of cast iron street name signs survive, for example on Coventry Street and in Shaw's Passage.

Traffic and Pedestrian Movement

Traffic flow is heaviest on Park Street, Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley, along the boundary of the conservation area, and lightest on the streets to the east of Heath Mill Lane. Bus routes run along Park Street, Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley and Heath Mill Lane. Pedestrian movement is relatively light with most concentrated around the bus stops on Digbeth and by the Custard Factory and South Birmingham College, both on High Street Deritend.

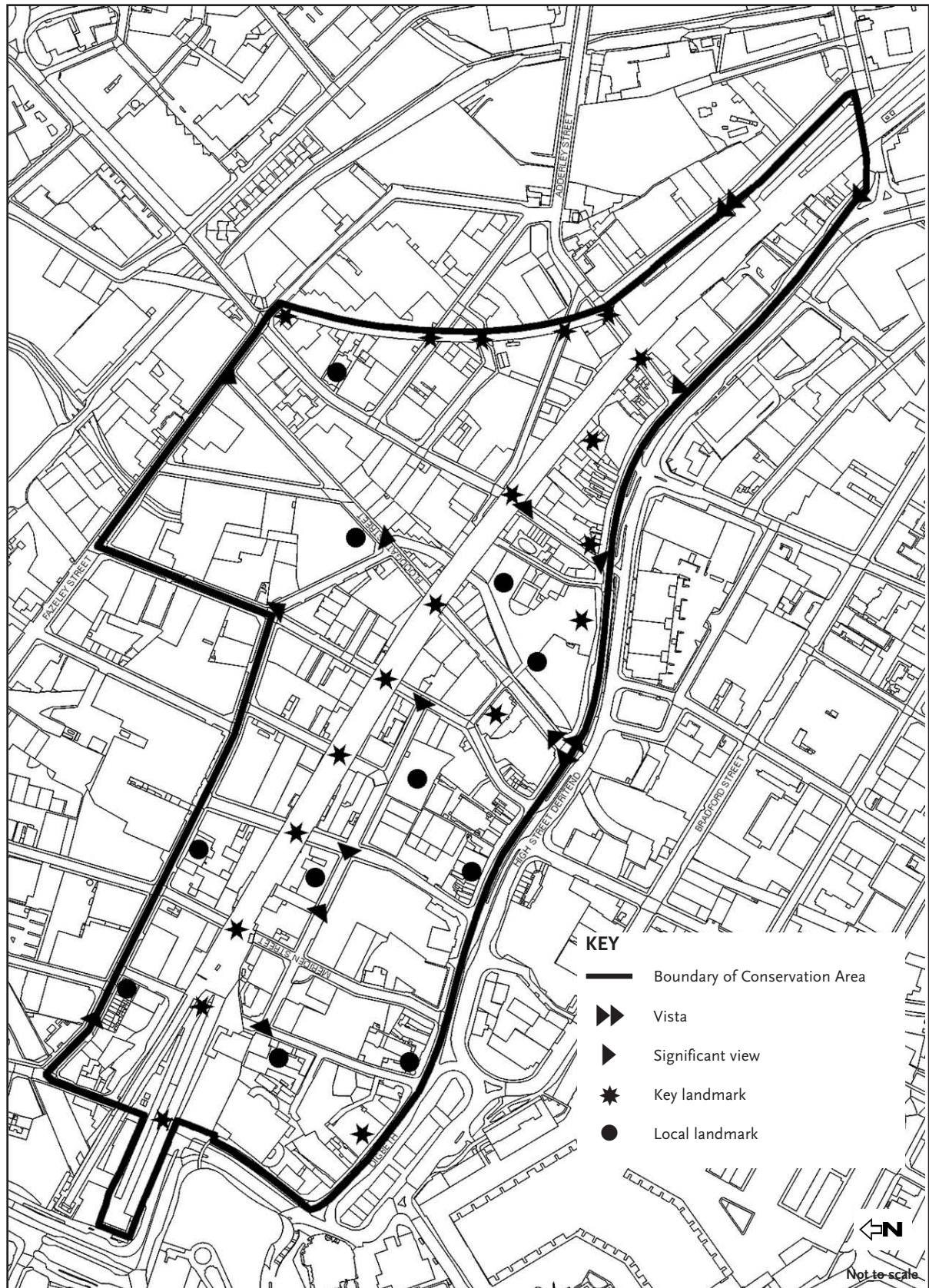
There is on street parking throughout much of the area. The streets north of South Birmingham College, including Barn Street and Trent Street, are particularly well used.

Conservation Area Setting

The conservation area lies within the inner city. On the northern boundary Warwick Bar Conservation Area is similar in character and the two areas flow one into the other. On the west, the conservation area boundary is defined by wide roadways and the traditional scale of development in the area is set against the metropolitan scale of the city centre. The southern boundary along Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley is clearly defined by the widened roadway and the redeveloped street frontage on its southern side stands in clear contrast with the historic street frontage on the north. Farther south, redevelopment in Cheapside, the industrial district to the east of the wholesale markets, has brought in a range of new uses. To the east the conservation area is confined by the railway viaducts. The streets east of Heath Mill Lane run through and beyond this boundary and the nineteenth century street pattern and small scale industrial development here share the urban character of the designated area and are important in its setting.

The setting of the conservation area contains a number of landmark buildings which help to place it in a wider context and connect it to the city centre. They include St Martin's Church, the Rotunda on New Street and Selfridge's department store in the Bullring shopping centre. These buildings are particularly important in long views west along the High Street corridor.

Map 3 Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area
Views



Part A

6

Localities

There are five principal localities or character areas within the conservation area (Map 4).

The High Street Corridor

- from Digbeth to High Street Bordesley together with the Moor Street frontage

Bordesley Street

- and area south to Bordesley Viaduct

Coventry Street

- and area north to Bordesley Viaduct and south to Digbeth street frontage

Floodgate Street

- and area west to Barn Street

Heath Mill Lane

- and area east to conservation area boundary

1. The High Street Corridor


The built fabric along the High Street corridor dates mostly from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century and is more varied in type than elsewhere in the conservation area. It includes, for example, retail shops, banks, warehouses, manufactories, and civic and religious institutions. Architectural variety adds interest to the street scene and the fine roofscape provides a cohesive townscape element. Traditional buildings range in height from three to five storeys and the human scale is augmented by active street level frontages.

