

Hill Top Conservation Area Appraisal



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1.0 Introduction

The Hilltop Conservation Area around Holy Trinity Church, the Cathedral and the Council House in the city centre was declared a Conservation Area on 8th August 1969. Its national importance was recognised by the Department of the Environment in December 1976 when it was granted the status of Outstanding Conservation Area. This Conservation Area Appraisal document has been produced to support the designation and to define and record the special architectural and historical interest of the area and identify opportunities for enhancement.

This document satisfies the requirements of the legislation and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Hilltop Conservation Area can be assessed. This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Management Plan which outlines the proposals and actions that will guide and manage future change.

1.1 Summary of Special Interest

The special interest that justifies designation of this area as a Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- It includes many of Coventry's most important heritage assets including archaeological monuments and built heritage
- It gives the most complete remaining impression of the City's character before the massive industrial expansion and accompanying redevelopment of the 20th century, including many historic buildings set within the historic street pattern
- Its narrow streets and alleys and attractive trees and lawned areas form a striking contrast with the redeveloped areas which abut on all sides
- The continuity in the use of this area. Since Coventry's earliest beginnings it has been the focus of the city's civic and religious life and remains so today, including the old and new Cathedrals of St. Michael, Holy Trinity Church and the early 20th century Council House.
- Many of the buildings are of special architectural and historic importance and are nationally significant
- The area includes the archaeological remains of Coventry's Benedictine Priory and Cathedral which have been extensively excavated, most recently in 2001-2003 as part of the Phoenix Initiative regeneration scheme, and which are now displayed in two gardens, a visitor centre and the upstanding remains of the medieval undercrofts
- The area is known to contain a number of historic sites, such as Coventry's medieval castle, providing potential for significant buried archaeological deposits.
- It includes a number of sculptures, statues and other examples of public art by artists of national and international renown, particularly around the Cathedral and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum.
- The area includes good quality, complementary modern architecture.

- The spires of Holy Trinity Church and the medieval St. Michael's Cathedral are important landmarks and are visible from across the City.

1.2 Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A Conservation Area is defined as, '**an area of special architectural interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance**'. Section 71 of the same Act requires Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. This Conservation Area Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the principles and policies set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework; *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*.

Local Planning Policy

Coventry City Council adopted its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) on the 9th December 2001. The majority of these policies were then saved via a 'Saving Direction' issued by the Secretary of State in September 2007. The Council is now working towards replacing these saved policies within the UDP with a new Local Development Plan, following changes to the planning system introduced by the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 and the Localism Act 2011. Conservation Area Appraisals are considered integral with the spatial planning approach of the Council to support and affirm the development plan documents within the new forthcoming plan. The adopted 2001 UDP contains policies which relate to the preservation and enhancement of the City's built heritage. In the Adopted UDP (Chapter 8) the following policies are of particular relevance:

BE 8: Conservation Areas

BE: 9 Development in Conservation Areas

BE: 10: The Retention of Buildings in Conservation Areas

BE 11: Alteration or Extension of Listed Buildings

BE 12: Change of Use of Listed Buildings

BE 13: Demolition of Listed Buildings

BE 14: Locally Listed Buildings

BE 15: Archaeological Sites

The Council is committed to using the Development Management Process and Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance to achieve environmental improvements and to protect and enhance its Conservation Areas. Currently UDP policies are supported by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

1.3 Location

Hill Top Conservation Area is situated in the northeast quadrant of the modern city centre, within the area encompassed by the ring road. It lies between Earl Street in the south and Priory Place in the north, Trinity Street on the west and Coventry University buildings on the east. It adjoins High Street Conservation Area to the southwest. As its name suggests it sits on a low hill approximately 85m above sea level.

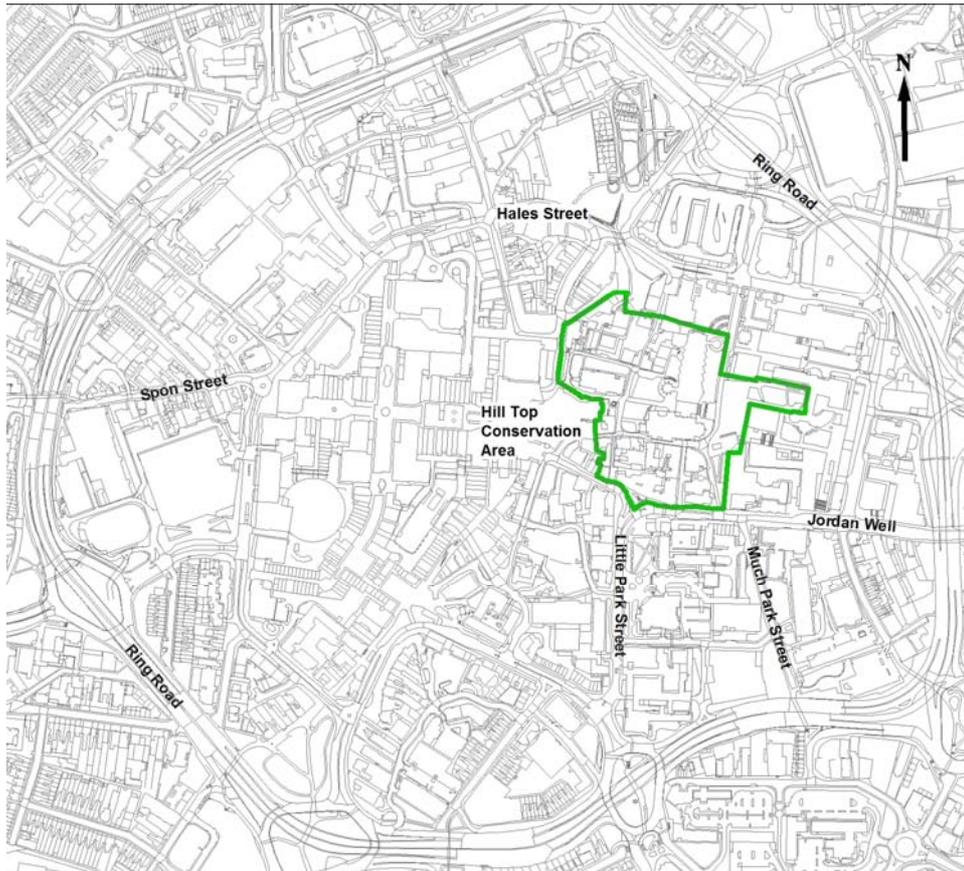


Figure 1: Map showing the location of Hill Top Conservation Area within Coventry City Centre

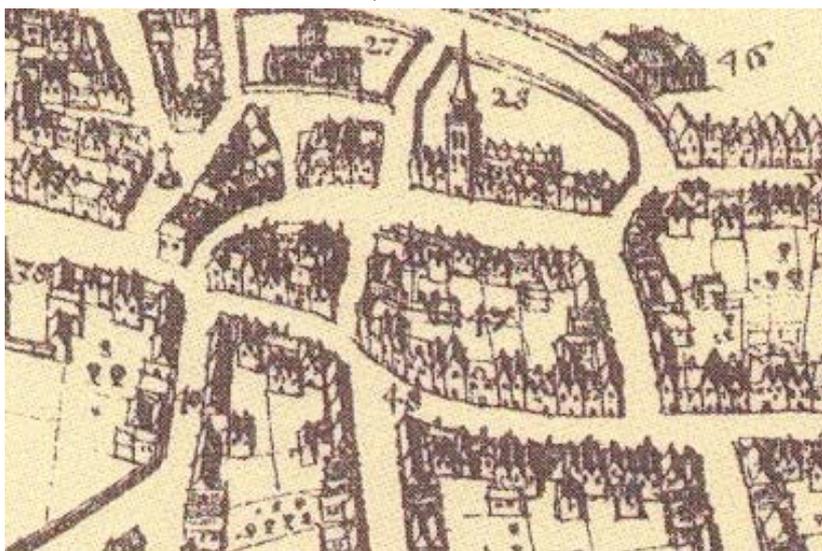
1.4 History

The Hill Top area is thought to be where the settlement of Coventry had its beginnings. The foundation of the Benedictine Priory of St Mary in 1043 by Leofric, the Saxon Earl of Mercia and Godiva, his wife, is known from documentary evidence and parts of the site have been intensively excavated over the years. Two stone structures discovered in the most recent excavations of 1999-2000 may belong to Leofric and Godiva's foundation but there is a tradition that this was preceded by St. Osburg's Nunnery, which is thought to have existed on the same site from the mid-9th Century before being destroyed by Edric the Traitor in 1016. The same archaeological excavations also recovered human remains from beneath one of the stone structures. The bones were radiocarbon dated to AD 870, evidence that there was late Saxon period occupation on this site at about the same time as the foundation of St. Osburg's. Although the 1086 Domesday Book records Coventry as an agricultural community equating to nothing more than a large village it is possible that it was

already a town of some size and that it was omitted from the survey in the same way as other urban areas like London and Winchester were.

The area in which medieval Coventry developed has throughout the centuries been the focus of the City's civic and religious life, possibly starting with a 7th or 8th century minster church on the site of Holy Trinity. If this high piece of ground was already occupied by a church in the 11th century it might explain why the Benedictine Priory was built on the more inconvenient sloping site to the north, with its cloister unconventionally on the north side of the cathedral church. Begun in the 11th century, by the 14th century the Benedictine Priory dominated this area with the cathedral running the length of Priory Row to the site of the present cathedral, and its west end opening onto the medieval market place, where Trinity Street is now sited. The Priory precinct, incorporating the cloister, west range, chapter house, infirmary and refectory stretched down the slope to where modern-day Priory Place is.

