

BROMSGROVE
TOWN
CONSERVATION
AREA
APPRAISAL

JUNE 2011



BROMSGROVE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONTENTS



1.0	Introduction
2.0	Planning Policy Context
3.0	Summary of Special Interest
4.0	Assessment of Special Interest Location and Setting Historic Development and Archaeology Key Views Prevailing and Former Uses Character Zones Architectural Character and Key Buildings Building Materials Public Realm Important Trees and Green Spaces General Condition of the Area Challenges and Opportunities
5.0	Proposed Boundary Changes
6.0	Management Proposals
7.0	Public Consultation

Appendices

Appendix 1	List of Properties in the Conservation Area
Appendix 2	List of Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area
Appendix 3	Management and Enhancement Proposals
Appendix 4	Relevant Local Plan Policies
Appendix 5	Glossary

List of Maps

Map 1	Proposed Revised Boundary of the Conservation Area
Map 2	Positive, neutral and negative buildings

Comments are welcome and should be sent to the Strategic Planning Team, Bromsgrove District Council, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA. Email conservation@bromsgrove.gov.uk or telephone 01527 881326

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is to identify the factors and features which make an area special, based on an in-depth assessment of an area's buildings, spaces, evolution and sense of place. This is the first step in developing a management plan for the continued preservation and enhancement of a Conservation Area. An appraisal evaluates the positive, neutral and negative features of the area and suggests opportunities for improvement. It is not unusual for the boundary of a Conservation Area to fluctuate over time as the area evolves, and an assessment of the current and potential boundaries is normally part of the appraisal process.
- 1.2 The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area was originally designated by Worcestershire County Council in 1968 containing "Area A High Street" and "Area B St John's". The boundary was extended in 1983 and again in 1989 to include the Spadesbourne Brook, the Strand, Crown Close, 9-15 New Road, 64-78 Worcester Road and Hanover Street. At some point the use of Areas A and B ceased and the area is formally designated as one complete Conservation Area.
- 1.3 This appraisal of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area was carried out in July 2009 in accordance with the guidance given by English Heritage in their 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' publication. Although produced by the Council, local societies and residents will be encouraged to contribute to and comment on the draft document. This will result in a well rounded assessment of the area incorporating local knowledge, perceptions and suggestions.
- 1.4 The draft appraisal was made available on the Council's website, at the Customer Service centre in the Dolphin Centre and the Council House to ensure that it reaches a wide audience. There was also an exhibition in the High Street to explain the purpose of the document and collect local comments.
- 1.5 Map 2 identifies positive, neutral and negative buildings within the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area - this is not an exclusive list and omission of any particular building should not be taken as an indication that it has no value. Positive buildings make a notable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and are usually good examples of historic buildings with only minor alterations or additions. Neutral buildings make a limited contribution and are generally the much altered historic buildings, but may provide opportunities for enhancement. Neutral buildings are those properties which detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, where replacement with a new building would be encouraged, subject to compliance with other planning policies.





Aerial view of Bromsgrove Town Centre

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2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 A Conservation Area is defined in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is not the purpose of a Conservation Area to prevent development, but to manage change in a positive and proactive way that benefits current and future generations.
- 2.2 Conservation Area status means that a special form of Planning Permission called Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building over 115m³ in size, the demolition of a boundary wall over 1m in height next to the highway or 2m elsewhere and the removal of any agricultural building constructed before 1914. There is a general presumption against the loss of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Additional controls are also placed over trees within the area, meaning that an owner must submit a formal notification of works to the Council six weeks before starting work.

2.3 The primary legislation governing Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This legislation includes certain statutory duties which the Council as Local Planning Authority must uphold. S69(1) of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas, and under s69(2) to review such designations from time to time. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas from time to time.

2.4 When assessing applications for development within designated Conservation Areas, the Local Planning Authority must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Areas under s72(1) of the Act. This does not mean that development will necessarily be opposed, only that this should not be detrimental to the special interest of the wider Conservation Area. Specific guidance relating to development within Conservation Areas can be found within PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment.

2.5 The Bromsgrove District Local Plan adopted in 2004 contains a series of specific policies relating to the historic environment (see Appendix 4). These policies help guide the Local Planning Authority when assessing planning applications, to ensure that new developments and alterations preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The Council is also in the process of producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the town centre which will set out the Council objectives for housing, employment, transport, retail etc over the next 15-20 years. This Conservation Area Character Appraisal will form a key part of the evidence supporting the AAP.





3.0 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

3.1 The special interest of a Conservation Area is defined by more than its appearance and includes the atmosphere, texture, sense of place and setting as well as more obvious qualities such as groups of historic buildings. Notable buildings and the spaces between buildings set an overall context for an area, but a designated Conservation Area should be more than just a collection of attractive buildings.



3.2 The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area contains an assortment of notable historic buildings dating from predominantly the 18th and 19th centuries but with some earlier surviving timber framed buildings. A range of architectural styles is represented from English vernacular, to restrained Georgian and more elaborate Victorian Gothic buildings. This variety of elevational treatments and styles demonstrate high quality construction and craftsmanship, giving a rich texture to the town centre, and are tangible reminders of the town's past prosperity.



3.3 The narrowness of the historic building plots, varied rooflines and the overall height of the buildings give an overall impression of vertical emphasis, and a strong sense of enclosure. The more modern developments unfortunately detract from this being generally set back from the established building line, sometimes a storey lower and include detailing which gives a horizontal rather than vertical emphasis. These infill sites do at least give opportunities for redevelopment in the future without requiring the loss of more historic buildings.