Characteristic plot sizes vary from relatively narrow burgage and other early holdings to larger sites formed by plot amalgamation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the exception of Heath Mill Lane the streets on the

north side of the High Street corridor were cut through early frontage plots. This is particularly obvious in the lines followed by Meriden and Milk Streets, both brought down to join Digbeth from the land behind. The rear boundary of the building plots on Bordesley High Street is closely defined by the impressive bulk of Bordesley Viaduct. From there its course veers northward and the railway's presence as seen from High Street Deritend and Digbeth gradually decreases.

The ancient route followed by Digbeth and the High Streets curves gently down the Rea Valley from Park Street to the river at Floodgate Street, then winds more steeply through Deritend before climbing up Bordesley High Street to the conservation area boundary on the Coventry Road. This topography allows fine westerly views. The wide view from High Street Bordesley towards the city centre with High Street Deritend in the foreground is the most important in the conservation area. Enclosure is dissipated through the post war widening of Digbeth and the High Streets and the loss of the earlier fabric on their southern sides.

The timber-framed Old Crown public house on Deritend High Street provides a landmark of considerable visual and historical significance and is a key feature of the conservation area. The former Digbeth Cold Stores and Digbeth Police Station, with its corner tower, both on Digbeth, and the principal building of the former Devonshire Works, Devonshire House, on High Street Deritend, cranked to follow the street frontage, are important landmark buildings. On High Street Bordesley the Rainbow public house on the corner with Adderley Street and the former Birmingham District and Counties Bank at 123 are significant



representatives of the traditional character and quality of the conservation area. The campanile of the former St Edmund's Home for Working Boys, the chimney stack of the former Devonshire Works, both on High Street Deritend, and the pyramidal roof of the former Bonser's Iron Warehouse on Digbeth provide prominent landmarks.

On Park Street redevelopment associated with the Bullring shopping centre has introduced contemporary buildings which step up in scale to six storeys. At high level a suspended bridge connects the car parking on the east side of the street with Selfridge's department store opposite. The bridge carrying Moor Street Station closes views north and south along the street and the covered platforms are prominent as the land rises to the west. The station wall creates a robust boundary on the north side of the new length of Moor Street. The architectural character and traditional scale of the station buildings provide a vivid contrast to the shopping mall development beyond the conservation area boundary to the south and west.

2. Bordesley Street

Characteristic buildings in the locality date mostly from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Twentieth century works are the most common building type. Architectural character is functional and robust with a restrained use of detail. Ladbroke House on Bordesley Street with its elegant faience detailing provides a notable exception. Building heights range from one to three storeys. The Spotted Dog public house (c.1820) on the corner of Meriden Street and Bordesley Street is the earliest building in the area. Terraced housing remains in its original residential use at nos. 1-8 Bordesley Street. Victorian cast iron urinals survive beneath the railway on Allison and Oxford Streets.

The streetscape in the western part of the area from Park Street to Meriden Street retains a cohesive largely nineteenth century character, particularly along Allison Street. Eastwards to Milk Street gap sites fragment the twentieth century townscape and the built frontage is poorly defined. Building plots vary considerably in size from the narrow domestic plots found in the west of the area to relatively large sites formed by plot amalgamation.

Bordesley Street retains the line of the earlier field road into the former Little Park in its deflected junction with Park Street. Beyond the junction

there is an important long view east down the Rea valley and then up and towards Camp Hill. Bordesley Viaduct closes views to the south, although the campanile of the former St Edmund's Boys' Home, which rises above the railway, provides the focus for a significant long view south-east down Little Ann Street. Gap sites allow some good incidental views. The best of these are south-west from Bordesley Street towards the city centre and focus on the Rotunda. 8A-10 Bordesley Street and Ladbroke House, Bordesley Street are important landmark buildings. The former Typhoo Tea company premises in Warwick Bar Conservation Area on the north side of Bordesley Street provides another local landmark.

3. Coventry Street

Traditional buildings in the locality date from the 1830s to the mid-twentieth century. Industrial works are the most common building type. The area contains good examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century manufactories which contribute to townscape quality. These buildings are richly detailed and display greater scale and massing than the lower more simply detailed mid-twentieth century works. Building heights vary between one and three storeys.

Gap sites and setbacks fragment the townscape and erode the characteristic sense of enclosure. This is particularly so in the case of the vacant site on Coventry, Meriden and Oxford Streets, which makes a large hole in the urban fabric. Building plots vary in size from relatively narrow works and public house plots to larger industrial sites.

Good long views along Coventry Street are enclosed on the north by Bordesley Viaduct, visible above the buildings. There is an important view east, closed by the workshop ranges of the former Devonshire Works on the east bank of the River Rea. Gap sites allow incidental views. Of these the panoramic view from the west side of Meriden Street beyond Trent Street to the east and towards the impressive former manufactory of Thomas Walker on Oxford Street is the most significant. Both the former Walker's manufactory and the former Allison Street Works on Allison Street and Well Lane make important contributions to the local townscape. The former engine house and stack of the Birmingham Battery and Metal Works on Coventry Street provides an impressive local landmark.

4. Floodgate Street

Characteristic buildings in the area mostly date from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Twentieth century engineering works are the dominant building type. Architectural quality is high and buildings are well detailed. The former Medical Mission and the former Board School, both on Floodgate Street, provide good examples of late nineteenth century architectural styles and make a considerable contribution to townscape interest and quality. The Floodgate Tavern (c.1785) on the corner of Floodgate Street and Little Ann Street is the earliest building in the locality and is still in its original use as a public house. Building heights are between one and three storeys.

The townscape in the area is generally coherent and Floodgate Street and River Street in particular retain almost continuous built frontages. On the east side of River Street and the west side of Floodgate Street the north light sheds of the former Wellington Works give an insistent rhythm to the streetscape. Plot sizes vary from the relatively small sites occupied by the Floodgate Tavern, the former Medical Mission or Wild's no.2 works at 104-108 Floodgate Street to the larger sites formed by plot amalgamation and occupied by post war works on Floodgate Street and River Street. The River Rea, set within its deep bricklined channel, skirts the east side of Floodgate Street from Deritend Bridge to the junction with Little Ann Street. Below the bridge (1896) across to the former Devonshire Works a high boundary wall stands at the back of pavement. Views of the river can be gained through two sets of gates.