While the northern part of the present day Conservation Area had become the site of an important religious centre, the southern part became the centre of Coventry's local government with the building of a castle in the 12th century by the Earl of Chester. No physical trace of the castle survived above ground beyond the medieval period but place-name evidence and archaeological remains of the castle ditch do remain. 'Bayley Lane' takes its name from the castle bailey or courtyard, which would have been enclosed by a ditch and ramparts and 'Broadgate' is first mentioned in a document of 1180 as *porta larta*, literally meaning broad or wide gate and inferring an entrance towards the west end of the castle. The slight lean of the Cathedral spire is attributed to the fact that part of its foundations sunk into the filled-in defensive ditch during the 19th century. Other possible remains of the ditch have been excavated over the years on the west side of Pepper Lane, at the corner of Hay Lane and Bayley Lane, and to the east of St. Mary's Street and remains of the castle bakehouse were discovered in Castle Yard in 1990. Furthermore, the old St. Michael's probably originated as a chapel for the private use of the Earls of Chester located within the outer bailey of the castle. By the late 12th or early 13th century the castle had gone out of use, the Earl of Chester having moved his residence to the newly built Cheylesmore Manor to the south, making way for urban development on the former castle site. St. Michael's probably became a parish church by the end of the 12th century and expanded over the proceeding years to become one of the largest parish churches in England by the 15th century, sitting in its own graveyard which lay to the west and north. Elsewhere, medieval tenements were built along Bayley Lane, Hay Lane and



Extract from Speed's 1610 Map of Coventry showing street frontages built up around Bayley Lane, Hay Lane and Cuckoo Lane

Cuckoo Lane, streets which were all in existence by the 13th century. Speed's 1610 Map of Coventry shows all street frontages developed. Amongst the buildings depicted is St. Mary's Guildhall built for the merchant guild in the 1300s and rebuilt in stone in the 15th century for the united Trinity Guild.

As with any urban area there has been much redevelopment over the centuries but other medieval buildings that survive today are the Golden Cross, though much restored, The Cottage and 10/10a Hay Lane. Elsewhere, medieval timber-framed buildings were gradually replaced with 18th and 19th century commercial and residential properties built in brick and/or stone, including Draper's Hall, the headquarters of the Draper's Company, built in 1829. This probably stands on the site of two earlier wool halls. This part of the present Conservation Area also retained its role as a centre of government with the building of County Hall at the corner of Cuckoo Lane in 1784. On Earl Street historic buildings were removed after 1888 to create a plot for the Council House, which was built between 1914 and 1920.

North of Priory Row the Benedictine Priory dominated until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540, after which the Cathedral of St. Mary, apart from the northwest tower, was slowly dismantled. Other buildings within the precinct remained standing and were used for a time, some into the 19th century, before being demolished and redeveloped. The only upstanding buildings that remain today from within the precinct are the Lychgate Cottages on Priory Row. The site of the nave of the Benedictine cathedral became a cemetery extension for Holy Trinity Church in the 18th century, whilst at the east end a row of Georgian houses was built fronting Priory Row circa 1800. Following the blitz of the Second World War St. Michael's Cathedral was in ruins and it was decided to build a new cathedral. Part of the graveyard of St. Michael's ruined cathedral and the east end of Priory Row were used for this purpose. The new Cathedral of St. Michael, designed by Sir Basil Spence, was built between 1951 and 1962.

Between 1999 and 2003 extensive excavations of the Benedictine Priory were undertaken as part of the Phoenix Initiative, a heritage-led regeneration scheme that created several new public spaces and a development of cafes, bars, retail outlets, housing and a visitor centre, linking the Cathedrals Quarter and the Museum of British Road Transport. Archaeological excavations included the site of the nave and north transept of the Benedictine cathedral lying beneath the 18th/19th century graveyard of Holy Trinity, the cloister, conventual buildings, undercroft and mill. From the outset the plan was to create the Priory Gardens on the site of the nave, using the display of the archaeological remains as a key feature. The preservation in situ of the Priory undercrofts was incorporated into the scheme later when their extraordinary level of survival was discovered.



Priory Undercrofts under excavation

1.5 Archaeology

Archaeological interest can be both buried remains surviving below the ground or evidence for past activity that is contained within standing buildings and structures. This area of the city has been the focus of settlement since at least the 11th century and probably earlier. Consequently the potential for archaeology is huge. Previous excavations have demonstrated that, although there have been many episodes of redevelopment within the Conservation Area, archaeological deposits are generally well-preserved. Major potential sites within the Conservation Area include:

- The 9th century site of St. Osburg's Nunnery
- The Benedictine Priory of St. Mary
- Coventry Castle
- The medieval Bishop's Palace
- Remains of medieval New Street
- Various phases of expansion of St. Michael's old cathedral
- Cemeteries of St. Michael's and Holy Trinity

1.6 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure can be defined as a *strategic network of green spaces and the links between them*. It is a network of multi-functional green space both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological process and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. It is the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages - the open spaces, the blue spaces such as waterways, towing paths and their environs, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside. Green Infrastructure provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people. The fundamental principles of Green Infrastructure are multi-functionality and connectivity. The multi-functionality of Green Infrastructure is important to ensure the maximisation of public benefits, while the connectivity ensures that the network functions on a large scale and that its overall public benefit is greater than the sum of its parts. Coventry has a draft study to provide high quality Green infrastructure in Coventry over the next 25-30 years, linked to the Coventry Green Space Strategy.

Hill Top Conservation Area incorporates a number of areas of green space and street trees that undoubtedly contribute to the tranquil atmosphere within the Conservation Area as well as enhancing views and providing an attractive setting for the historic buildings.

2.0 Localities

For the purposes of this document the Hill Top area will be divided into a series of localities and the character and significance of each will be discussed in turn. These localities are:

1. Mixed commercial and residential area around Priory Row and Priory Place
2. Ecclesiastical area of the Cathedrals and Holy Trinity
3. Civic area in the vicinity of Bayley Lane/Earl Street

The appraisal will describe each part of the Conservation Area and identify Listed Buildings, Locally Listed Buildings and important views in each locality. The appraisal will also identify other buildings, features and areas of green space which are felt to make a positive contribution to the special character of the area. It should be noted however that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

2.1 Mixed Commercial/Residential Area around Priory Row and Priory Place (Figure 2)

Description

The approach from Trinity Street forms an important gateway into the Conservation Area. The view is dominated by the Flying Standard Public House (2-10 Trinity Street and 1-2 Priory Row), a locally listed building erected in 1938-39 in mock Tudor style to complement the timber-framed buildings on Priory Row. From Trinity Street a short flight of steps leads the pedestrian from the bustle of the City Centre to the quiet and calm of Priory Row. This picturesque lane, which dates back to the medieval period, sits in an elevated position above Trinity Street on the west. Immediately on the left is a short terrace of buildings. Nos.3-5 is a row of early 15th century jettied timber-framed buildings and together with nos. 1-2 and the Victorian Gothic-style Bluecoat School they form a picturesque group. At the time the timber-framed buildings were erected they would have stood in the forecourt of the medieval Priory Cathedral of St. Mary and they are the only buildings from within the Priory precinct still standing today. At the northern end of the Blue Coat School two massive octagonal stone towers with conical lead and slated roofs incorporate the bases of towers of the monastic church.

The Priory church and its precinct were built on a series of man-made terraces on the northern slope of Hill Top. These changes in levels, with Priory Row uppermost, gradually sloping down towards Priory Place, are echoed in the design and layout of today's buildings and open spaces. The modern redesign of this area was dictated by the archaeological remains excavated between 2000 and 2003. One element of this design is the Priory Gardens adjacent to the Blue Coat School. On the site of the Priory church, the garden sits below street level on the south side and is surrounded by buildings on the remaining three sides, giving it an enclosed and secluded atmosphere. The remains of the priory cathedral walls and stone piers discovered during the excavations, and their interpretation, form a key feature of the gardens, which in turn provide a valuable green space in the Conservation Area. A wooden footbridge takes pedestrians over the gardens, providing an elevated view of the archaeological remains, and on towards Priory Place. This is the location of the Priory Visitor Centre, a visitor attraction which tells the story of the priory and the monks who lived there. A short walk away is the Priory Undercrofts, an area of cellars that are on permanent display beneath Youell House. Outside the visitor centre is the Cloister Garden, another enclosed green space designed to reflect the quiet ambience of the medieval cloisters which once stood at this location. An opening in the north wall of the garden enables visitors to glimpse through a cascade of water to Priory Place, this being part of Susan Heron's art installation *Waterwindow*. Immediately opposite the garden, the grade II listed mid-19th century former ribbon weaving factory successfully integrates with surrounding buildings to add to the sense of history of this part of the Conservation Area. Priory Place, the Cloister Garden and Priory

Gardens provide a series of intimate spaces and the use of attractive contrasting materials throughout this area has resulted in the successful integration of old and new.

Standing at the east end of Priory Row is the finest group of Georgian buildings in the City. Nos. 6 to 11 Priory Row comprises a row of three-storey town houses, each built to individual design with slight variations in the building line. Together they form an attractive and interesting group which acts as a contrast to the medieval stonework, trees and lawns of the cathedral precincts. No. 11 has a particularly interesting history. It suffered a direct hit in the Second World War and only the front façade survived. This was retained and the house behind was rebuilt to conform as closely as possible to the original. Between nos. 8 and 9 is Hill Top, a narrow lane running downhill towards the Priory Undercrofts. The lane probably originated in the 17th century. It is not depicted on Speed's 1610 Map of Coventry but is shown on Bradford's 1748-49 maps and may have developed as a route for carting away stone from the ruins of the priory buildings.

Listed Buildings

- Lychgate Cottages, 3 to 5 Priory Row (Grade II Listed), a row of jettied timber-framed buildings dating to the early 15th century
- Blue Coat School (Grade II* Listed) built in the mid-19th century in the Gothic style incorporates the base of one of the towers from medieval Priory Cathedral, further remains of which can also be seen in the basement of the 19th century building.
- Remains of the west wall of the 11th century Priory Cathedral (Grade I Listed and also a Scheduled Monument) adjacent to the Blue Coat School.
- New Buildings, a mid-19th century former ribbon weaving factory (Grade II Listed). By 1860 it was in use as a ragged school and a decade later as a drill hall and armoury for the Rifle Volunteers Corps.
- Pelham Lee House, nos. 6 and 7 Priory Row (Grade II Listed) built c. 1800.
- No. 8 Priory Row (Grade II Listed) built c. 1800.
- Nos. 9 and 10 Priory Row (Grade II Listed) built in the mid-18th century. The building incorporates 17th century brick vaulted cellars that reflect the plan of the earlier buildings that stood on this site.
- No. 11 Priory Row (Grade II Listed), a building with an early 18th century façade. The building was severely damaged in the Second World War and rebuilt. The railings to the front of the property are also listed separately.