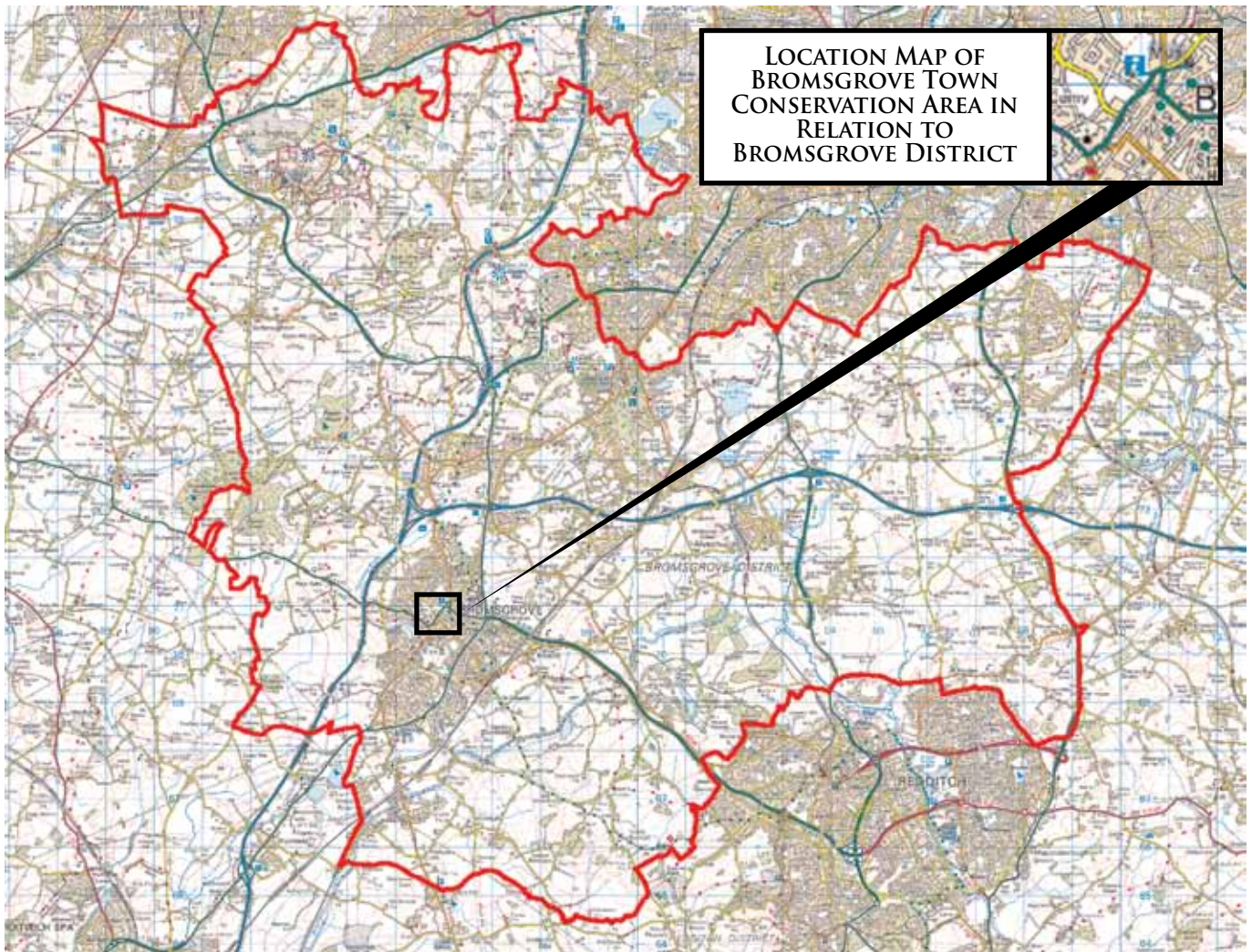


4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

4.1 Location and Setting

The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area is located in the centre of the town, which itself lies in the South West of the District of Bromsgrove, approximately 15 miles South West of Birmingham and 15 miles North East of Worcester. The High Street follows the medieval plan comprising the main South-West/North-East route between Worcester and Birmingham. The Spadesbourne Brook defines the boundary to the West (although the more recently realigned Market Street is now the more obvious boundary) and the predominately 20th Century Windsor Street is the boundary to the East.

The medieval street pattern, including burgage plots and the Market Place (where the High Street is noticeably wider) are still visible, and define the later phases of expansion in the town centre.



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4.2 Historic Development and Archaeology

The main axis of the town is the Roman Road between Droitwich and Wall, and Bromsgrove was probably the site of an Anglo Saxon Minster. A 'reeve' (an official elected annually by the serfs to supervise lands for a lord) and a 'beadle' (a parish constable of the Anglican Church often charged with duties of charity) are recorded as being employed in 1086 which indicates that Bromsgrove was an important Royal manor. The town of Bromsgrove developed in the second half of the 12th Century, with the right to have a weekly market being granted in 1200. The town would seem to have been very prosperous at this time, however this prosperity diminished shortly afterwards.



In 1533 records show that Bromsgrove had an established trade in narrow cloth and friezes, which thrived into the 18th century. From the 17th century the manufacture of nails became the predominant industry. Bromsgrove continued to flourish in the 19th century, with nail production and button making being the main industries. The Birmingham and Gloucester Railway Company's line from Cheltenham to Gloucester opened in 1840, and later that year the completion of the Lickey Incline Plane allowed the town to be connected to Birmingham by rail.



Historic maps taken from Council archives

The High Street and immediate vicinity clearly exhibit a number of medieval elements. The churchyard lies immediately to the West of the town on an area of raised ground overlooking the main road. This area may have been the site of an earlier Anglo Saxon Church, but the earliest remnants in the existing Church date from the 12th century. The street system in and around the High Street is very clearly medieval, consisting of the main South West/North East route between Worcester and Birmingham which is the High Street itself. From this road two roads go off to the West (Kidderminster Road and Stourbridge Road) and one to the East (Stratford Road). These roads are probably of medieval date along with Hanover Street and St John Street, which lead to the Church. The 1839 tithe map shows many small lanes leading from the High Street to the backs of burgage plots, many of which are medieval in origin, with narrow frontages to the High Street.

The weekly market, originally granted in 1200, was likely to have been held in the wider part of the High Street, a common feature of medieval high streets. The street market was re-established in 2008, located along the High Street with occasional specialist farmers' and continental markets.

4.3 Key Views

The elongated pattern of development within the town centre means that it is not possible to view the Conservation Area in its entirety from any one point. Key views can be identified however within each character zone, and from outside the Conservation Area boundary through to the main retail areas (see Map 2). Views of the Grade I listed St John's Church are also possible from gaps between the buildings on Worcester Road and from the Market Place. Unfortunately, the poorly landscaped area on Mill Lane detracts from views through to the Spadesbourne Brook. The view from High Street to Market Place has been spoilt by the loss of the old Town Hall in the 1930s and its replacement with a bulky modern office building.