Views within this area are generally closed and contained by buildings. The best are those north and south along the entire length of Floodgate Street and through the railway arches. There are good views east down Moores Row and from Floodgate Street of the workshop ranges and stack of the former Devonshire Works on the opposite side of the River Rea. The hexagonal stack provides an important local landmark. The southern end of Floodgate Street is dominated by the former Board School with its landmark ventilation tower. Farther along the street, and allowed by late twentieth century development set back from the building line, there is an enclosed and atmospheric view of the Rea as it flows beneath Bordesley Viaduct. From Fazeley Street the river, emerging from its culvert, is largely obscured by the parapet of Fazeley Street bridge. WJ Wild's no. 4 works on the corner of Floodgate Street and Little Ann Street,


with its prominent office range, stands out in views north from the railway.

5. Heath Mill Lane

Characteristic buildings in this area are almost exclusively early to mid-twentieth century. Warehouses and works are the most common building types, functional in style with effective but simple detailing. Traditional building heights are variable with the workshop ranges of the former Devonshire Works (now the Custard Factory) on Gibb Street, five storeys in height, achieving the greatest scale and massing. The 'Greenhouse' development (1998), built for the Custard Factory, reaches a height of six storeys.

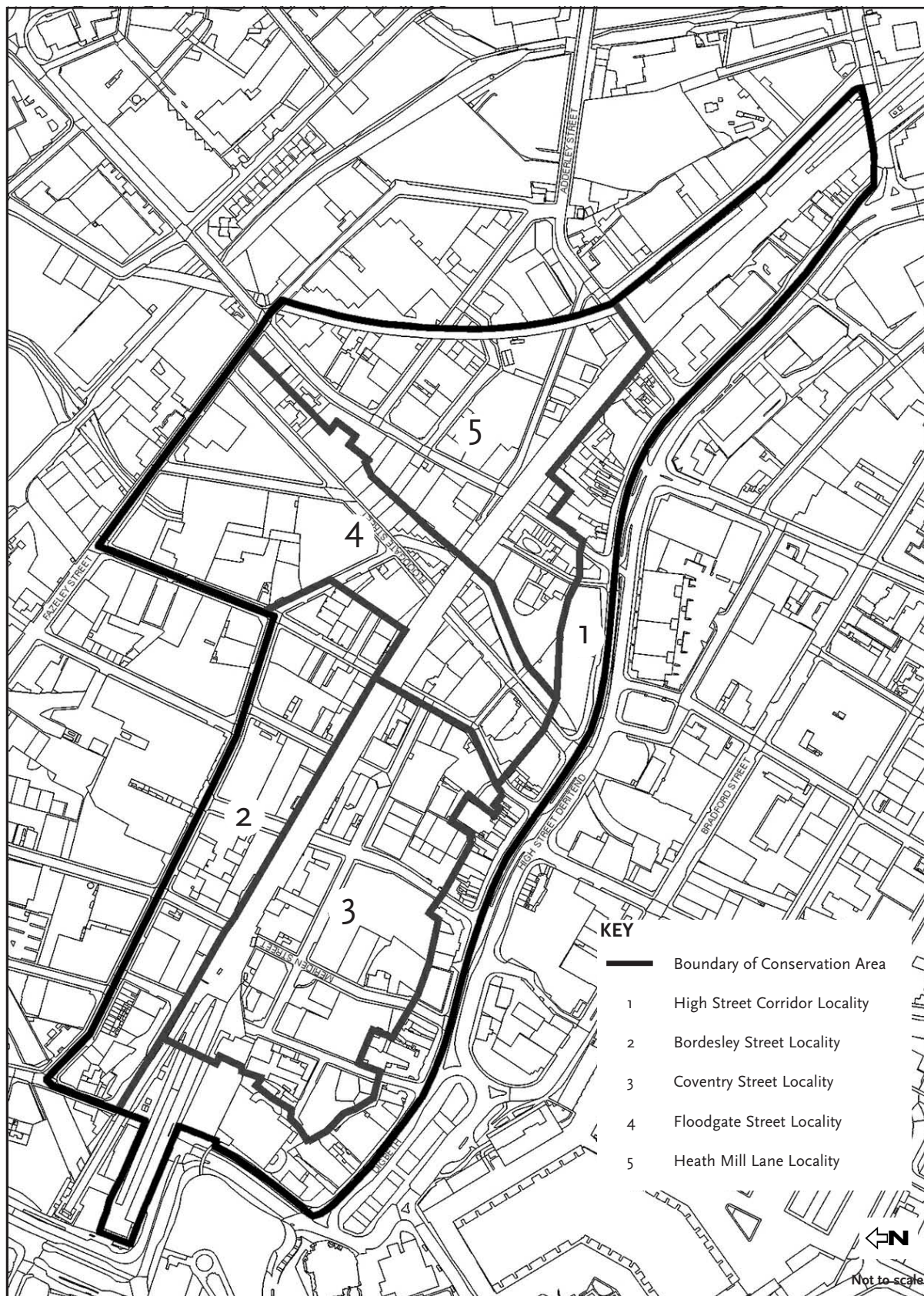
The townscape quality of the area is fragmented by gap sites and setbacks which dissipate the traditional sense of enclosure. The large vacant site on Bromley Street, Lower Trinity Street and Heath Mill Lane, situated on rising ground, is especially prominent. Plot sizes are variable, ranging from the narrow industrial plots found on Heath Mill Lane and Lower Trinity Street, for example, to the large amalgamated site occupied by the former Devonshire Works on Gibb Street.

At the north-east end of Heath Mill Lane the former St Basil's Church (1910-11, now the St Basil's Centre), designed in a Romanesque style, makes an important contribution to local townscape interest and quality. With the former Deritend Branch Library, at the north-west end of Heath Mill Lane, it provides a reminder of a lost local community. The former church is set back and screened on either side by industrial buildings set at the back of pavement. On its northern side a range of north light sheds (nos.123-125 Heath Mill Lane) gives rhythm to the streetscape. The southern side of Allcock Street and the northern side of Bromley Street present cohesive street frontages which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area as a whole. On Gibb Street the Custard Factory is identified by brightly (and uncharacteristically) painted buildings. The cream painted former workshop range beside the railway viaduct is particularly prominent. The complex incorporates Gibb Square (1998) with its pool and giant statue (2002). Anonymous utilitarian late twentieth century buildings, as on the south corner of Bromley Street, erode the coherence and vitality of the streetscape throughout the locality.