View of Lychgate Cottages



New Buildings, former ribbon factory

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9, 10 and 11 Priory Row



Bluecoat School viewed from Priory Gardens



Pelham Lee House, Priory Row



No. 11 Priory Row and listed railings

Locally Listed Buildings

- Nos. 2-10 Trinity Street/Nos. 1-2 Priory Row, late 1930s mock Tudor building



The Flying Standard, 2-10 Trinity Street and 1-2 Priory Row

Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings, Spaces and Features of Value

- The archaeological remains of the Priory Undercrofts beneath Youell House, excavated 2000-2002 and on permanent display.
- Priory Visitor Centre, a modern but attractive building constructed using materials in keeping with its surroundings such as red sandstone and timber. The centre houses a display of artefacts discovered during the excavations of the medieval Priory.
- Archaeological remains of the Priory Cathedral of St. Mary set in the green space of Priory Gardens
- Public art in Priory Gardens
- Green space provided by the Cloister Garden, which also adds to the interpretation of the Priory site
- Susan Heron’s art installation *Waterwindow*
- Cobbled road surfaces along Priory Row and Hill Top



The Priory Undercrofts beneath Youell House



Priory Gardens



Waterwindow installation from Priory Place (above) and from the Cloister Garden (right)





Cobbled street surface on Priory Row



Priory Visitor Centre

Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest

Given that there has been human activity in this area for the past 1200 years at least, there is huge potential for archaeological deposits throughout the Hill Top Conservation Area. The Priory Row/Priory Place locality has been a focus for previous archaeological investigations from the 1950s to the present day and Figure 3 shows those areas where excavations have taken place and where significant ground disturbance is known to have occurred.

Views and Vistas

- View towards the Conservation Area from Trinity Street/Broadgate
- Views along Priory Row
- View across the Priory Gardens towards the Blue Coat School and the Lychgate Cottages
- View of New Buildings, Cloister Garden and Priory Visitor Centre from Priory Garden footbridge.
- View along Cuckoo Lane towards the Georgian buildings (6-11 Priory Row)



View towards Priory Row from Trinity Street



View along Priory Row towards the new Cathedral



View along Cuckoo Lane towards the Georgian terrace on Priory Row



View along Priory Row towards Trinity Street

Negative Features

- Ineffective orientation signage at Priory Gardens
- Large estate agents advertising boards attached to listed and other historic buildings which spoils the overall street scene.
- Use of modern railings that detract from the historic atmosphere of the street scene.
- Lack of appropriate storage space for refuse bins so that they are left on the street, damaging the street scene.
- Poor interpretation of archaeological remains and artworks.
- Poor directional signage to the Visitors Centre and Transport Museum..
- Damage to some of the archaeological remains in Priory Gardens.
- Poor environment on the approaches to the Conservation Area along Hill Top lane, New Buildings and Pepper Lane. These areas are used principally as service yards for properties facing Priory Place, Trinity Street and the High Street and are dominated by large refuse bins and plant equipment. These elements are detrimental to the setting of the Conservation Area and discourage visitors from entering Hill Top via these routes.
- The poor condition of some areas of cobbled surfaces and the lack of smooth crossings and dropped kerbs causes access problems for those with impaired vision and mobility.



Unnecessarily large estate agents boards attached to listed buildings



Ineffective signage using unsympathetic materials



Prominent refuse bins along Hill Top

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Modern, unsympathetic railings



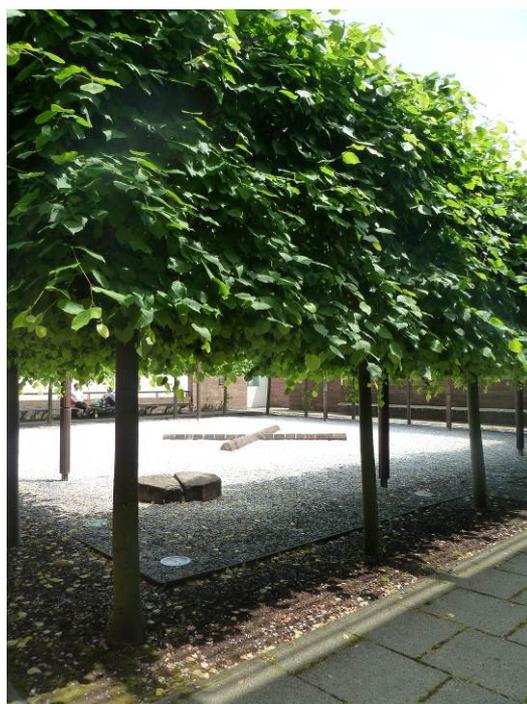
Damage to archaeological remains in Priory Gardens



Unattractive approach to the Conservation Area along New Buildings

Current Palette





The earliest buildings in this area date to the 15th century and the latest to the 21st century resulting in the use of various building materials; medieval timber frames, Georgian red brick, 19th century sandstone, and most recently timber, glass and red sandstone. Roads and pavement materials vary across the area, cobbles being used the length of Priory Row in contrast to the timber decked footbridge over Priory Gardens leading on to granite paving slabs in the area by the Priory Visitor Centre. Overall, the materials used throughout this area are of a high quality and complement the well maintained street furniture, such as the historic railings outside the Georgian terrace. There is a good impression of greenery in the area from the street trees, Priory Gardens and the Cloister Garden.

2.2 The Ecclesiastical Area of the Cathedrals and Holy Trinity Church (Figure 4)

Description

The large open space of University Square enables an uninterrupted view of the old and new Cathedrals of St. Michael. This area of hard landscaping is off-set by the green spaces immediately in front of the cathedrals and also the 19th century graveyard of the old cathedral lying to the northeast. This particular green space contains many mature trees and has been preserved between the modern buildings of Coventry University, which serves to link it in atmosphere with the older parts of the Conservation Area.

The old Cathedral of St. Michael may have started out as a small church within the 12th century castle, later becoming a small parish church for the Earl's half of the City. It subsequently became one of the largest parish churches in England, having been rebuilt on a grand scale between 1373 and 1450 in the perpendicular Gothic style. It wasn't until 1918 that the modern diocese of Coventry was created and St. Michael's became a cathedral. Its magnificent tower and spire survived the wartime blitz of November 1940 and at almost 92m high it is the third tallest in England. In addition to being a medieval monument of great historic significance, the old cathedral provides a tranquil space in the heart of the city centre. It is also used as performance space on occasions as well as housing a number of important works of art by renowned sculptors and artists, for example Jacob Epstein.

Following the Second World War a competition was held to choose a design for a new cathedral. Sir Basil Spence's now world famous design was selected. It involved retaining the old cathedral and using it as an approach to the new cathedral, which was built in a modern style on a north-south axis on the north side of the ruined building. The new cathedral was consecrated in 1962 by Queen Elizabeth II. It is built of red sandstone, a traditional local material, and blends therefore with the old cathedral and other buildings within the Conservation Area. The main entrance doors in the south are part of a wall that is entirely of glass and which is engraved with saints and angels by John Hutton. Beyond the entrance to the new cathedral and the tower of the old cathedral is the old churchyard, which provides an area of attractive green space on the western approach to the buildings.

To the south of Priory Row, and behind its narrow wooded graveyard lies the impressive Grade I Listed Holy Trinity Church. It may have originated as a Saxon minster as early as the 7th or 8th century. Documentary evidence attests to its existence by 1113 as a chapel serving the Prior's half of the City but this church was destroyed by fire in 1257. Considerable remains of the rebuilt 13th century church survive in the present structure which dates mainly from the late 14th and 15th centuries. The chancel may date from as late as the mid-16th century. In 1666 the spire and upper part of the tower fell in a storm but were rebuilt on an even grander scale within three years to its present height of 72m, making it the second tallest of the City's three medieval spires. The building was refaced in Bath stone in the late 19th century. Inside Holy Trinity above the west crossing arch is the 'Last Judgement' or 'Coventry Doom' wall painting, which is one of the most legible and complete examples of this subject to survive. Its high level of artistry and detail make it one of the most significant late medieval parochial wall-paintings and it is thought to have been created no earlier than c.1430. The church is surrounded by the churchyard on the west, north and south sides, which contains mature trees and along with the grassy areas to the west of Trinity Lane the approaches to the church have a green and open feel to them. The church dominates views into the Conservation Area from Trinity Street.

At the corner of Trinity Lane and Cuckoo Lane stands the Coventry Cross, a replica of an ornate medieval market cross. The original dated to 1541 and stood in Cross Cheaping. It was

demolished in 1771 when attempts were being made to remove obstructions in the City's streets. The concrete replica was erected on this spot in 1976.

Listed Buildings

- 20th century Cathedral of St. Michael built between 1951 and 1962 (Grade I Listed).
- Ruins of the Medieval Cathedral of St. Michael (Grade I Listed).
- Holy Trinity Church (Grade I Listed), built in the 14th and 15th century but incorporating the remains of an earlier building as well as the 15th century Coventry Doom wall painting.



Medieval tower and spire of St. Michael's viewed from inside the ruined cathedral



Holy Trinity Church viewed from Trinity Lane area



The old and new cathedrals of St. Michael viewed from University Square

Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings, Spaces and Features of Value

- The churchyards of Holy Trinity and St. Michael's which act as areas of open green space
- Green space to the west of Holy Trinity Church which enhances the view of the building from Broadgate and Trinity Street
- Mature trees throughout this part of the Conservation Area
- Priory Street Square, a large open space to the east of the cathedrals which allows uninterrupted views of the buildings
- Cobbled surfaces and stone paving on streets such as Trinity Lane which add to the historic character of the Conservation Area.
- The locality contains many works of public art, mainly within the Cathedral ruins.
- The Coventry Cross replica which enhances the historic character of the area.
- Stone boundary walls surrounding Holy Trinity Church and St. Michael's church yard to the west of the Cathedral ruins.
- Coventry lantern street lights



The Coventry Cross replica



Railings style at south east corner of the old cathedral in keeping with the historic building



St. Michael's Churchyard between the buildings of Coventry University



Reconciliation statue in the old cathedral



Coventry lantern street lamp



Stone wall surrounding St. Michael's church yard

Views and Vistas

- Vista of the old and new cathedrals across University Square
- View along Bayley Lane towards the east end of the old cathedral
- View of the tower and spire of the old cathedral from Cuckoo Lane
- View of Holy Trinity from Broadgate/Trinity Street
- View of the interior of the old cathedral from the west door
- View of the south screen of the new cathedral
- Views of the spires from across the city

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View of the east end of the old cathedral from Bayley Lane