4.4 Prevailing and Former Uses

The original medieval burgage plots resulted in a number of narrow units, with significant ancillary accommodation to the rear, some now in unconnected uses. The rear workshops were originally part of the nailmaking industry in Bromsgrove. The upper floors of some buildings (particularly at the Southern end of the High Street) are relatively grand indicating that they were originally constructed as houses for wealthy merchants. Unfortunately many of the ground floors have been altered extensively and often unsympathetically to accommodate modern retail uses.

The buildings within the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area are now predominately in retail use with a mixture of A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses - traditional retail, financial institutions and some pubs and cafes. Some upper floors are in ancillary use, office space and storage; many others are vacant which has led to some condition and maintenance problems. Worcester Road is very much a secondary street to the High Street, with smaller local retail units.



4.5 Character Zones

Although the area has an overall character as a complete Conservation Area, five main character zones can be identified.

Zone 1 is centred on The Strand, which is physically separated from the rest of the Conservation Area by the busy junction at Stratford Road. Zone 2 contains the primary shopping area along the High Street. Zone 3 stretches along Worcester Road from the junction with Market Place and has a tighter building line with narrower building plots than along High Street. (Zones 2 and 3 do blur together on the Eastern side of the High Street). Zone 4 is centred in and around St. John's Church and it is suggested that this should be re-designated as a separate Conservation Area. Finally Zone 5 is the two small areas to the East of Windsor Street on Chapel Street and New Road.

Some examples of key buildings are identified in the assessment of each character zone and also in Map 2 attached as an appendix. It should be made clear that this is not a definitive list and as trends in conservation change some buildings which are now identified as having a neutral or negative impact could be more valued in the future. The identification of specific buildings in this document will not prejudice the determination of an application for Conservation Area Consent or redevelopment by the Local Planning Authority.

4.6 Architectural Character and Key Buildings

Zone 1: The Strand Architectural Character

This character zone terminates the Conservation Area boundary and is notable in views through and into the wider Conservation Area, contributing to its setting. The buildings around The Strand are almost all historic and date from the 18th and 19th centuries with various later additions and alterations. The varied roofline and use of dormer windows adds interest to this group of notable historic buildings, many of which retain their original timber sliding sash windows.



Unfortunately the road layout has undermined this group value significantly although the retention of the island containing the Grade II listed building, adds some coherence and connection between the two sides of the Strand. The small public space created in front of 2 Stourbridge Road with the reinstated 'Sanders Horse Trough' is underused because of the lack of pedestrian links and unattractive position in the centre of a busy road. Overall this section of the Conservation Area is unfriendly to pedestrians. Improvements to the pavement widths, parking layout, road markings and surface materials would soften the appearance and enhance the setting of the surrounding historic buildings.

Proliferation of signage is also a problem in this part of the Conservation Area, particularly on the corner of Stratford Road, and a balance needs to be sought to adequately advertise retail businesses on the edge of the town centre with preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Zone 1: The Strand

Key Buildings

The Queens Head PH is Grade II listed and dates from the early 19th century with a later extension to left hand side. The central stone doorcase with pediment and carved woman's head are interesting features at ground floor level with recessed 16 pane sliding sashes above with rather heavy rusticated lintels. The row of buildings next to the Queens Head (beyond the 1970s pastiche infills) at No. 25-27 The Strand are also Grade II listed, and were once timber framed but have been now re-fronted in red brick. Remnants of the timber frame have been found at the former Mitre Inn, a 19th century cider house which has now been converted to offices.

2 Stourbridge Road, in an island in the centre of the Strand, is now the offices of Thomas Horton but was originally built in 1701 as a gentleman's residence known as Cock Hall. In 1723 the building became the town's first workhouse and then a tannery - possibly the reason why this part of the town was once known as Rotten Row. The horse trough in front of the building was recently reinstated to its original position, after several years in Sanders Park.





On the other side of The Strand is a range of listed and unlisted historic buildings dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, unfortunately let down by the blank frontage to No's 22-24 and poor quality signage to the retail units. The Grade II listed building at No's 6 to 12 The Strand dates from the 18th century with added Victorian dormers and surviving timber sliding sash windows. The adjacent building at No's 2 to 4 The Strand (now the Strand Centre) is a 20th century mock classical building, which wraps around the corner into Stratford Road terminating views out of the High Street.



Further past The Strand facing onto Birmingham Road is the former Town Museum and the Grade II listed building at No. 28 which is now a dentist's surgery. The Museum closed in 2009 and a new use for the building has yet to be found. This area was looked at for removal from the Conservation Area boundary, but discounted as there is still a historic connection with The Strand.

Zone 2: High Street Architectural Character

Many of the High Street buildings are of extremely good architectural quality with a high number of statutorily listed buildings and an equally significant number of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Although this quality is rarely evident at ground floor level, it is still evident when looking at the upper floors.



Several historic styles and periods are represented in this part of the Conservation Area. The oldest buildings date from the 17th Century and are timber framed, some of which have been re-fronted at a later date - but evidence of the earlier structure remains internally or to the rear. There are numerous good examples of later periods of architecture such as Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian. There are also a significant number of vernacular buildings characterised by being two or three stories high, the upper storey comprising an attic space with a dormer window.

From the rear of the High Street evidence of the original burgage plots can be seen in various places. Backland redevelopment has destroyed many of these plots, and where there has been significant redevelopment on the High Street several plots have been completely lost. The modern buildings present generally do not make a positive contribution to the High Street. On the East side the building line has been set back, probably to achieve a road widening scheme prior to the pedestrianisation of the High Street. No's 62 to 68 High Street is a typical 1950's scheme that can be described as having a neutral impact on the High Street. Other poor modern developments have been added around Mill Lane and at the North East end of the High Street.

Apart from the disruption noted above, the building line is generally consistent along the High Street, widening out at the St John's Street/Market Place end. Buildings are also of a generally consistent height being largely 3 storeys but there are several examples of ground floors with a first floor and attic, with a dormer window. There are rare examples of older two storey buildings as most of the two storey buildings are modern.