Views within this area are traditionally closed or contained by buildings with the two viaducts providing prominent landmark features. Bordesley Viaduct separates the southern ends of Heath Mill Lane and Gibb Street from the rest of the locality while the unfinished GWR viaduct forms an effective eastern boundary to the conservation area. Views to the north and south along Heath Mill Lane are framed through the arch of Bordesley Viaduct. There is a good view south through the arch towards the Old Crown public house on High Street Deritend. At the south end of the street there is an important view to the east along the viaduct to the campanile of the former St Edmund's Home for Working Boys (175 High Street Deritend); from the north end the blue painted Custard Factory studios are clearly visible above the railway. Views east from Bromley, Allcock and Lower Trinity Street are closed by the unfinished GWR viaduct.

Map 4 Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area
Localities





Successive redevelopment and road building and widening schemes have destroyed almost all of the fabric and much of the plan of mediaeval settlement in central Birmingham. The most significant remnants of this earlier townscape are now contained in Digbeth/Deritend Conservation Area. They include the twelfth century burgage plots on Digbeth, laid out opposite the (now lost) market below St Martin's Church, part of the line of the twelfth century Hersum Ditch, which divided the lord's park from the town and the surviving mediaeval building line on Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley. The fifteenth century Guildhall of St John (now the Old Crown public house), uniquely combined with a school and priests' house, is a nationally important example of a rare building type. It is the only mediaeval building in the city centre, apart from St Martin's Church. These early townscape elements are of considerable significance in the history of Birmingham's development and were of particular importance in the designation of the area.

The conservation area also derives significance from its survival as an inner city industrial quarter with a good range of industrial and commercial buildings dating from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

Part A

8

Economy

The economy of the conservation area suffered from the general decline in manufacturing industry in the 1970s. A downturn in domestic demand allied to falling export trade, particularly in the motor industry, caused the contraction or failure of many local firms. Restructuring, relocation and modern methods of warehousing and distribution have also contributed to the removal of industry from the area.

There has been a considerable loss of retail use. Along the High Street corridor road widening, completed in 1952, effectively eliminated passing trade and post-war housing clearance schemes deprived the many small shops in the area of local custom. Severance from the city centre caused by road improvement and traffic schemes has denied Digbeth in particular any opportunity to benefit from its proximity to the Bull Ring and market areas and to the Central Business District.

Land Use and Values


Uses in the area are still dominated by industry. Some traditional retail activities and a good number of public houses remain, found mostly along the High Street corridor. There is a slow but growing trend towards new uses. The former Devonshire Works on High Street Deritend, now known as the Custard Factory, has been converted for leisure, retail, studio and office use with the addition of a new studio block (1998) on the east side of Gibb Street. The former Tube Works (1872-5), built for Hoskins and Sewell, at 48-52 Floodgate Street, now known as The Arch, was converted to office units in 1992-1998. South Birmingham College opened on High Street Deritend in 2005. The site includes the former Floodgate Street School and the refurbished former corn chandler's premises, 224-225 High Street Deritend. In 2007

work began on the refurbishment and conversion of Devonshire House on Deritend High Street and Fazeley Street Studios (formerly occupied by WJ Wild Ltd.) between Fazeley Street, Floodgate Street and River Street. New uses include office and exhibition space, a dance studio and a screen hub. The project received funding through the East Birmingham North Solihull Regeneration Zone (ebns).

There is a lack of demand for existing floor space in the area. Many buildings are void or underoccupied and adventitious temporary uses exploit short leases and vacant sites. This situation is attributable to two main factors.

1. Low rental values make conversion and refurbishment, particularly of the older and more specialised premises, to meet modern production and office standards uneconomic. This is compounded by a shortage of space for delivery and parking. The area is unable to compete with industrial locations more suited to modern production, farther from the city centre and close to the main arterial routes with good access for delivery and space for car parking. The congested inner city location and absence of large modern single storey warehouses with service yards also make the area unattractive to the distribution sector.

2. Short term leases, up to a maximum of five years, reflect the hope values associated with the regeneration of Eastside, protecting future development opportunities for landowners, but preclude any immediate investment. The preference for short term lets discourages manufacturing industry, where long leases are necessary to justify considerable set-up costs.



New uses in the area, following regeneration initiatives, will attract higher property returns than established industry. As land values increase industrial use will decline as property owners seek to maximise profit through development opportunities.

Property ownership in the area is fragmented but there are some significant interests, including the Gooch Estate. There are some long leasehold interests with no incentive to engage in the development process. This will have an inevitable effect on the dynamics of the local property market.

Vacant Sites

There are a significant number of vacant and under-used sites within the conservation area. This is largely attributable to low land values and lack of industrial investment. Close to the city centre where there is expectation of rising values it may also be due to 'land banking'. Gap sites are scattered throughout the area, with the greatest concentrations on Bordesley Street and High Street Bordesley. Most are in use as car parks.

Future Uses

Current and future uses should be seen against a background of citywide decline in manufacturing industry. While acknowledging that industry will retain a significant role in the local economy, the Eastside Development Framework (2001) seeks to regenerate the Digbeth area through the promotion of a mix of uses, including education and technology, residential, leisure, offices, work spaces, design studios and specialist retailing. The proximity of the area to the city centre together with the number of vacant and underused sites and buildings provide an ideal opportunity to widen the mix of uses without compromising existing businesses. Proposed improvements to Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley to create a high quality, pedestrian friendly environment and increase footfall should encourage new retail and leisure uses here.

The Parkinson Report (The Birmingham City Centre Masterplan: The Visioning Study 2007) recognises the removal of the Inner Ring Road and the opening of Eastside as a major achievement for Birmingham. The Council is urged to build on this success and to focus on the distinctive 'gritty' character of the Digbeth area as a major asset in the creation of a diverse and vibrant city centre.