View of cathedral ruins from west door



The south screen of the new Cathedral



View of the old and new Cathedrals from University Square

Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest

- St. Michael's churchyard between the Coventry University buildings which will contain 19th century burials and possibly other earlier archaeological deposits.
- Green space on the east side of the new cathedral which partially covers the site of the medieval Bishop's Palace.
- University Square, the site of medieval New Street.
- St. Michael's churchyard on the west side of the cathedrals which will contain burials and the possible site of the 11th/12th century castle ditch
- The interior of the old Cathedral of St. Michael's for burials and potential for remains of earlier phases of the church.
- Churchyard of Holy Trinity, potential for burials and early medieval occupation

Negative Features

- University Square comprises entirely of hard landscaping which encourages the use of skateboards which is often intimidating and has caused damage to the stone steps and other street furniture.
- Poor quality and inconspicuous information panels in the cathedral ruins which don't give a coherent view of the building's history.
- Excessive numbers of signs and sculptures within the cathedral ruins which give the space a cluttered feel.
- Redundant and poorly maintained street furniture and other street clutter which needs to be rationalised.
- Temporary barriers around the chapels and in the cathedral ruins that spoil the appearance of the buildings.
- Use of materials that are out of keeping with their surroundings, for example yellow plastic grit bins in Cuckoo Lane and grey metal cabinets in cathedral ruins.
- Use of street lamps of modern design that are out of keeping with the Coventry lanterns used elsewhere in the Conservation Area.
- The former book shop building that adjoins the north side of the cathedral ruins obscuring the north porch.
- Cathedral Lanes shopping centre whose use of inappropriate building materials are detrimental to views along Trinity Lane and Trinity Churchyard and views of the Conservation Area from Trinity Street and Broadgate
- The use of unattractive plastic planters on the steps of the Cathedral, which spoil from views of the historic buildings from University Square.
- The poor condition of some cobbled surfaces that cause access problems for those with impaired mobility and vision.
- Lack of storage facilities for waste bins.
- The inconsiderate parking of vehicles which restricts access to pedestrians and impacts negatively on the historic environment.
- The use of Holy Trinity Churchyard for car parking.
- The poor environment around the Britannia Hotel creates a neglected backwater immediately to the rear of the Cathedral.

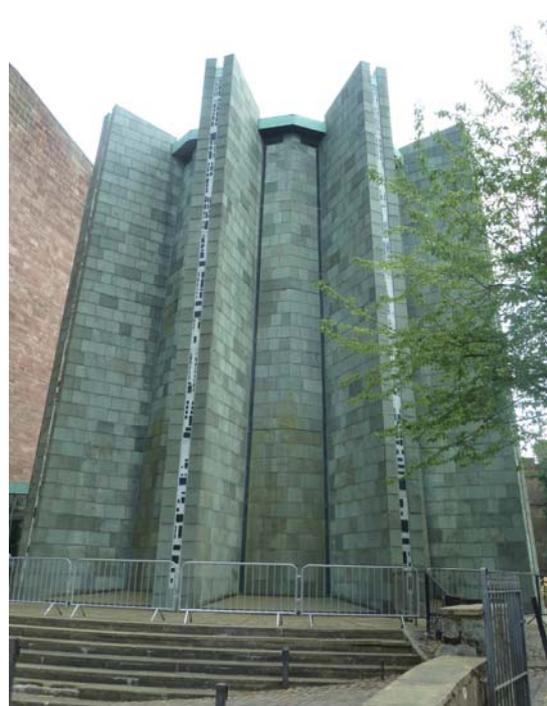


Use of inappropriate materials, signage and redundant street furniture at Cuckoo Lane and Holy Trinity Church



Signs and public art in the Cathedral ruins give it a cluttered feel (above)

Temporary barriers around the Chapel of Unity (right)



Hill Top Conservation Area Appraisal



Cathedral Lanes shopping centre which impacts negatively on the view of the Conservation Area



Redundant barriers left in Cathedral ruins



The book shop which abuts the north side of the Cathedral ruins and whose overall design and use of materials does not complement the historic building



Intrusive cabinets using inappropriate materials within the Cathedral ruins



Modern street lamps in Bayley Lane

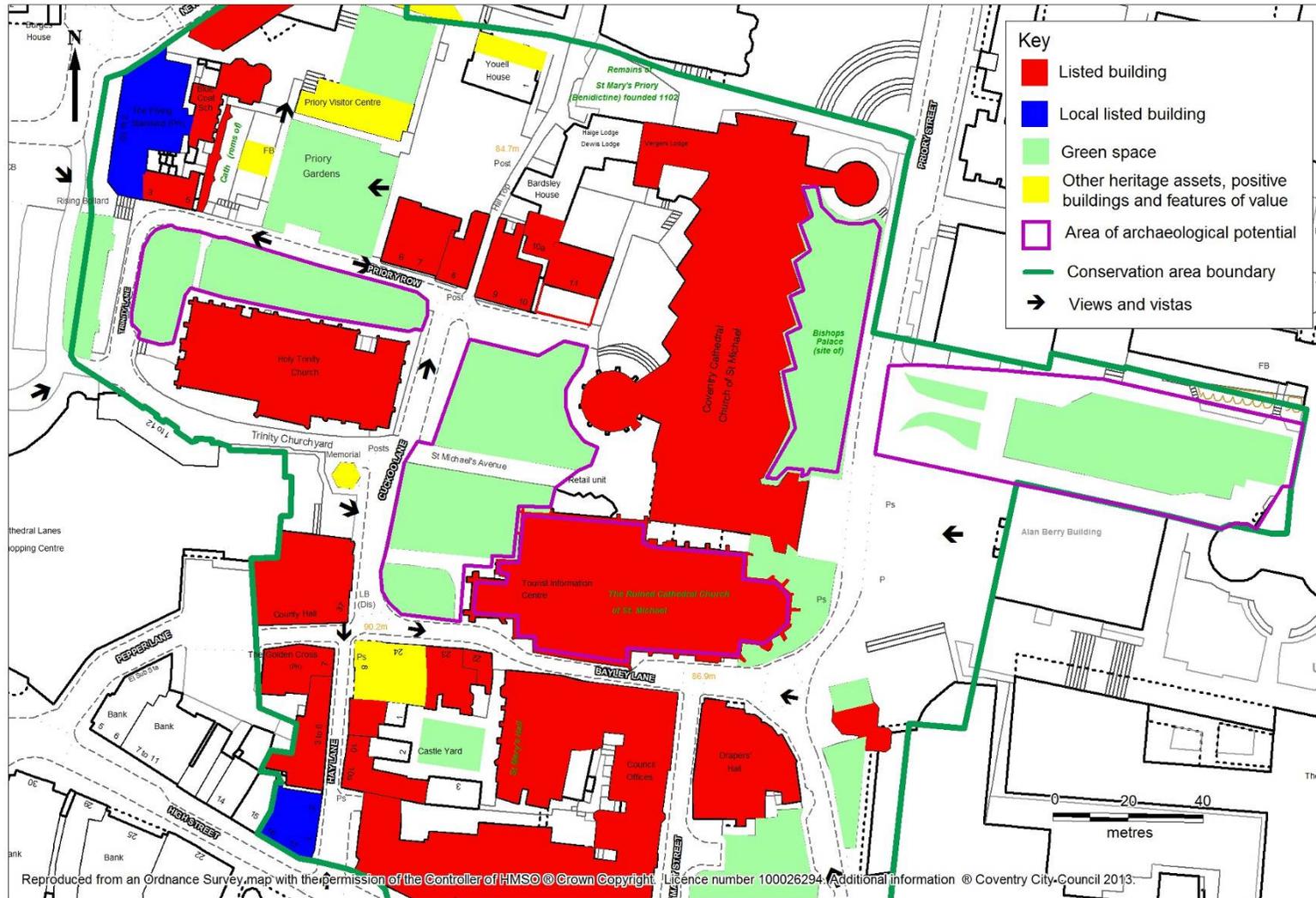
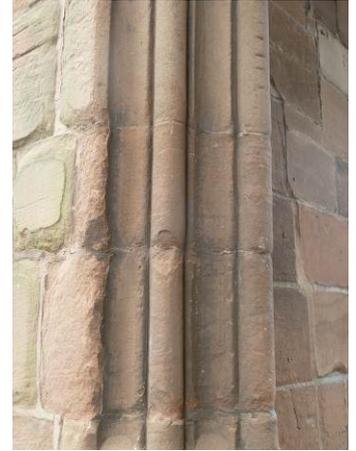


Figure 4: Locality 2 – The old and new Cathedrals of St. Michael and Holy Trinity Church

Current Palette



Hill Top Conservation Area Appraisal



This area is dominated by the red sandstone of the old and new Cathedrals. Cobbled street surfaces and areas of York stone paving are used throughout the area, including Priory Street Square, which helps to draw the area together as a whole. The area has a very green feel to it and incorporates the largest amount of green space and trees in the Conservation Area.

2.3 Civic Area around Bayley Lane and Earl Street (Figure 5)

Description

This part of the Conservation Area is, perhaps, one that reflects most closely how Coventry would have looked during the medieval and early post-medieval periods. It incorporates the narrow cobbled streets of Cuckoo Lane, Hay Lane, and Bayley Lane which can all be traced back to the medieval period, and St. Mary's Street which was laid out in the late 19th century. Almost every building along these streets is designated as either a listed or locally listed building.

In Cuckoo Lane, immediately south of the Coventry Cross, is the County Hall which was built in 1783-4. Designed by Samuel Eglington it is one of the few 18th century buildings of any architectural distinction to survive in Coventry and has a fine stone faced classical frontage. The red brick frontage onto Pepper Lane formerly contained the house of the governor of the gaol which stood on the adjacent site where Cathedral Lanes now stands.

Standing opposite on the corner of Hay Lane and Pepper Lane is The Golden Cross Public House, a timber-framed jettied house dating from the late 16th century and heavily restored in the 19th century. The one other timber-framed building on Hay Lane is No. 10/10a which dates from the late 16th/early 17th century. Its frontage has been in filled with red brick but the timber frame is visible in its southern gable. The remaining buildings on Hay Lane date to the late 18th or 19th centuries and are of red brick, several with traditional shop frontages. An interesting feature on wall of No. 6 are the remains of painted signs giving instructions on water supply to individuals who were engaged in defending the city from incendiary bombs dropped during the Coventry Blitz of November 1940 and subsequent raids the following April.