Zone 2: High Street

Key Buildings

The High Street character zone contains a high number of notable listed and unlisted historic buildings. 126-130 High Street (Grade II listed) was built in 1851 in blue brick with pale buff diaper pattern brickwork, tiled roof and stone mullioned windows. The timber bargeboards have both trefoil and quatrefoils patterns, and add significant interest to the upper level of the building. 120 High Street (Grade II listed) is an 18th century building in the Georgian style with a low pitched pediment, moulded cornice and camber headed dormers. The ground floor has unfortunately been compromised by the addition of a modern shopfront which is not in keeping with the character of the building

The Lloyds TSB Bank at 112 High Street (Grade II listed) dates from the early 19th century and is in a Regency style with classical stone portico and Doric columns. This building forms a key group with No's 104-112 High Street including the timber framed 16th century building at No's 108-110 High Street. This was constructed in 1533 and is the oldest building in the Conservation Area, although it has some later 19th century alterations including the shopfronts. This building was once the Unicorn Inn and the horn details can still be seen on the gables now adorned by Victorian bargeboards



Opposite the bank is a fine collection of 18th and 19th century buildings which have significant group value as well as being individually Grade II listed. The Red Lion PH at No.77 includes what was once the Roper Nail Warehouse to the rear, which originally formed part of a historic courtyard bordered by nail workers' cottages.



The timber framed former Hop Pole Inn on New Road (Grade II listed) now known as Tudor House, was originally built in the High Street in 1572 but was later dismantled and relocated to this site in 1865. The upper floors retain the original framing with central jettied gable and carved bargeboards, but various features were added upon its reconstruction including the Gothic style porch and the chimneys.



The Golden Cross, 20 High Street (unlisted) was originally a 19th century coaching inn, but was substantially rebuilt in 1932. The brass menu holders on the front elevation were designed by the Bromsgrove Guild.

10 High Street was once the Market Post Office and retains a historic shopfront behind the modern signage, which was designed by John Cotton.

1 High Street (Grade II listed) dates from the early 17th century, as evident in its fine timber framing with fleur-de-lis motifs, but has been altered throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The shopfront is particularly unsympathetic and the building's new position adjacent to a major road junction has seriously compromised its setting.



Zone 3: Worcester Road Architectural Character

Worcester Road is a continuation of the High Street running South West, after Market Place/St John Street. The West side of Worcester Road is predominately Victorian with mainly three storey buildings of brick construction beneath pitched tiled roofs. There are some simple decorative details to the windows, including some projecting first floor bay windows. Ground floors are predominantly retail including takeaway restaurants, whilst the upper floors are mostly used for storage or vacant.



The poor quality 1950's building on the corner of Worcester Road and St John's Street is highly visible given the prominent location where the High Street is at its widest, and where it turns the corner into St John's Street. To the East side of Worcester Road is a mix of older listed buildings, unlisted Victorian buildings (similar to those on the West side) the 'Lurve' nightclub and a Hyundai Garage. Overall the feel of Worcester Road is very much of a secondary/tertiary commercial street, but with the potential to be improved. There are various important views here through to the former Market Hall site and St John's Church beyond.



It is proposed that No's 57-63 and 85-87 Worcester Road (odd) including Bromsgrove School, No's 62-78 Worcester Road (even), No's 1-3 Hanover Street and No's 1-12 Hanover Place be omitted from the Conservation Area boundary. Apart from a few listed buildings, the rest of the properties at this far end of the Conservation Area are of limited architectural quality having been extensively altered and make no contribution to the special interest of the wider area. This part of the Conservation Area has also been severed visually by the addition of the main road junction at Hanover Place, providing an obvious end stop to a revised Conservation Area boundary.



Zone 3: Worcester Road

Key Buildings

There are only a few listed buildings in this part of the Conservation Area, interspersed with attractive unlisted historic buildings and some more neutral additions.

No.7 Worcester Road is Grade II* listed and forms a notable group with 3 and 5 Worcester Road which are Grade II listed. No.7 is now known as Kembrey House and converted to offices. The building dates from the late 18th century and has interesting curved windowheads with fluted keystones and a pedimented doorpiece with Doric columns to the ground floor.



The group of unlisted buildings at No's 4 to 16 Worcester Road are mostly three storeys with a variety of architectural detailing at upper levels. Unfortunately the character of some of these buildings has been undermined by the poor quality shopfronts below, but they do retain sufficient architectural interest above ground floor to be worthy of retention.





No's 33, 35 and 37 Worcester Road are Grade II listed and date from the 18th century. The fine timber shopfronts date from the early 20th century and add interest to the wider streetscene. No's 33 and 35 was converted in 2010 into one restaurant unit, preserving the external appearance of two individual units whilst bringing the building back into economic use.

The larger terrace of unlisted buildings towards the end of the Conservation Area have been harmed by the introduction of PVC windows to the upper floors and a series of inappropriate modern shopfronts and poor quality signage. There are a few surviving timber bay windows but these properties make a limited contribution to the character or appearance of the wider Conservation Area



Zone 4: St. John's

The area around St. John's Church has a distinct character from the rest of the town centre as well as being physically divorced from it by a busy road. It is therefore proposed that this character zone be re-designated as an independent Conservation Area, with its own separate appraisal document.



Zone 5: New Road/Chapel Street

The two small areas around New Road and Chapel Street were considered for removal from the Conservation Area boundary but discounted as they do contain some interesting historic buildings. The area beyond Tudor House on New Road includes two detached Victorian villas which retain their original sliding sash windows. These properties could potentially be at risk of demolition if the conservation area protection was removed. On Chapel Street can be found two Grade II listed buildings - the Congregational Chapel and associated Sunday School plus an unlisted 19th century terrace unfortunately undermined by the addition of PVC windows. The Congregational Chapel dates from 1833 and is in the Greek Revival style with a stuccoed façade and large arched windows. The former Sunday School (now the United Reform Church Hall) was built in 1852 and is a single storey, red brick building with blue brick dressings and tall arched windows similar in style to the church windows. No 15 Chapel Street retains plasterwork designed by the Bromsgrove Guild on the ground floor.

4.7 Building Materials

The predominant building materials within the Conservation Area are red brick and clay tiles with a number of notable timber framed buildings – some with wattle and daub, some with brick infill panels. There are also a number of buildings to the rear of the High Street constructed in sandstone and a few painted brick buildings.

A large number of buildings have decorative detailing in stone including keystones, quoins and window detailing, notably on the high status buildings at the Market Place end of the High Street, but even the later Victorian buildings have stone cills and lintels to break up their elevations. There are some examples of decorative brickwork, notably the Slug and Lettuce PH which is constructed in blue brick with light brick polychromatic detailing (unusual for the area). The Lloyds Bank in the High Street makes use of sandstone but only in detailing, it is predominately red brick.