Part A

9

Loss, Attrition and Intrusion

1. A significant number of buildings in the conservation area are vacant or underoccupied and/or suffer from neglect and lack of maintenance. This detracts from the quality and interest both of the buildings themselves and of the local street scene and degrades the character of the area as a whole.

2. Inappropriate alterations, additions and accretions to existing buildings have had an adverse effect on their character, reducing their positive contribution to the interest and integrity of the conservation area.

3. Late twentieth century industrial development lacks the quality of design which characterises the traditional building stock and erodes the identity and distinctiveness of the conservation area. This trend is best exemplified by the Oxford Trading Estate (1978) on Oxford Street and the development on Rea Terrace/Milk Street/Little Ann Street (1968/1985), where anonymous utilitarian sheds make no concession to quality or context.

4. The use of poor quality or alien materials, such as render or profiled sheet cladding and roofing, erode quality and local identity and can be intrusive.


5. There are a large number of gap sites in the conservation area. These break up the urban grain, destroying the continuity of street frontages, exposing the backs of buildings and reducing enclosure. Vacant sites weaken the definition of street corners, resulting in a loss both of containment and legibility.

6. Uncharacteristic setbacks from the historic back of pavement building line to provide frontage servicing or parking break up the street frontage and compromise enclosure, diluting the quality of the townscape.

7. Steel railings, galvanised palisades, chain link fencing and other non-traditional means of enclosure lack the quality and sense of permanence of the brick walls and metal or boarded gates historically used as boundary treatments. Railings and open fencing reduce containment and allow views from the street into and through building plots, eroding the clear division between public and private space which characterises the conservation area.

8. The High Street corridor, Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley, is a key route into the city centre. The loss of traditional development, characterised by a fine grain and continuous street frontage line, has fragmented the townscape within the conservation area, eroding its coherence and quality. Late twentieth century vehicle showrooms on Digbeth and on High Street Bordesley add significantly to this loss of character.

9. The bright painted brickwork of the Custard Factory on Heath Mill Lane and Gibb Street dominates views of the Old Crown public house as seen from beyond the conservation area boundary on Deritend High Street.



10. Unsympathetic altered, replacement or inserted shopfronts along the High Street corridor and on Allison Street erode the character and interest of the area. They fail to respect the buildings which contain them in either proportion or materials. Where there are two or more shopfronts in a single building, as in the Digbeth Institute, 78-79 Digbeth, and 179-182 High Street Deritend, lack of co-ordination in design and/or detail often disrupts the integrity of the original façade and detracts from the architectural character of the building.

11. Signage can be obtrusive and/or over-scaled, detracting both from the quality of the buildings and the character and interest of the street scene.

12. Along the High Street corridor large advertisement hoardings on vacant sites and open yards and the exposed side elevations of buildings are visually intrusive and dilute the character and quality of the conservation area.

13. The railway viaducts are in need of repair and improved maintenance.

14. Some of the street surfaces in the area are in poor condition and in need of repair or appropriate renewal.

15. The accumulation of street furniture, including guard rails and bollards, along Digbeth and onto High Street Deritend disrupts the visual continuity of the street scene.

16. Planting is not a traditional feature of the area and detracts from the characteristically hard urban character of the streetscape. The pockets of planting on Little Ann Street/Milk Street and along Shaw's Passage, while pleasant in themselves, should not be regarded as a precedent.

17. On street car parking in the area north of South Birmingham College on High Street Deritend dominates the street scene and detracts from the quiet industrial character of the conservation area here. It has a particularly negative effect on Floodgate Street and River Street.

18. On the periphery of the conservation area the widened carriageways and heavy traffic along the A41 (the High Street corridor) and on Park Street/Moor Street sever the conservation area from the surrounding districts. The lack of appropriate enclosure along the High Street corridor reduces the visual impact of the street scene and adds to a general loss of coherence.



Part B

Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley
High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area

Supplementary Planning Policies





Introduction - The Need for Policy Guidance

Int

Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area contains the most important remnants of Birmingham's mediaeval townscape, dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. It is also significant as an inner city industrial quarter with a good range of industrial and commercial buildings dating from the nineteenth to the twentieth century and provides a major focus for regeneration.

The conservation area is included in the Eastside Regeneration Area. The Parkinson Report (The Birmingham City Centre Masterplan: The Visioning Study 2007) recognises the downgrading of the Inner Ring Road and the opening of Eastside as a major achievement for Birmingham. The Council is urged to build on this success and to focus on the distinctive 'gritty' character of the Digbeth area as a major asset in the creation of a diverse and vibrant city centre.

The purpose of the supplementary planning policies set out in this document is to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area as defined in the Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area Character Appraisal. In order to maintain and reinforce this special character the policies are intended to guide and manage the significant level of change anticipated for the area through the promotion of good new design which responds sensitively to historic context. New development will be encouraged to complement the established character of the area while clearly reflecting its own time and function.

The Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Policies have been prepared in accordance with the national guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) and in Guidance on conservation area appraisals (2005) and Guidance on the management of conservation areas (2005) produced by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service.

The policies should be read in conjunction with the local and national guidance contained in the Birmingham Plan 2005 (2005), Regeneration through Conservation Birmingham Conservation Strategy 1999 (1999, revised 2004) and PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994).

In forming their proposals applicants for planning permission must have regard to the information contained in the Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend) Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Part B

1

Protecting the Existing Historic Environment

1.1. Additions and Alterations

There will be a presumption against additions and alterations to buildings which adversely affect their character and appearance or that of the conservation area.

Developers should ensure that additions or alterations to existing buildings have a positive effect on their character and that of the conservation area. The Council will ensure that all additions and alterations are sympathetic to the existing building in scale, proportion, materials and detailing.

Where significant alterations and additions are proposed the Council will require the design and access statement to be submitted in detail. It should include an analysis of the contribution made by the existing building to the character of the immediate streetscape and the wider conservation area and of the preservation or enhancement of that character by the proposed additions or alterations.

1.2 Conservation Area Consent

There will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. This will include buildings of contextual or group value.

Where the demolition of a building which makes little or no contribution to the character of the conservation area is proposed the Council will expect the developer to justify demolition in terms of the character of the conservation area and submit detailed plans for redevelopment. These should preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area (see 2.1 below). In the absence

of satisfactory proposals consent for demolition will not be granted.