The historic buildings in Hay Lane are complemented by No. 8 Hay Lane/24 Bayley Lane which, although modern, respects traditional proportions and has used materials in keeping with the historic buildings such as red sandstone. As a group the buildings in Hay Lane create an attractive 19th century street scene and an atmospheric entrance from High Street in to the Conservation Area.

Running around the southern walls of the old cathedral Bayley Lane still retains a medieval atmosphere. The lane probably takes its name from the 12th century castle bailey which is thought to have extended east towards where the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery stands today. In addition to the old Cathedral of St. Michael's, which towers above the cobbles on the northern side of the lane, there are many other fine buildings in the street which cover a variety of styles and periods. They include the charming 16th century timber framed cottage with carved gable and corner post; the early 19th century 'Greek Revival' Draper's Hall, and the former police station which was erected in 1863 and enlarged at several later dates in a Tudor red sandstone style to match St. Mary's Guild Hall. The Guildhall, stands on the site of the first hall built for the Merchant Guild of St. Mary's soon after 1340. The stone and half-timbered buildings date mostly from the late 14th and 15th centuries and form one of the grandest medieval guild halls in the country. They comprise the stone built gatehouse on the Bayley Lane frontage, and two ranges of timber framed buildings around a small rectangular courtyard. The principal room is the magnificent Great Hall at first floor level that has a late 14th century timber roof and in which hangs the Tapestry (c.1500). To the south of this main group stand the early 15th century stone built kitchen and Caesar's Tower, which is thought to be a rebuilding of part of the 12th century castle.

Between no. 22 Bayley Lane and the Guild Hall is an entrance into Castle Yard, a quiet square providing green space and areas to sit outside. A mix sympathetic modern development and historic buildings enclose the square and magnify its historic character. Excavations here in 1990 found the remains of two ovens that are thought to be those from the medieval castle bakery.

To the south of Draper's Hall is an attractive area of green space from which the east elevation of the Council House on St. Mary's Street can be viewed as well as the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum on Bayley Lane. Situated in front of the glass and timber wing of the museum is a second area of green space. A group of large corten steel panels have been erected here to reflect the former building lines of several houses that stood on the site, the remains of which were excavated in 2006. The property number, names and dates of the occupants of each building are inscribed on the panels, giving them the dual purpose of a piece of public art

as well as relaying some of the history of this part of the street to visitors and passers-by. The panels also serve to close the views from Bayley Lane into University Square.

Facing onto Earl Street is Drapers (formerly Browns) Café Bar, an attractive modern building that has used building material types derived from the Conservation Area such as red sandstone, timber and copper and which complements nearby buildings in Bayley Lane and the early 20th century Council House immediately to the west. The Council House was built between 1913 and 1917 after a design competition that was won by the Birmingham architects Edward Garret and H.W. Simister. One of the conditions of the competition was that the design should be in keeping with the adjacent St. Mary's Hall. In the years after the Second World War a modern square was opened up in front of the building, enabling uninterrupted views of its impressive principal façade.

Listed Buildings

- County Hall, a Grade II* listed building dating to the 18th century of red brick and stone dressings
- The Golden Cross Public House (Grade II*), late 16th century timber-framed jettied building at the corner of Hay Lane and Bayley Lane
- Nos. 3-6 Hay Lane (Grade II listed), an early 19th century building with an early shop front
- No. 9 Hay Lane (Grade II listed), a late 18th or early 19th century red brick building
- No. 10/10a Hay Lane (Grade II listed), a 16th or 17th century timber-framed building whose main frontage was re-faced with brick in the 19th century
- The Cottage, 22 Bayley Lane (Grade II* listed), a timber-framed building constructed circa 1500
- No. 23 Bayley Lane (Grade II listed), a building with a 19th century brick façade but which may be of an earlier date
- St. Mary's Guildhall, Bayley Lane (Grade I listed), a mainly 15th century sandstone and timber-framed building and one of the finest medieval guildhalls in the country
- Former police station (now Council offices) on the corner of Bayley Lane and St. Mary's Street (Grade II listed) built in 1863
- The Council House, Earl Street (Grade II listed), built between 1913 and 1917 in the Tudor style
- Draper's Hall, Bayley Lane (Grade II* listed), built between 1831-32 in the Greek Revival style and used by the Draper's Company for meetings, entertainment and ceremonies.
- A late medieval cellar or undercroft on the corner of Bayley Lane and Priory Street (Grade I listed), which was excavated in 1987. Its location is marked on the paving outside the entrance to the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery and it can be accessed from within the museum.



The Cottage and St. Mary's Guildhall, Bayley Lane



19th century Draper's Hall



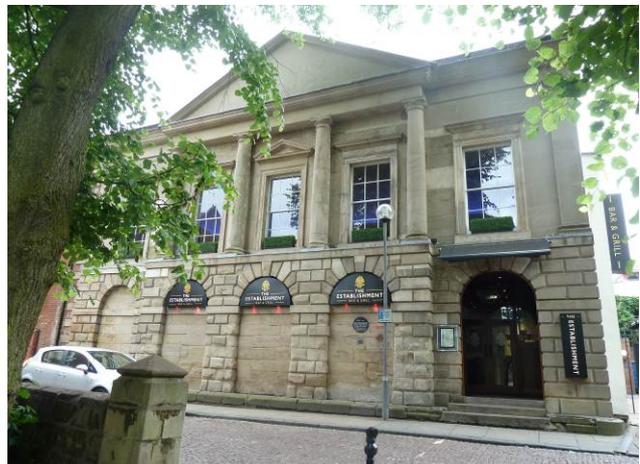
Nos. 1-6 Hay Lane, 19th century brick buildings and the timber-framed gable end of no.10a



Nos. 9, 10 and 10A Hay Lane



The Council House, Earl Street



County Hall, Cuckoo Lane

Locally Listed Buildings

- 1 and 2 Hay Lane/16 and 17 High Street, a late-19th century building

Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings, Spaces and Features of Value

- Cobbled street surfaces add to the historic character of the area. In Trinity Lane and the approach to the Cathedral smooth paved surfaces, using appropriate materials, have been incorporated into the cobbled surface to enable better access for wheelchair and pushchair users and people with sight impairments.
- No. 8 Hay Lane/24 Bayley Lane, a modern building designed to complement the surrounding buildings through the use of materials such as red sandstone
- Enclosed space of Castle Yard which provides a peaceful area of green space
- Green space between St. Mary's Street and Bayley Lane
- The area outside the glass wing of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum which incorporates some green space and public art; *The Enfolding* sculpture by Jean Parker and the steel panels marking the former buildings on Bayley Lane; and an area of red sandstone paving that marks position of the 14th century undercroft beneath.
- Area south of the Museum entrance on Bayley Lane that contains the works of public art; *The Mother and Child* sculpture by Gary Galpin, 1986 and *Barra Suite No. 5* by Tim Threlfall, 1992

Hill Top Conservation Appraisal

- Browns Café and Bar , a sandstone, timber and glass building fronting Earl Street that has used materials in keeping with its surroundings
- Second World War painted water supply signs on façade of no. 6 Hay Lane giving instructions to fire fighters.



Castle Yard



Area of green space between St. Mary's Street and Bayley Lane



Green space outside The Herbert with The Enfolding sculpture in the foreground



Position of medieval undercroft marked by sandstone paving



Drapers (formerly Browns) Café and Bar on Earl Street



Second World War painted water supply signs giving instructions to blitz fire-fighters

Views and Vistas

- Views along Hay Lane from High Street and Bayley Lane
- The view looking eastwards along Bayley Lane which incorporates the exterior of the old Cathedral of St. Michael, The Cottage and St. Mary's Guildhall
- The view of the east side of the Council House and former police station along St. Mary's Street
- The view looking north along Bayley Lane past the green space and iron panels outside the museum towards the east end of the old Cathedral of St. Michael's
- The view westwards along Bayley Lane which incorporates Draper's Hall, St. Mary's Guildhall, the gable end of The Cottage, and the exterior wall and spire of the old Cathedral
- View of from Little Park Street of the principal façade of the Council House



View along Hay Lane from High Street



View westwards along Bayley Lane



View of the former police station and the east side of the Council House on St. Mary's Street

Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest

There is evidence that there was activity in the area around Priory Gardens to the northwest in the 9th century and much of this locality probably falls within the site of the 12th century castle. It is in this area that the medieval town started to expand after the castle went out of use and, consequently, there is great potential for surviving archaeological deposits throughout this locality. Archaeological excavations from previous years support this assertion, having found the remains of a building containing two bread ovens dating to the 12th century and thought to be the castle bakery; an enormous ditch beneath the basement of a chapel that stood where no. 8 Hay Lane is now located which was interpreted as the ditch of the castle bailey; in the area east of St. Mary's Street, a medieval quarry that may have been utilised as part of the castle ditch was discovered under the remains of a series of medieval cellars; and on the east side of Bayley Lane excavations uncovered the remains of a series of buildings dating from the early 15th century. Figure 6 shows those areas where excavations have taken place and where significant ground disturbance is known to have occurred.