Window frames are generally timber. Some buildings have frames that are flush with the external brickwork, typical in early Georgian architecture. There are also examples of vernacular buildings with dormer windows in the attic space, as at 89 to 93 High Street.

Roofs are almost without exception covered in clay tiles and are steeply pitched; some of the Georgian buildings have parapets, whilst the more modern buildings are flat roofed.



4.8 Public Realm



The existing poor quality public realm affects both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and detracts from its historic setting. At present there is a mix of brick paviors and concrete paving slabs throughout the Conservation Area and some oddly random strips of buff concrete paving. There is no obvious pattern or delineation between 'pavement' and 'road space', and a lack of maintenance has resulted in a rather shabby appearance. Vehicles still use the High Street for deliveries which has resulted in a proliferation of protective barriers and bollards, to the detriment of the wider streetscene.



The existing street furniture appears to be randomly located, with street signage, bins, seating and trees obscuring some of the possible views through the Conservation Area. Most of this was installed in 1995 and has been poorly maintained adding to the run down appearance of what should be an attractive retail area.

At intermittent intervals, particularly on the West side of the High Street, are alleyways of varying width leading to the rear of the buildings. This is a remnant of the historic burgage plots and courts to the rear of buildings once used as workshops etc. Some small areas of cobbles survive here and should be preserved as part of any future resurfacing project.



In general the public spaces within the Conservation Area have a tired feel that detracts from the appearance of the historic buildings. Changes to the basic surface material, the legibility and hierarchy of spaces, working with pedestrian desire lines rather than thwarting them as part of a wider 'wayfinding' strategy and removing traffic from the High Street would greatly enhance the Conservation Area.

4.9 Important Trees and Green Spaces

The Conservation Area only has one significant green space around the Bus Station area and the adjacent section running along Crown Close/Market Street to the Market Place junction. Whilst this area is of considerable amenity value relative to the built environment of the rest of the town centre, the effect is reduced considerably at times due to the close proximity of the busy traffic running along Market Street and the considerable noise and dust that results.

The Spadesbourne Brook runs along the whole length of the Conservation Area from the rear of properties on The Strand down to Hanover Street in the South-East. The larger part of the brook course has been heavily canalised and culverted with several sections disappearing completely. Despite this, the brook still retains considerable value for biodiversity and provides an essential wildlife corridor through the town centre for a number of species including Brown Trout and Water Voles, both of which have been recorded where the course passes through the Bus Station site.

Only about 10% of the channel within the Conservation Area is naturalized and of both wildlife and amenity value. 30% of the course is hidden within closed culverts beneath roads & buildings and 60% in steep sided canal sections providing little opportunity for wildlife habitat other than that 'passing through'. Within this, the naturalized area at the Bus Station site provides an important 'stepping stone' for wildlife using the corridor but this 1km section still forms fairly hostile territory for most species. Naturalization of additional sections of the brook course would greatly improve this situation and increase the biodiversity value both locally and for wildlife habitats further up and down the brook. In particular, aiding and allowing Water Vole colonies to intermix can be a vital factor in their survival.





Three other areas within the Conservation Area boundary are notable for their amenity value as a result of their possession of both some tree cover together with seating areas. These are the area adjacent to Strand House and Cupitts Jewellers, a small area on the corner of Market Place and Market Street, and the High Street itself. At the two sites at The Strand and the Market Place, the presence of large mature trees provides a contrast with the built environment and a shading and cooling effect on hot summer days. The trees also contribute significantly to improved local air quality. The amenity of all three sites suffers considerably however, from traffic noise & dust as a result of their close proximity to major roads through the town centre.



Along the High Street itself, a number of trees have been planted over the last 30 years as part of past improvements. Although nearly 50% of those trees originally planted have been lost and not replaced, those that remain contribute to the amenity of the area by providing shading and improved air quality in summer, a medium for Christmas lights in winter, and visual amenity all year round. The current trees do cause a few problems, however, such as the obscuring of site lines for both amenity value and CCTV purposes, maintenance and issues of encroachment close to nearby buildings, and the effects of roots on paving and surfacing. For the most part, these problems are the consequence of poor planning, design and tree species selection in previous years which has resulted in incompatible positioning of trees, CCTV cameras and other street furniture. Unsuitable positioning and surfacing around trees has directly led to trees damaging paving and also tree loss. All of these problems can be reduced or avoided by correct selection, siting & design of new replacement trees.

4.10 General Condition of the Area and Buildings

There are 2 buildings in the Conservation Area which could be classified as 'at risk', 22-24 High Street and 73-75 High Street and generally the condition of the historic buildings in the area can be described as fair to good. The main condition issues arise from the disuse of upper floors leading to deterioration of windows, rainwater goods and roof materials.

The condition of the area as a whole as previously discussed is let down by the poor quality and ill maintained public realm.



4.11 Challenges and Opportunities

The main challenge facing the Conservation Area is the continuing deterioration of the public realm, which has had a consequential impact on the retail offer within the Town Centre. Local users and visitors expect an attractive wandering space coupled with a varied high quality retail mix - neither of which Bromsgrove is currently providing. The negative perceptions of the town centre as a run down, unattractive place to visit must be addressed if Bromsgrove is to compete with surrounding market towns in the future.



The groundscape requires to be completely reconsidered and a homogeneous scheme conceived. As part of this the street furniture should also be rethought, removing excessive visual clutter, and grouping bins, seating, telephone booths etc in a more considered way. As a minimum the removal of some of the redundant poles for CCTV and unnecessary signage to reduce street clutter should be undertaken - this would require minimal expenditure. A more comprehensive public realm improvement programme would be required to have a more dramatic impact on the atmosphere of the town centre, possibly funded through a Townscape Heritage Initiative.





The challenge of improving the quality of the shopfronts and signage should be addressed in conjunction with improvements to the public realm. This would require a tighter adherence to the Council's adopted guidance on shopfronts - raising the bar on the quality of works expected. The designation of an area of special advertisement control should also be explored to limit permitted rights for signage in certain parts of the Conservation Area. Most of the modern shopfronts bear little relationship to the historic buildings above, and a lack of consistency in style, proportions of signage, materials and colour schemes is evident. Few historic shopfronts survive and the possibility of offering grants for their repair should also be explored.