1.3 Recording

Where consent is granted for significant demolition the Council will expect an accurate archive record to be made prior to the commencement of any works. This will include photographs and/or where appropriate, measured survey drawings and will be provided at the expense of the applicant.

1.4 Change of Use

The Council will not permit changes of use to buildings where the new use would adversely affect their character and appearance or that of the conservation area.

1.5 Shopfronts

The retention of shopfronts which form part of the original design of a building will always be encouraged. New shopfronts should be sensitively designed to respect the buildings which contain them in terms of proportion, material and detail. The guidelines set out in the City Council's Shopfronts Design Guide must be followed when designing new shopfronts for an existing building or where older shopfronts are restored and reused.



1.6 Signage

Signage must be designed to suit the proportions, design and materials of the host building and the immediate streetscape. Overscaled, unsympathetic and visually intrusive signage will not be allowed.

1.7 Repair and Maintenance

The Council will use its statutory powers to secure the preservation of threatened buildings in the conservation area. In the case of statutorily listed buildings these powers include Urgent Works and Repairs Notices and, as a last resort compulsory acquisition. The Council also has the power to secure the preservation of unlisted buildings where it is important for maintaining the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The Council will provide guidance on the repair and maintenance of traditional buildings in the conservation area.

1.8 New Uses for Vacant Buildings

The Council will actively encourage beneficial and creative new uses for vacant buildings, where these respect the character of the buildings and the conservation area.

Where buildings are unoccupied and await a long term use, appropriate temporary uses will be encouraged. Such uses should not require significant internal or external alterations, particularly where these would reduce the flexibility of the building in the future.

1.9 Burgage Plots

The surviving twelfth century burgage plots on Digbeth (136-144 Digbeth) should retain their separate identities as historic building plots.

2.1. The Design of New Development

The Council will expect all new development to achieve a satisfactory relationship with its surroundings, demonstrating a regard for the character of the immediate street scene and the wider conservation area. Permission for new development will only be granted where it preserves and enhances the character of the conservation area as a whole.

Existing buildings which are unsympathetic to the character of the conservation area will not be regarded as valid precedents for further uncharacteristic development.

The Council will require the design and access statement for all significant new development to be submitted in detail. It should include an analysis of the contribution which will be made by the proposed new building to the character of the immediate streetscape and the wider conservation area as defined in the conservation area appraisal.

2.2. Key Design Principles

a) All new buildings should follow the street frontage line at back of pavement. Dominant architectural elements or features which project beyond the building line will not be permitted.

b) New buildings should not generally appear to be significantly higher or lower than their neighbours and should reflect the building heights characteristic of the locality or character area. This will normally limit new buildings to a maximum of six industrial/commercial storeys. New development north and north east of Bordesley Viaduct should respect the height of the viaduct parapet. Where setback storeys are employed to reduce apparent height these must be in

proportion to the street frontage elevation and should be carefully designed to minimise bulk and mass.

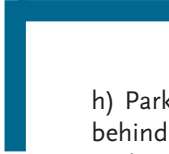
c) The roof forms and rooflines of new buildings must complement the roof forms and roof lines of the surrounding and/or adjoining buildings. Space for plant should be treated as integral to the design of any new building and must be included in all design statements. It should normally be provided at basement level. Where rooftop plant/service equipment is unavoidable it must be designed and sited to avoid any adverse visual impact.

d) The plan form and architectural treatment of new development should complement the historic and architectural character of the conservation area. In particular, principal elevations must always front the street.

e) New development should respect the proportion of solid to void found in the elevations of traditional buildings. Windows should be set within reveals of sufficient depth to add definition and interest to the façade.

f) Local identity should be reinforced through the use of materials traditionally employed in the area. All building materials should be of high quality.

g) Architectural detail of high quality and which contributes to scale, proportion and legibility will be encouraged. Indiscriminate, fussy and arbitrary use of applied features or detail will be resisted.



h) Parking or servicing areas should be concealed behind built frontages of appropriate scale. Car park or service entrances should be carefully designed to mitigate any adverse visual impact on the local street scene. Car park ventilation grilles on any street frontage will be resisted.

i) New buildings must preserve views and vistas characteristic of the conservation area and respect the setting of key historic landmarks. The creation of new landmarks will be discouraged.

j) New buildings should be accessible to all users, including people with disabilities. Where specialised access is required it must be treated as integral to the design and should be included in any design and access statement.

2.3. Vacant Sites

The redevelopment of vacant or gap sites within the conservation area is a priority. The Council will encourage early discussion of development proposals and provide guidance for significant sites.

2.4. Development in the Conservation Area Setting

New development in the setting of the conservation area should respect and preserve characteristic views within, from and into the area. The Council will not permit new buildings or additions to existing buildings beyond the conservation area boundary to intrude on or block key views or important sightlines.

Part B

3

The Public Realm

3.1. Groundscape

The existing groundscape within the conservation area provides an appropriate setting for its buildings and structures. Some street surfaces are in need of sympathetic repair or renewal and granite kerbstones should be restored where they have been replaced in concrete. Where historic materials such as granite kerbstones and granite setts survive great care should be taken to ensure that these are retained and accurately repaired.

If new paving schemes are proposed the design and materials should provide a simple, neutral and subordinate foreground which relates well to the surrounding buildings. On Digbeth, High Street Deritend and High Street Bordesley natural stone paving should be used. If this cannot be justified, large reconstituted stone slabs would provide an acceptable alternative. Elsewhere in the conservation area traditional blue brick paving is the most appropriate material. Drainage channels and vehicle crossovers should be marked with stone setts and kerbstones should be granite. Work should always be carried out to the highest standard.

3.2 Street Furniture

New street furniture, including street lighting columns should be simple and functional, reflecting the industrial character of the conservation area. Care should be taken to avoid spurious 'heritage'. Any additions must be justified and restricted to essential items. New features within the public realm should be carefully sited to avoid intrusion on views, vistas and the setting of buildings.

3.3 Clutter

A co-ordinated effort should be made to avoid street clutter through good design and careful siting. Where possible signs and equipment should be fixed to lighting columns, buildings or other existing structures. Larger items such as telephone kiosks and pay and display machines should be sited at the back of footway.