Negative Features

- Modern street furniture such as signage and overtly prominent CCTV cameras whose design and use of materials are out of keeping with the character of the Conservation Area
- Use of tarmac road surfacing within the historic area of Bayley Lane which detracts from the character of the street
- Inconsiderate parking which blocks access to Castle Yard damaging paving and deterring visitors.
- Large refuse bins in Castle Yard which spoil the appearance of the square
- Insensitive positioning of street signage which impacts upon the appearance of historic buildings and other positive features
- The use of large numbers of A-boards causing obstructions to pavements.
- Use of inappropriate types of signage, such as plastic banners and window vinyls.
- Redundant or poorly maintained street furniture which gives the street scene a cluttered appearance and an impression of neglect
- Graffiti on the panels outside the Museum, which gives the impression of neglect

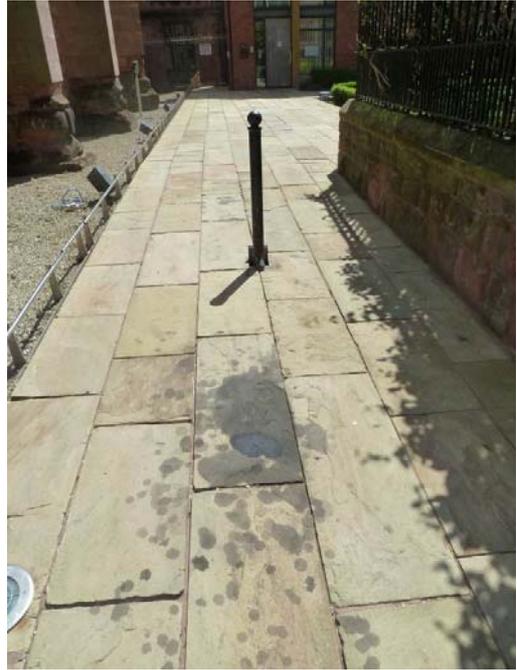


CCTV camera on the corner of 8 Hay Lane/24 Bayley Lane

Modern design way marker outside Museum on Bayley Lane



Intrusive refuse bins in Castle Yard



Damage to paving slabs at entrance to Castle Yard



Intrusive sign outside The Golden Cross at the corner of Hay Lane



Graffiti on steel panels and grit bin outside the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

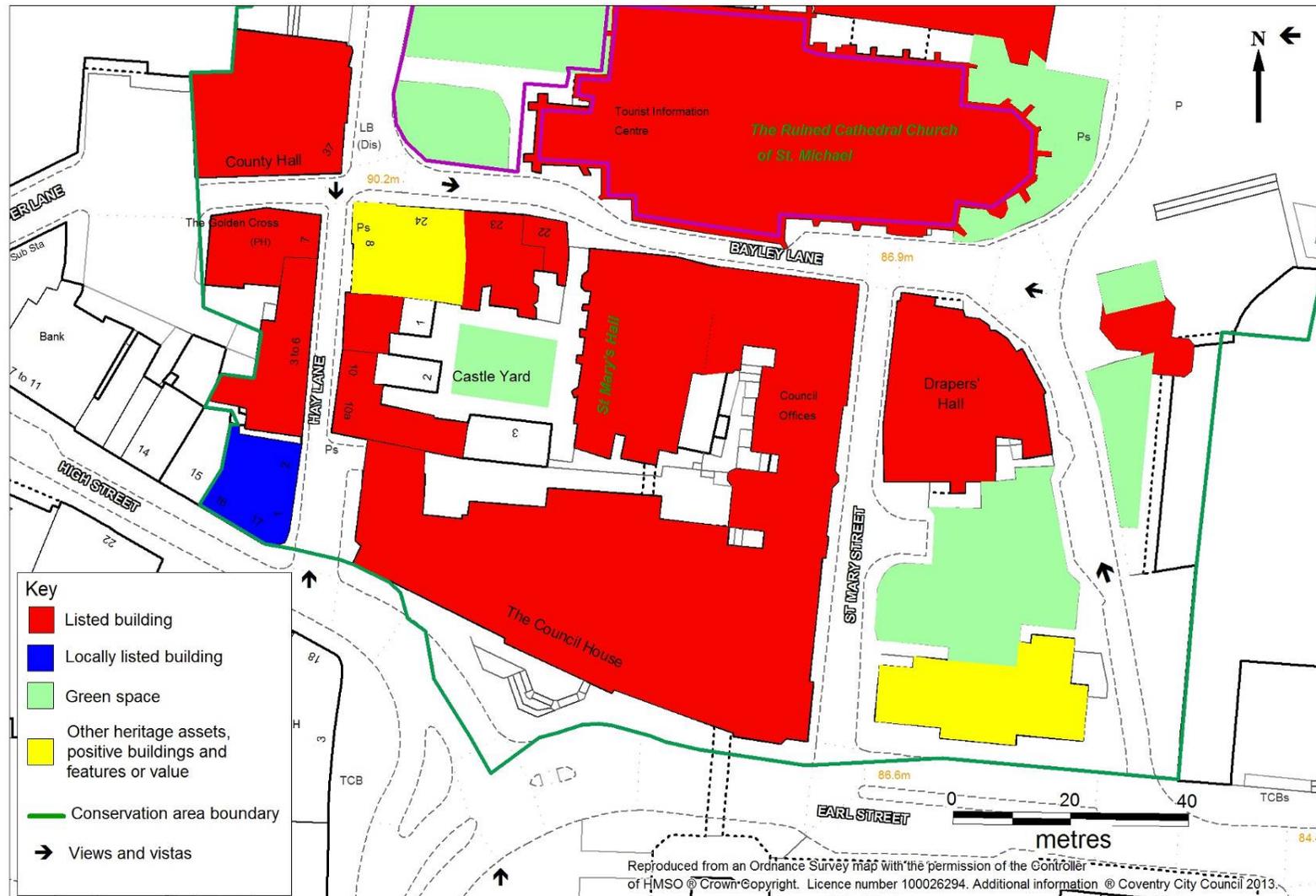


Figure 5: Locality 3 – Bayley Lane to Earl Street

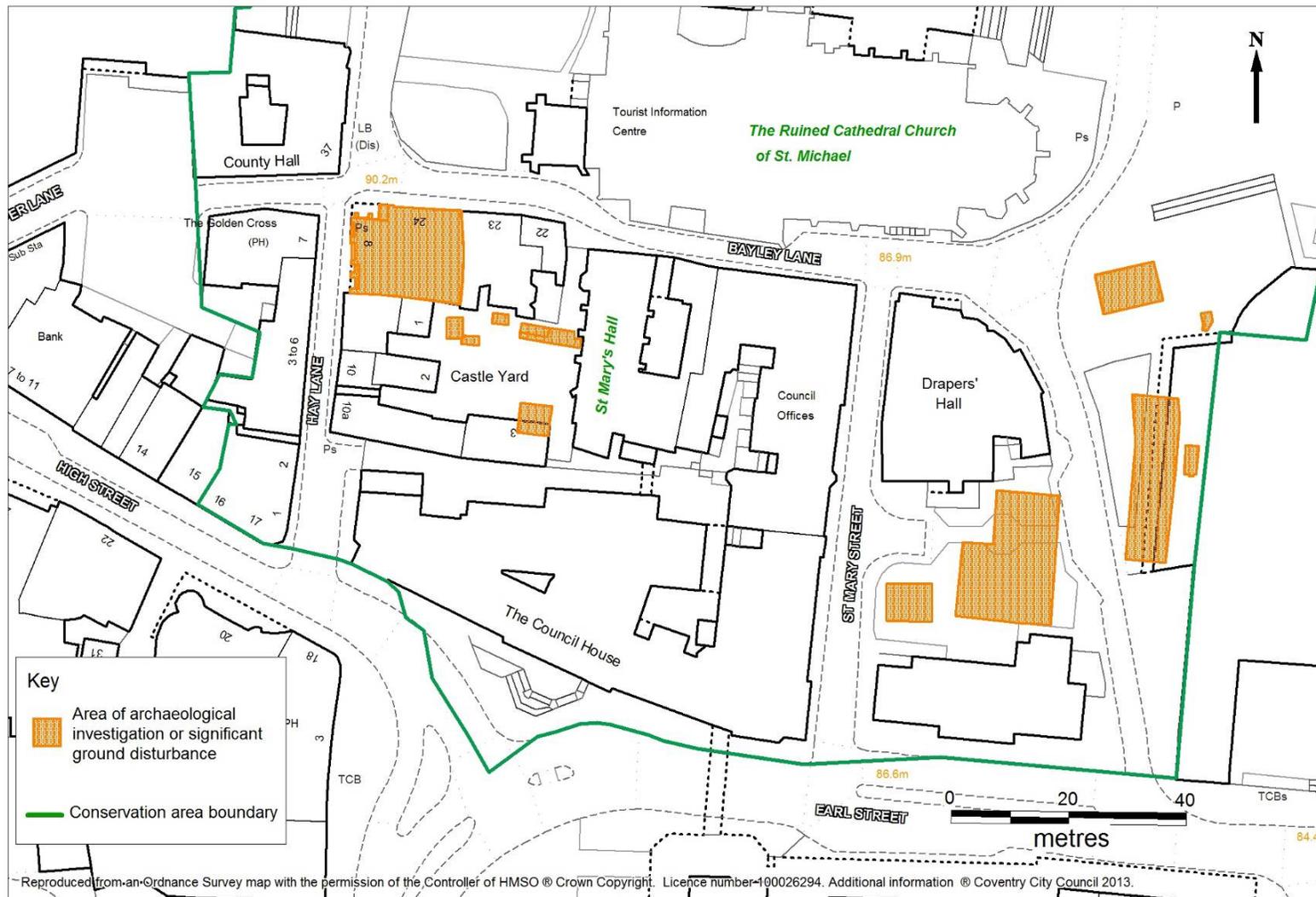


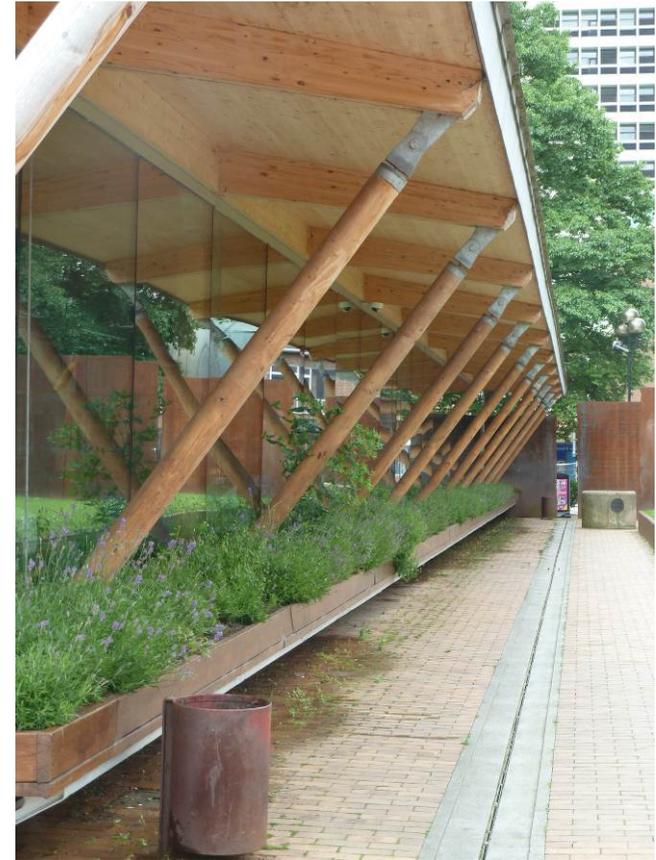
Figure 6: Areas of previous archaeological investigation or significant ground disturbance

Hill Top Conservation Appraisal

Current Palette



Hill Top Conservation Appraisal



The predominant building material in this area is red sandstone with most of the more recent buildings from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries wholly or at least partly using this material in order to complement older buildings. The southern end of Hay Lane is the exception where the buildings are largely of red brick. Buildings from the last two decades have also used glass and timber, which complements the timber-framed buildings. There is a mix of cobbled street surfaces and stone paving. The style of the street furniture such as railings and street lamps contributes to the historic atmosphere of the area. The area is punctuated with several green spaces, particularly in the vicinity of the Museum, but there are fewer than in the other two parts of the Conservation Area.