The number of infill modern developments in the town provides an opportunity for redevelopment without sacrificing any surviving important historic buildings. For example, the 1970s retail development around Mill Lane, the block on the East side of the High Street at the junction with Stratford Road, and 80-102 High Street which are all of a poor architectural quality. The redevelopment of the Market Hall site, although outside the Conservation Area, could set the tone for high quality contemporary design which complements the wider historic context of Bromsgrove.

5.0 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY



The revised boundary for the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area removes the area west of Worcester Road beyond Hanover Street as this area has a limited relationship with the rest of the town centre and all the valuable historic buildings are already listed. The St. Johns area was also redesignated as an individual conservation area on 1st June 2011, in recognition of its unique and distinctive character and physical severance from the rest of the town centre.

Map 1 showing the areas removed from the boundary of the Conservation Area is included as an appendix to this report.

6.0 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Appendix 3 includes a draft management plan for the area. This is not an absolute list but outlines the main issues which need to be addressed and possible tasks and timescales. It should be made clear that the Council cannot give a definite commitment to undertake these tasks, which will ultimately depend on future financial and staff resources.

The main management issues which need to be addressed are:

- Quality of the public realm
- Quality of shopfronts and signage
- Effective maintenance of historic buildings
- The increasing number of vacant retail units
- Vacant upper floors of historic buildings
- Advertising of the street market
- Marketing of the town's heritage
- Environmental improvements to Spadesbourne Brook

It is anticipated that the Council would explore partnership funding schemes with Worcestershire County Council, English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund to pursue some of these issues and challenges in a coordinated way.

7.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Before final publication this document was subject to a six week public consultation period to gather views on the assessment of the area, the proposed boundary changes and the draft management plan.





APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

List of properties within the revised Conservation Area Boundary

Davenal House Surgery, 28 Birmingham Road
Former Bromsgrove Museum, Birmingham Road
St. James Court, The Strand
1-27 The Strand (odds)
2-26 The Strand (evens)
Strand House, 2 Stourbridge Road
18-22 Market Street (evens)
1-135 High Street (odds)
2-140 High Street (evens)
2-12 Mill Lane
1-9 Chapel Street
1-15 Church Street (odds)
4-12 Church Street (evens)
1,2,4,5,6 New Road
Cleggs Entry (to rear of 15 High Street)
2-6 Market Place
1 George Street
1-55 Worcester Road (odds)
2-60 Worcester Road (evens)

APPENDIX 2

Listed buildings within the revised Conservation Area Boundary

1 High Street (Grade II)
2 & 4 High Street (Grade II)
7 & 9 High Street (Grade II)
14 & 16 High Street (Grade II)
18 High Street (Grade II)
22 & 24 High Street (Grade II)
25 & 27 High Street (Grade II)
29 & 31 High Street (Grade II)
33 & 35 High Street (Grade II)
46 High Street (Grade II)
47 High Street (Grade II)
48 & 50 High Street (Grade II)
49 High Street (Grade II)
52 High Street (Grade II)
67 High Street (Grade II)
69 & 71 High Street (Grade II)
Red Lion PH, 73 & 75 High Street (Grade II)
85 High Street (Grade II)
87a High Street (Grade II)
89 High Street (Grade II)
89a High Street (Grade II)
91 & 93 High Street (Grade II)
95 High Street (Grade II)
104, 104a & 106 High Street (Grade II)
108 & 110 High Street (Grade II)
112 High Street (Grade II)
120 High Street (Grade II)
126-130 High Street (Grade II)
1 & 3 New Road (Grade II)
The Queens Head PH, 1 The Strand (Grade II)
6 to 12 The Strand (Grade II) officially listed as
146-148 High Street
21 & 23 The Strand (Grade II) officially listed as
141 & 143 High Street
25 & 27 The Strand (Grade II) officially listed as
145 & 145a High Street
Strand House, 2 Stourbridge Road (Grade II)
3 Worcester Road (Grade II)
5 Worcester Road (Grade II)
7 Worcester Road (Grade II*)
33, 35 & 37 Worcester Road (Grade II)

APPENDIX 3

Management and Enhancement Proposals

Priority	Task	Timescale
Public Realm Improvements	Better maintenance of existing street furniture	Ongoing
	Remove any redundant lighting/CCTV poles and signage	By Summer 2011
	Develop a wayfinding or signage strategy to better address pedestrian needs and improve links to the train and bus stations	By end of 2011
Shopfront Improvements	Manage Frontage Improvement Scheme in High Street	To be completed by April 2012
	Investigate designation of area of special advertisement control	By Summer 2011
	Explore possibility of a local development order to allow easier changes of use	By Summer 2011
	Investigate any unauthorised shopfronts and signage, and take enforcement action where appropriate	Ongoing
Improve condition of historic buildings	Identify Buildings at Risk and develop a strategy for their repair	Identify buildings by April 2011 and prepare strategy by end of April 2012
Improve retail offer	Work with owners of vacant retail units to find new tenants	Ongoing
	Develop joint working with the Strategic Housing team to make use of the vacant upper floors such as 'Living Above the Shop'	Ongoing
Improve marketing of Bromsgrove's heritage	Find new home for Tourist Information Centre	To be investigated as part of the Town Centre AAP production
	Improve interpretation panels and reproduce town trail leaflets	Investigate by Summer 2011 to introduce in next 12 months
	Take part in Heritage Open Days Foster better links with the Bromsgrove and Victorian Societies	Annual event in September Ongoing
Environmental Improvements to Spadesbourne Brook	Arrange volunteer clean up day - possibly linked with Youth Offending Service	By Summer 2011

APPENDIX 4

Bromsgrove District Local Plan - adopted January 2004

S20	Main Shopping Location
S23	Shopfront Enhancement
S24	Retention of Traditional Shopfronts
S24A	Original Features on Shopfronts
S25	New Shopfronts
S26	Shopfront Fascias
S27	Standards of Fascia Design
S27A	Projecting Signs
S27B	Design and Materials within Conservation Areas
S35A	Development in Conservation Areas
S36	Design of development within Conservation Areas
S37	Demolition in Conservation Areas
S39	Alterations to Listed Buildings
S39a	Demolition of Listed Buildings
S41	Listed Buildings in Shopping Areas
S42	Shopfronts in Conservation Areas
S43	Traffic Calming Schemes
S44	Reinstatement of Features in Conservation Areas
S45	Improvements to Conservation Areas
S46	Areas of Special Advertisement Control
S47	Advertisement Control
C17	Retention of existing trees
C19	Tree Preservation Orders
C36	Preservation of Archaeological Resources
C37	Excavation around Archaeological Remains
C38	Development Criteria for Archaeological Sites
C39	Site access for Archaeologists
E4	Extension to existing Commercial Uses
E9	Criteria for New Employment Development
E10	Retail or Recreational Uses on Employment Land
RAT4	Retention of Open Space
RAT33	Visitor Facilities
ES2	Restrictions on Development where Risk of Flooding
ES11	Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Bromsgrove Draft Core Strategy 2 - published January 2011