3.4 Planting

The hard urban character of the conservation area presents little opportunity for tree planting or soft landscaping. Street trees are not a traditional feature of the area and would not be considered an appropriate addition to the public realm.

3.5 Developers' Contributions

Where appropriate developers will be expected to contribute to the improvement of the public realm.

Opportunity Sites for New Development

Several key sites within the conservation area present opportunities for beneficial new development. Some of these have already been identified in other council documents including Digbeth Millennium Quarter: Planning and Urban Design for the Future (1996) and the Eastside Development Framework (2001). Reference should be made to these documents for further guidance relating to appropriate uses.

4.1 Site bounded by Digbeth, Meriden Street, Oxford Street and Coventry Street

The loss of virtually all development within this street block presents an opportunity to reinstate frontage development along all four streets. A hierarchy of scale should be established between the Digbeth frontage and the street frontages to the north. The creation of a lively street frontage is particularly important along Digbeth. The east and west corner treatments require particular consideration. An interesting skyline with an appropriately modelled roofscape should be achieved. Development should reflect the scale and grain of the traditional development to the east and west. The development on the northern Coventry Street frontage should be subordinate in scale to the listed premises on the corner of Oxford Street.

4.2 High Street Deritend – land to west of Custard Factory

This important corner site adjoins the former Devonshire Works (Custard Factory) and is bounded by the River Rea to the west. Careful consideration should be given to the prominent street corner at the junction with Floodgate Street. Development should be set against the east bank of the Rea in order to provide a strong edge to the channel.

4.3 Bordesley Street – land to east of Ladbroke House

Development on Bordesley Street should be attached to the exposed east flank of Ladbroke House. It is important that careful consideration is given to the handling of the principal (north) elevation. The treatment of the Oxford Street corner should reflect the splayed treatments found in existing development along Bordesley Street.

4.4 Bordesley Street – land to east of Oxford Street

This site has a long street frontage, defining the complete northern frontage of the street block. The opportunity exists to reinstate continuous frontage development of appropriate scale. The treatment of the Trent Street corner should reflect the splayed treatments found in existing development along Bordesley Street.

4.5 Bordesley Street – land on north-west corner of Milk Street

This corner site adjoins an existing brick engineering works. The site has equal street frontages which should act as an effective 'bookend' to the southern Bordesley Street frontage. The plot has greater prominence as a result of the open corner treatment of the block to the east. Accordingly it is essential that the development of this site achieves a robust termination to the southern street frontage. The corner treatment should reflect the splayed street corners found in existing development along Bordesley Street.



Appendices

Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley
High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area





Appendix: Associated Reading

App

Legislation and Guidance Notes

- ▶ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- ▶ Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- ▶ National Heritage Act 1983
- ▶ Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) *Planning and the Historic Environment* 1994
- ▶ Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) *Archaeology and Planning* 1990
- ▶ *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* English Heritage 2005
- ▶ *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* English Heritage 2005
- ▶ *Sustainability and the Historic Environment* English Heritage 1996
- ▶ *Streets for All West Midlands* English Heritage 2005

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

- ▶ *The Birmingham Plan Birmingham Unitary Development Plan* 2005 2005
- ▶ *Regeneration through Conservation Birmingham Conservation Strategy* 1999
- ▶ *Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings A guide for owners and occupiers* 2003
- ▶ *Archaeology Strategy* 2004
- ▶ *Digbeth Millennium Quarter Planning and Urban Design for the future* 1996
- ▶ *Eastside Development Framework* 2001

- ▶ *BUDS City Centre Design Strategy* 1990

- ▶ *Places for All* 2001

- ▶ *High Places* 2003

Background Reading

- ▶ Bunce J et al
History of the Corporation of Birmingham vols 1-6. 1878-1957
- ▶ Christiansen Rex
A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain vol.7 *The West Midlands* 3rd ed. 1991
- ▶ Cullen G
Townscape 1961
- ▶ Demidowicz George
Medieval Birmingham: the Borough Rentals of 1296 and 1344-5 Dugdale Society Occasional Paper Number 48 2008
- ▶ Foster Andy
Pevsner Architectural Guides Birmingham 2005

Archival Material

- ▶ Material held in Birmingham Central Library.

Additional Material

- ▶ Material held in Planning Management, Development Directorate, Birmingham City Council.

References quoted

- ▶ Leland John *Leland's Itinerary In England and Wales*. ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, 1964, vol.II, p.96.
- ▶ Camden William *Brittania: OR, A Chorographical Description of the Flourishing Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland adjacent from the earliest antiquity* by William Camden. trans. Richard Gough, 1806, vol.2 p.446.


Appendix: Listed Buildings

Statutorily Listed Buildings

STREET	NUMBER and/or NAME	GRADE	CROSS REFERENCE
Allison Street	78	II	Well Lane
Digbeth	123-135	II	
Digbeth	85	II	
Heath Mill Lane	St Basil's Centre	II	
High Street Deritend	173 and 174 (Former Church)	II	
High Street Deritend	186, 187, 188 (Old Crown Public House)	II*	
High Street Deritend	Devonshire House	II	
High Street Deritend	224 and 225	II	
Milk Street	Hall Green Technical College Annex	II	
Moor Street	Former Moor Street Railway Station and warehouses below	II	Allison Street Park Street
Oxford Street	58	II	

Locally Listed Buildings

STREET	NUMBER and/or NAME	GRADE	CROSS REFERENCE
Allison Street	Cast Iron Bollard	C	Well Lane
Allison Street	Former Ash and Lacey Works	B	Meriden Street
Bordesley Street	1-8	B	
Bordesley Street	8A-10	A	Allison Street
Bordesley Street	18, Former Pig Market	B	Allison Street
Bordesley Street	21, Spotted Dog Public House	B	Meriden Street
Bordesley Street	Ladbroke House	B	
Bordesley Viaduct	Bordesley Railway Viaduct	B	
Coventry Street	Former Digbeth Motors	B	Meriden Street
Coventry Street	38, Former Engine House and Stack	B	
Coventry Street	58, Billy's Public House	B	Milk Street
Coventry Street	Trinidad House	B	
Coventry Street	Old Wharf Public House	B	
Digbeth	78, 78A and 79 The Institute (Former Digbeth Civic Hall)	B	
Digbeth	80 and 81, The Kerryman Public House	B	
Digbeth	86 and 87, Gregory Pank	B	
Digbeth	109, Former Castle and Falcon Public House	B	Meriden Street
Digbeth	115, Police Station	A	Allison Street
Digbeth	136	A	
Digbeth	137	B	
Digbeth	138 and 139	B	
Fazeley Street	Former Unitarian Chapel	B	
Fazeley Street	Former Unitarian Sunday School	C	
Fazeley Street	River Rea	C	