3.0 Key Issues

In light of the above appraisal and the identification of the positive and negative factors in each locality area, the following issues have been identified as being most relevant to the continuing preservation of the special historic character and appearance of the Hill Top Conservation Area.

- Inappropriate signage, particularly banners, window vinyls and estate agents boards which have a negative impact on the appearance of individual buildings and the street scene as a whole.
- There is a need for the provision of improved bin storage facilities and to review waste collection arrangements to avoid the need to leave bins in prominent locations and obstructing pavements.
- There is some redundant and poorly maintained street furniture which needs to be removed or replaced.
- Improvements to directional signage and interpretation of the archaeological remains are needed.
- Large areas of hard-landscaping like University Square attract activities such as skateboarding which causes damage to steps and street furniture and sometimes creating a nuisance for other users of the Area.
- There are several locations that are prone to graffiti which gives the impression of neglect. Where graffiti appears efforts should be made to remove it promptly.
- Several approaches into the Area such as Pepper Lane, New Buildings and the lower end of Hill Top lane are unattractive and discouraging to potential users. The poor quality environments also have a detrimental impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.
- There is some inconsistency in the inclusion of buildings of historic architectural interest and scheduled monuments on the Statutory Lists.
- There is a need to revise the Conservation Area boundary to reflect development that has occurred since 1969.
- There are important views and vistas looking towards the Cathedrals and Holy Trinity, and along the Conservation Area's historic lanes that should be preserved.
- There are limited facilities for parking which means that cars have a very limited impact on the Area and this should be maintained. Additional measures should be taken to prevent thoughtless parking that obstructs pavements.
- Trees and green spaces are an important element of the Conservation Area. They provide a pleasant environment for people to relax in the heart of the busy city centre, in addition to enhancing views and vistas and the setting of individual buildings and they should be protected and enhanced.
- Several buildings have been constructed within the Conservation Area in recent years which have enhanced it and this high standard of design should be maintained.

- Heritage-led regeneration of the area north of Priory Row has greatly enhanced this part of the Conservation Area by adding public spaces, quality buildings and a visitor attraction that interprets the area's history. This should be a template for further developments within and adjoining the Area.
- Cathedral Lanes shopping centre on Broadgate and the Britannia Hotel on Fairfax Street both negatively impact upon the Conservation Area. Cathedral Lanes obscures the views of the spires from the Upper Precinct and blocks the route through from Broadgate while the Britannia Hotel is neglected and creates a poor environment to the rear of the Cathedral.
- The areas of cobbled surfaces present access problems for those with impaired vision and mobility, the surfaces need to be properly maintained or alternative smooth surfaces need to be provided.
- Stronger links need to be created between the principal stakeholders in the Conservation Area (the Cathedral, Holy Trinity, Culture Coventry, Coventry University and the City Council) to secure mutually beneficial improvements.

4.0 Proposed Boundary Alterations

Having reviewed the current extent of the Hill Top Conservation Area three areas for possible inclusion have been identified and are shown in Figure 7.

4.1 Area 1 – The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

Completed in 1960, the museum and art gallery is constructed in brick with pillars faced in Hornton stone. External details include diaper brickwork and applique sculptures but overall the materials reflect those used in the Upper Precinct. As a complete contrast, a glass and timber extension with a curved roof was added to the building in 2007 and now sits partially within the current boundary.

Several important works of art are displayed on or around the exterior of the building. On the east gable are five stone panels that were installed in 1957 and represent the collections of the museum; painting, archaeology, sculpture and natural history, with the City's arms in the centre. On the southern wall are two panels entitled 'Man's Struggle' by Walter Ritchie from 1959. Originally located in the Upper Precinct, the carved relief panels examine man's fight to control the forces outside and within him. On the southern side of the museum on Earl Street is a bronze full length statue of Elisabeth Frink who created the eagle lectern in Coventry Cathedral. The sculpture dates to 1956 and is by F.E. McWilliam. It was shown in the 'Metomorphsis' exhibition at the Herbert in 1966 and subsequently placed for permanent display outside the gallery in what is now an area of green space. This lawned area bordered by mature trees provides a pleasant outlook for visitors using the museum café terrace. The Earl Street side of the museum and its grounds are bordered by a low sandstone wall which complements the sandstone buildings within the Conservation Area, two of which are visible further west along Earl Street.



View of the northern wing of the museum from University Square

'Man's Struggle' on the southern wall of the Museum

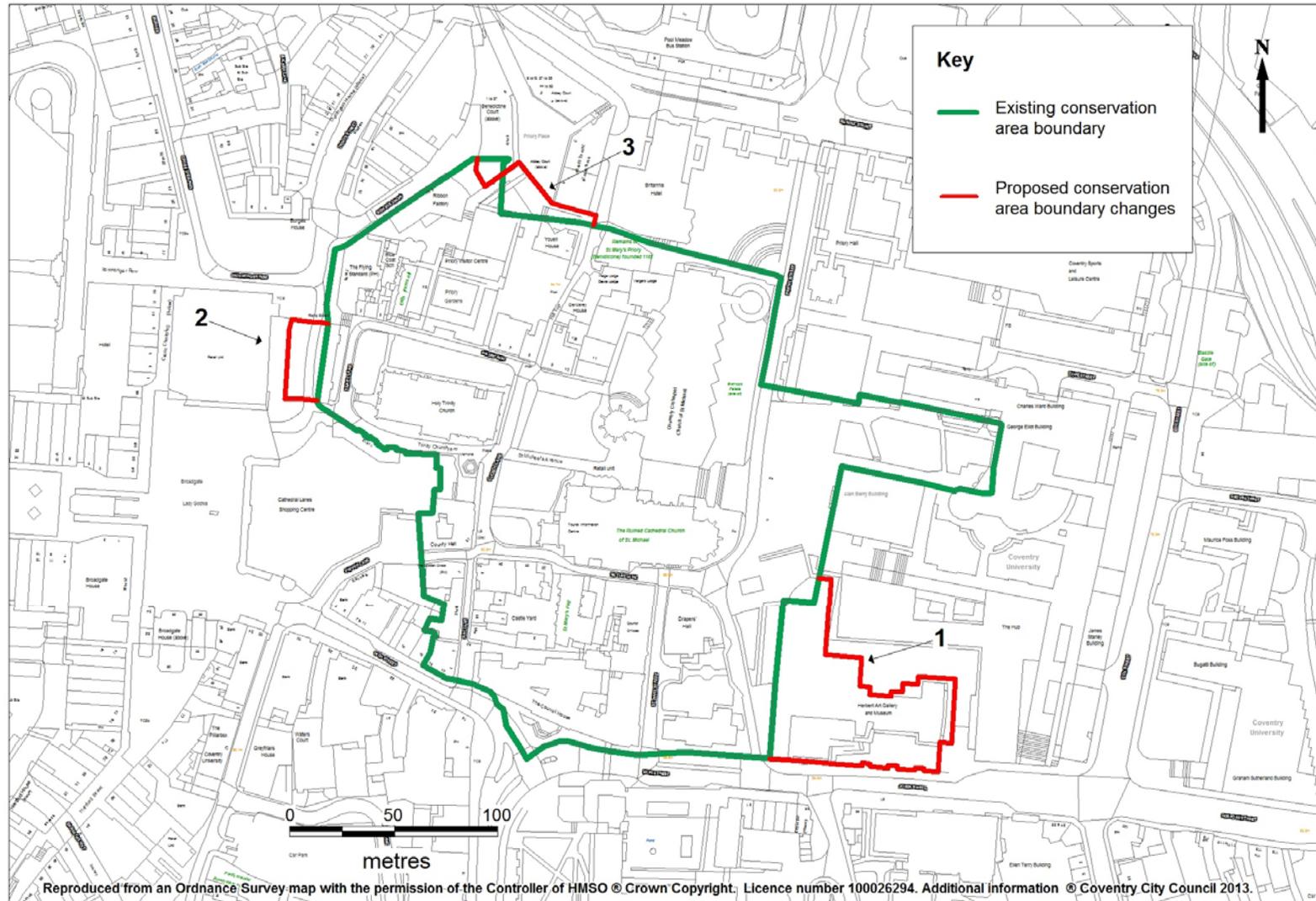


Figure 7: Proposed changes to the existing Conservation Area boundary

4.2 Area 2 – Area West of Holy Trinity Church

As part of the changes to the layout of Broadgate in 2012 an area of green space, in the form of two lawned areas with seating, was created to the west of Holy Trinity Church. This, and the sandstone wall at the northern end, has greatly enhanced the setting of the church and Priory Row in addition to expanding much needed green space in the city centre. The current boundary cuts through the eastern lawn but it should be moved westwards to include both lawns and the sandstone wall.

Area of green space and seating west of Holy Trinity Church



4.3 Area 3 – Priory Place



Passing between the former ribbon weaving factory and the Cloister Garden a wooden footbridge leads down into Priory Place. The eye is immediately drawn to the *Waterwindow* art installation, whose water cascade and pool add to the tranquil atmosphere of this enclosed space. The current Conservation Area boundary cuts through the southern end of Benedictine Court and the middle of the *Waterwindow* art installation and runs east towards Hill Top. It is proposed that the boundary is amended to omit Benedictine Court and include the wooden footbridge, the *Waterwindow* and the seating area adjacent to it.

Useful Contacts

Coventry City Council Contacts

General development control enquiries concerning Hill Top Conservation Area should be referred to the Development Management Team. planning@coventry.gov.uk Telephone: 024 7683 1212

Enquiries concerning the Hill Top Conservation Area and listed buildings should be referred to the Local Authority's Conservation and Archaeology Officer.