CP15	Town Centre Regeneration
CP16	Managing the Historic Environment
CP17	Natural Environment

Bromsgrove Town Centre Draft Area Action Plan - published January 2011

TC5	Urban Design and Conservation
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Appendix 4 continued

Worcestershire County Structure Plan

- CTC.5 Trees and Woodlands
- CTC.6 Green Open Spaces and Corridors
- CTC.8 Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage
- CTC.17 Archaeological Sites of Regional or Local Importance
- CTC.18 Enhancement and Management of Archaeological Sites
- CTC.19 Areas and Features of Historic and Architectural Significance
- CTC.20 Conservation Areas
- CTC.21 Reuse and Conversion of Buildings
- D13 Mixed Use Developments
- D26 Office Development
- D31 Retail Hierarchy
- D43 Crime Prevention and Community Safety

APPENDIX 5

Glossary

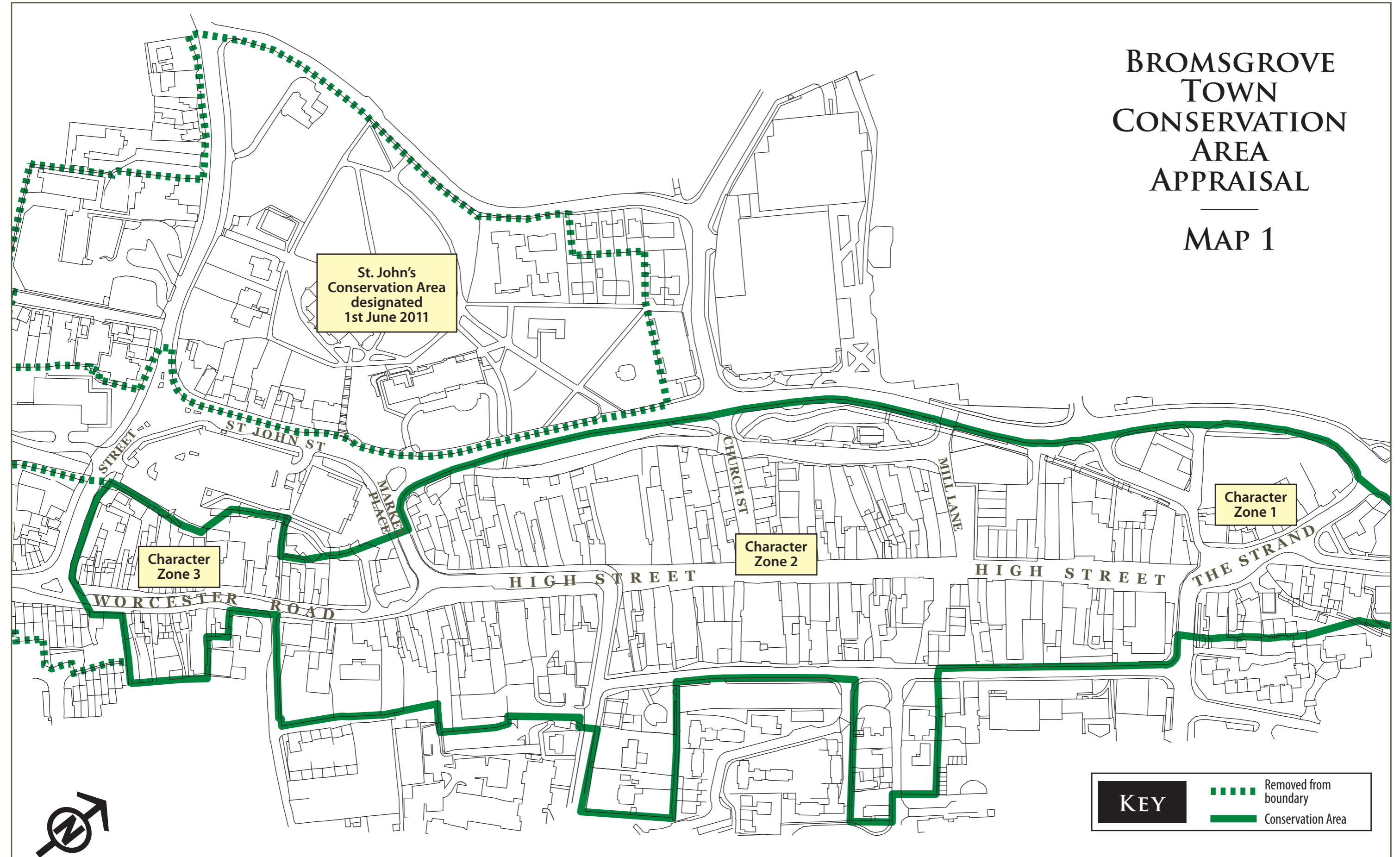
Listed Building	A building of special architectural or historic interest included on a national register. English Heritage is responsible for adding new entries to the statutory list.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which, it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities are responsible for designating new Conservation Areas.
Bargeboards	An angled decorative timber board at eaves level (see Slug and Lettuce, 126-130 High Street)
Burgage plot	A medieval term describing a long strip of land, with the narrowest section facing the street
Camber headed	A slightly curved window head
Canalized	Contained with artificial man-made sides
Classical	An architectural style from ancient Rome and Greece, revived in the Georgian period. Detailing is simple and refined with columns, moulded doorcases and sash windows. (see Davenal House, 28 Birmingham Road)
Cornice	Projecting moulding often found at eaves level, or as part of a pediment
Culvert	A man-made channel beneath a road or building
Diaper pattern	Repetitive decorative arrangement of bricks, often in diamond shapes or squares.
Doorcase	A moulded case or frame lining a doorway
Doric columns	The plainest of the three types of columns found in classical architecture, with simple vertical flutes and an unornamented capital. (The three types are Doric, Ionic and Corinthian)
Dormer	A window projecting from the roof (see 33-37 Worcester Road)
Edwardian	Dates from 1901-1910
Fleur-de-lis	A stylised lily with three pointed leaves (see 1 High Street)
Georgian	Dates from 1714-1830
Gothic	An architectural style from 12th to 16th centuries but revived in the late Victorian period. Typical details include elaborate tracery, heavily mullioned windows and pointed arches.
Jettied gable	Projecting upper storey overhanging the lower floors, often a feature of timber framed buildings (see former Hop Pole Inn, New Road)
Keystones	A wedge shaped block found at the centre of an arch (see 120 High Street)