STREET	NUMBER and/or NAME	GRADE	CROSS REFERENCE
Floodgate Street	Chimneystack, Former Devonshire Works	B	
Floodgate Street	Floodgate Tavern	B	Little Ann Street
Floodgate Street	Former WJ Wild no. 1 works	B	
Floodgate Street	Former WJ Wild no.2 works	B	
Floodgate Street	Former WJ Wild no.3 works	B	Moores Row, Milk Street
Floodgate Street	Former WJ Wild no.4 works	B	Little Ann Street, River Street
Floodgate Street	Former WJ Wild no. 6 works	B	
Floodgate Street	Former Medical Mission	B	River Street
Floodgate Street	48-52	C	Heath Mill Lane
Heath Mill Lane	2, Former Lloyd's Bank	A	
Heath Mill Lane	4 and 6, Former Deritend Free Library	A	
High Street Bordesley	123, Former District and Counties Bank	B	
High Street Bordesley	160, Rainbow Public House	B	
High Street Bordesley	164	B	
High Street Deritend	Highway Commemorative Plaque	C	
High Street Deritend	179 - 182	C	
Meriden Street	36 - 45	B	Allison Street
Meriden Street	Former King Edward's branch School, Former extension to Smithfield Garage	B	



Contact and Further Information

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Further Information

For further copies and guidance about conservation and listed buildings visit our website:

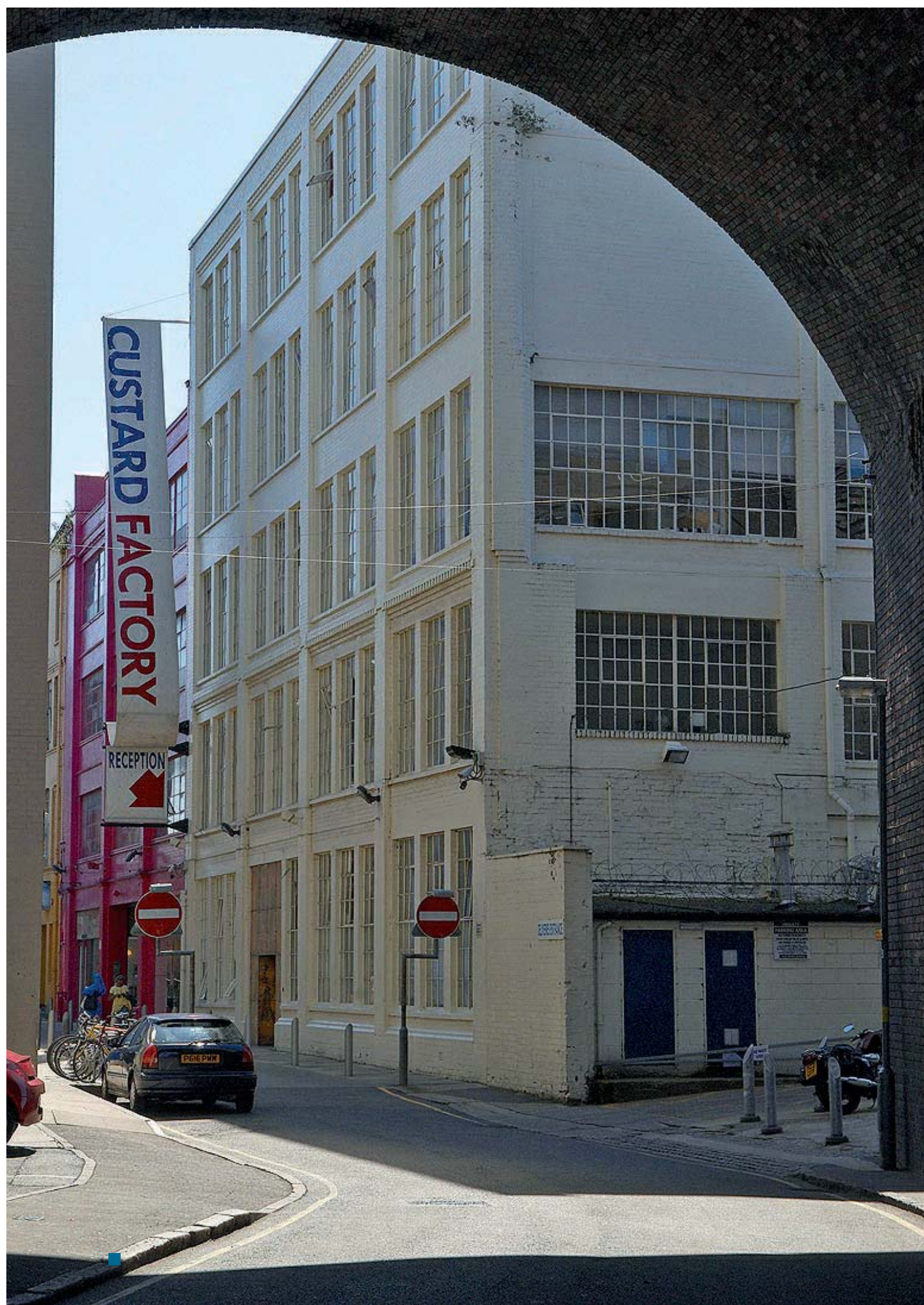
www.birmingham.gov.uk/conservation

Most Birmingham City Council publications can be made available in alternative formats or languages.

If you have difficulty reading this document please call us on (0121) 303 1115 to ask if a full or summary version can be made available in large print.

If you have hearing difficulties please call us via Typetalk 18001 0121 303 3030.

Or e-mail us at:
planning.conservation@birmingham.gov.uk



Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley
High Streets (Digbeth/Deritend)
Conservation Area

Character Appraisal
and
Supplementary Planning Policies

March 2009