Telephone: 024 7683 1271, email: heritage@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries relating to trees within the Conservation Area should be addressed to the Local Authority's Arboricultural Officer. Telephone: 024 7683 1269

Enquiries relating to the Historic Environment Record should be addressed to the Historic Environment Record Officer. Telephone: 024 7683 2795, email: heritage@coventry.gov.uk

National Organisations

English Heritage

West Midlands Office, The Axis, 10 Holliday St, Birmingham, West Midlands B1 1TG

Tel: 0161 242 1400 www.english-heritage.org.uk

Email: westmidlands@english-heritage.org.uk

Victorian Society

The Victorian Society

1 Priory Gardens Bedford Park London W4 1TT

Telephone: 020 8994 1019 www.victorian-society.org.uk Email: admin@victorian-society.org.uk

Georgian Group

6 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 5DX

Telephone: 087 1750 2936 www.georgiangroup.org.uk Email: info@georgiangroup.org.uk

Twentieth Century Society

70 Cowcross Street London EC1M 6EJ

Telephone: 020 7250 3857 www.c20society.org.uk Email: coordinator@c20society.org.uk

Institute of Historic Building Conservation

Jubilee House, High Street, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6HA

Telephone: 01747 873133 www.ihbc.org.uk Email: admin@ihbc.org.uk

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Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

APPENDIX

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

The points below suggest specific actions that could be taken to enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

1. SIGNAGE	
<p>1.1 The No Entry sign at the corner of Priory Row and Cuckoo Lane could be removed because there are two bollards preventing vehicular access down Priory Row.</p>	
<p>1.2 Remove and re-site the Restricted Parking Zone sign next to the Golden Cross, corner of Hay Lane and Pepper Lane. It is situated very close to the building and is visually intrusive.</p>	

1.3 Remove redundant one-way sign attached to Drapers Hall.



1.4 Remove redundant sign on wall in front of Holy Trinity Church.



1.5 Move way marker behind Britannia Hotel on Hill Top to a more prominent position to encourage use of the route west into Priory Place and the route east into Priory Street.



1.6 Keep trees in Cuckoo Lane pruned so foliage does not obscure way markers.



1.7 Repair or replace the signage for Castle Yard attached to the gable of 22 Bayley Lane.



1.8 There is a need to improve the directional signage for the Priory Gardens and the Priory Visitor Centre, particularly from Priory Row and Priory Place so that visitors know that they have arrived and can find out about the archaeological remains within the garden. An interpretive board upon the bridge would greatly improve the sites interpretation and draw visitors on to the Visitors Centre and Undercrofts.



1.9 More obvious directional signage is needed in the courtyard at St. Mary's Guild Hall and inside the entrance to enable visitors to find the hall more easily. Currently it is not very obvious and not very welcoming.



2.0 STREET FURNITURE

2.1 Remove redundant pole outside the east end of the cathedral ruins.



2.2 Remove redundant pole opposite 9 Priory Row at the corner of the Unity Garden.



2.3 Remove lamp post base next to Holy Trinity churchyard wall on Cuckoo Lane.



2.5 Change spherical street lights to lanterns throughout the conservation area.



2.6 The metal cabinets in the cathedral ruins should be housed in a wooden structure similar to that at the west end of the building



2.7 CCTV camera attached to the building on the corner of Hay Lane and Bayley Lane intrudes on the street scene and should be painted an appropriate colour that compliments the red sandstone walls of the building.



2.8 Refurbish benches outside north entrance to the museum.



2.9 Repair and repaint the water pump on Bayley Lane outside the Guildhall.



3.0 REFUSE AND GRIT CONTAINERS

3.1 Existing grit containers on Cuckoo Lane, Bayley Lane, Castle Yard, the north end of the Cathedral and in front of Holy Trinity Church should be repainted or preferably replaced by an alternative constructed from materials sympathetic to their surroundings.



Corner of Pepper Lane and Cuckoo Lane



Bayley Lane

3.2 Refuse containers and wheelie bins should be stored in areas away from the street frontage preferably in purpose built structures made from materials that are sympathetic to their surroundings. Specific areas where this is needed are in Castle Yard, the rear of Holy Trinity Church on Cuckoo Lane, and at 11 Priory Row. Another measure could be to review the waste collection arrangements to remove the need for bins to be left on the street all day obstructing pavements



Rear of Holy Trinity Church



Castle Yard



11 Priory Row

3.3 Refuse should always be disposed in an appropriate container and not left outside where it makes the area look unkempt.



Rubbish left outside buildings in Castle Yard



Rubbish left outside buildings in Castle Yard

4.0 IMPROVEMENTS TO PAVEMENTS AND ROAD SURFACES

4.1 The character of much of the conservation area is enhanced by its cobbled road surfaces. There are three areas where cobbles could be used to further enhance the street scene; the southern end of Hay Lane, the east end of Bayley Lane and the southern end of St. Mary's Street. Any such resurfacing work would have to include the provision of smooth routes and dropped curbs to ensure that the access of wheelchair users or the visually impaired is not detrimentally affected.



Hay Lane



Corner of Bayley Lane and Cathedral Square

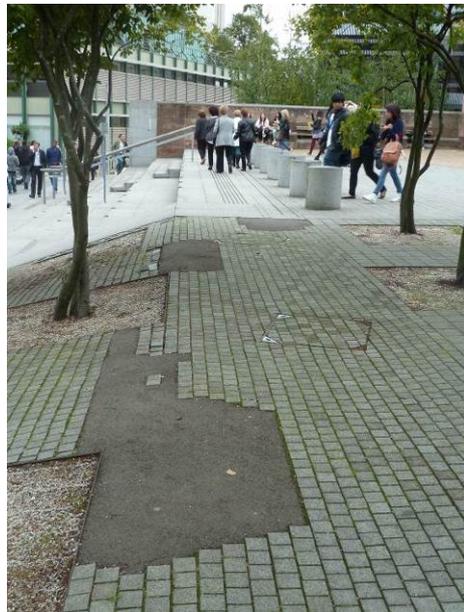


Bayley Lane



St. Mary's Street

4.2 There are a number of areas where repairs are needed to setts and paved areas, the use of tarmac to patch these areas looks untidy.



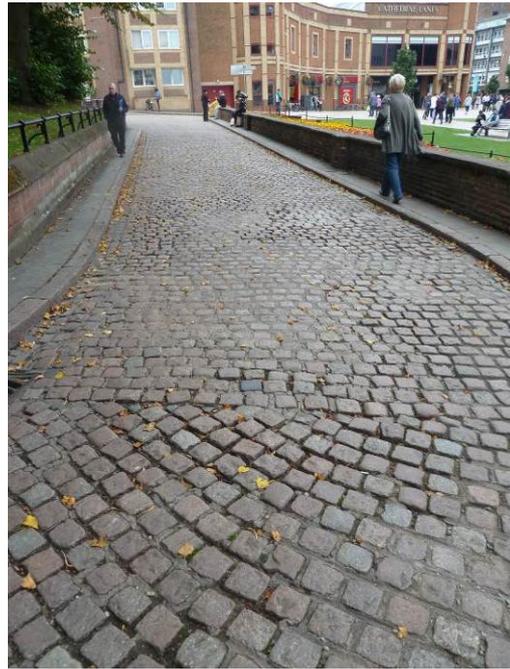
Area outside northern entrance to the museum



Repairs needed to cobbles in Priory Square



Repairs to paving slabs on Priory Street



Loose setts at corner of Trinity Lane and Priory Row

5.0 GENERAL MAINTENANCE

5.1 Broken architectural lighting at the Priory Undercrofts needs repairing and the light casing needs cleaning.



5.2 Missing letters on the Priory Undercroft sign need replacing



5.3 Ceiling above the Priory Visitor Centre entrance needs cleaning and repainting.



5.4 Mail box and cigarette bin outside the entrance to the Priory Visitor Centre need cleaning and maintaining.



6.0 APPROACHES TO THE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1 **Pepper Lane**, is the medieval route linking the High Street with Bayley Lane although the historic character of the street has been almost entirely lost and today it is a tidy but uninspiring service yard for the Cathedral Lanes shopping centre filled with utilitarian galvanised railings, bins and plant equipment. It is the most direct route to the Cathedral from Coventry's main shopping area and any future re-development of Cathedral Lanes must address and enhance this wasted space.



6.2 The No Parking sign on the gable end of County hall should be removed.

6.3 Paint on the sandstone wall of the Golden Cross should be removed.



6.7 Trinity Street/New Buildings.

The gateway to the conservation area from Trinity Street needs to be made more obvious. The way marker that directs pedestrians to the Priory Gardens, Visitor Centre and Priory Place could be moved to a more prominent position. It is currently obscured by road and other signs that are located too close to it and the signage and advertisements at 12 Trinity Street detract attention from it.



6.8 Straighten / replace the steel bollards on the corner of Trinity Street and New Buildings.

6.9 Provide bin stores constructed from materials that are in keeping with this area of the conservation area.

6.10 Install a gate across the entrance to the service yard to block the view.



6.11 Lane between Priory Street and Hill Top (at north end of Cathedral).

A lack of signage on Priory Street and poor placement of signage on Hill Top have led to this lane becoming a lost space that is under-used as a route for getting to and from Priory Place and Priory Street.



6.12 The bollard at the junction of the lane and Priory Street should be re-positioned to control the number of cars driving down the lane and using it as an unofficial parking area and blocking the thoroughfare.



6.13 The balcony area of the Britannia Hotel, which is visible to pedestrians using this route, is currently used as a place to dump redundant furniture, carpet etc. and gives an impression of neglect and degeneration of the area. It was designed to provide a close link with the Cathedral and still could do if the hotel was ever improved and refurbished.



6.14 At the entrance to Priory Place off Hill Top lane by the Priory Undercrofts pedestrians are made aware that they are entering the World Food Quarter but the sign is located next to a refuse store whose door is open revealing an overflowing bin and graffiti. This gives a poor first impression of the area and probably dissuades people from investigating the Hill Top area further. The door to the refuse store should be closed at all times and the graffiti removed.



7.0 Miscellaneous

7.1 Barriers around the Cathedral chapels need to be removed once the problems with the slate cladding have been solved and repaired.



7.2

Take measures to prevent thoughtless parking that blocks pavements thoroughfares and impact on the character of the Conservation Area in a negative way.