Glossary continued

Medieval	Dates from 950-1547
Mullioned windows	Vertical posts separating the sections of a window, usually in stone or timber
Naturalize	Make more natural
Pediment	Low pitched moulded triangle often found over doorways or windows and at roof level. (see Strand Centre, 14-18 The Strand)
Polychromatic brickwork	A feature of Victorian Gothic architecture, using a variety of alternating colours of brickwork
Portico Street)	A feature of classical architecture, moulded projecting hood on supporting columns to form an open sided porch (see Lloyds TSB Bank, 112 High Street)
Quatrefoil	A tracery detail in the shape of a flower with four lobes separated by cusps. A trefoil has three lobes.
Quoins	Angular often slightly raised stones added to the corner of a building (see 18 High Street)
Regency	Dates from 1810-1820
Rusticated	Roughened texture added to stonework with sunken joints (see The Queens Head PH, The Strand)
Stucco	An external plaster finish, often finely textured
Tannery	A building where animal skin and hide is tanned
Victorian	Dates from 1837-1901
Wattle and daub	Sticks and twigs interwoven to form a panel packed with plaster and then limewashed. Commonly found in timber framed or thatched buildings.

BROMSGROVE TOWN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

MAP 1

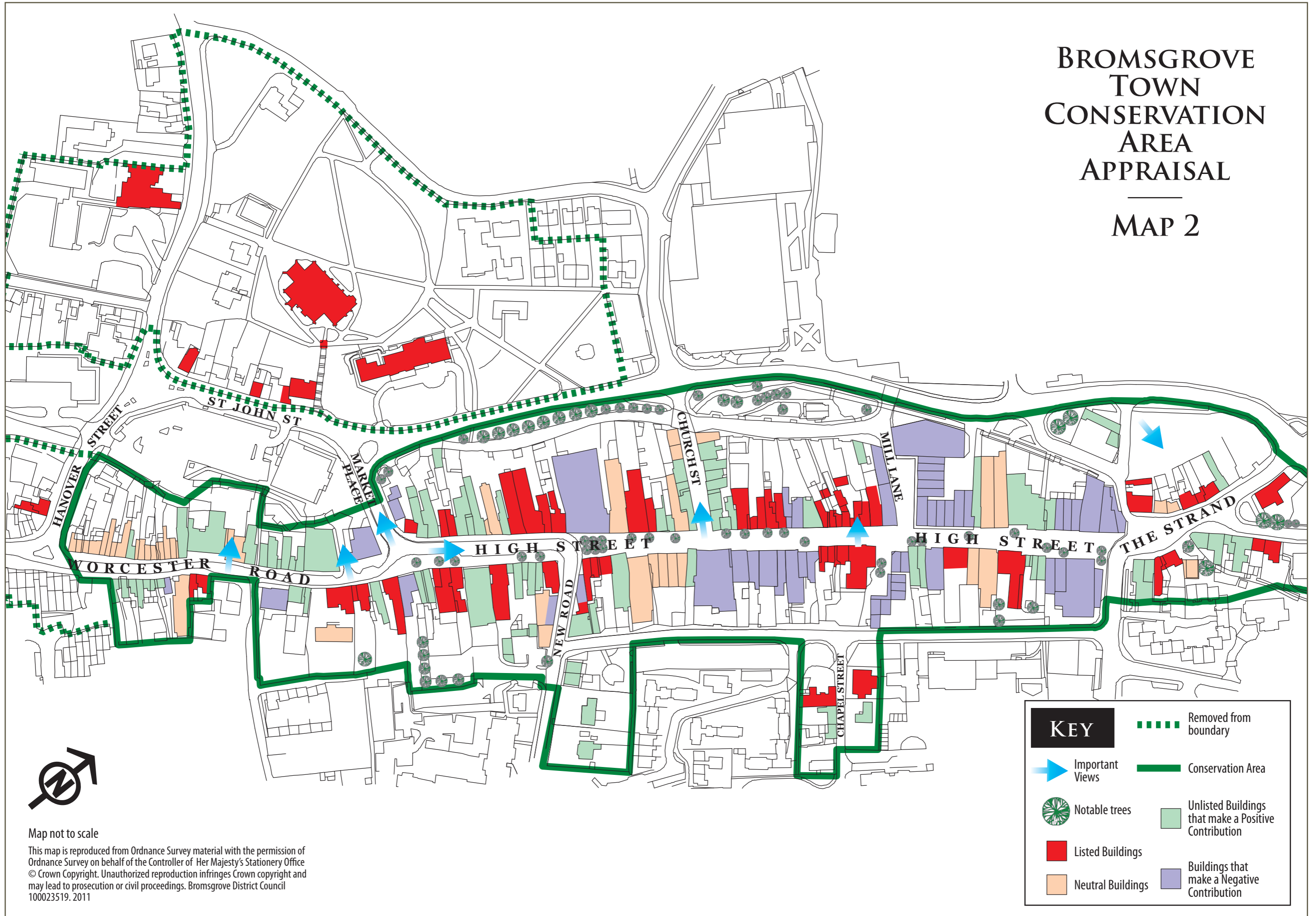


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BROMSGROVE TOWN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

MAP 2



KEY	
	Removed from boundary
	Important Views
	Notable trees
	Listed Buildings
	Neutral Buildings
	Conservation Area
	Unlisted Buildings that make a Positive Contribution
	Buildings that make a Negative Contribution



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پر رابطہ کریں



**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

HEAD OF
PLANNING AND REGENERATION
THE COUNCIL HOUSE,
BURCOT LANE,
BROMSGROVE B60 1AA