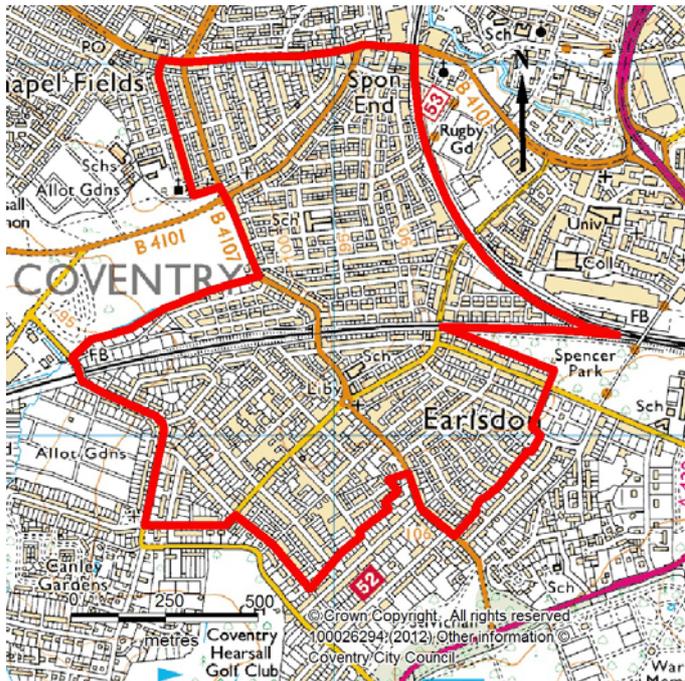


**Earlsdon and Chapelfields Character Area**

**HLC Area 17**



**Location and Context**

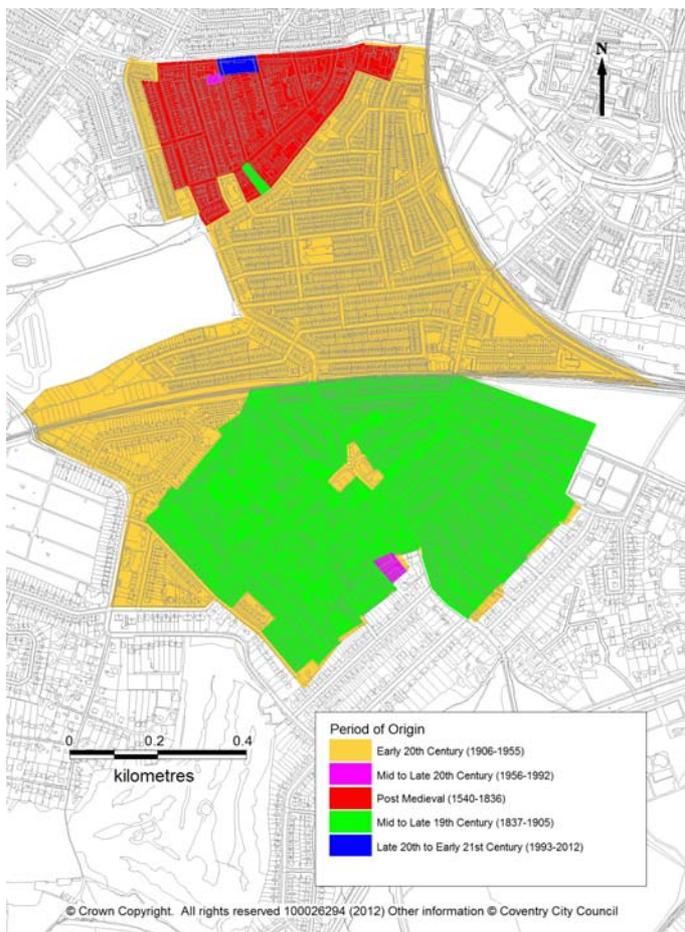
The Character Area is located to the south west of the city centre and bisected by the Coventry-Birmingham railway line. The area is mostly surrounded by housing; however, Spon End –an area associated with industry since the medieval period – is located to the north east of the Character Area. Hearsall Common is located to the west and the Coventry-Bedworth railway line acts as a boundary to the east.

**Heritage Designations in the Character Area**

- Scheduled Ancient Monuments: 0
- Archaeological Constraint Areas: 2
- Listed Buildings: 2
- Locally Listed Buildings: 34
- Conservation Areas: 1
- Registered Parks and Gardens: 0

**Historic Development**

The most significant aspect of the historic development of the area is the expansion of the watchmaking industry in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The industry originated in the vicinity of Spon Street located to the north east of the Character Area. Its success resulted in two satellite developments, one called Chapelfields – comprising Mount Street, Lord Street, Duke Street, Craven Street. The second, known as Earlsdon – comprising Earlsdon Street, Poplar Road, Providence Street, Cromwell Street, Warwick Street, Clarendon Street, Moor



Street – was built as a result of an early building society movement, the Freehold Land Societies. It offered the opportunity for Coventry artisans to leave the crowded inner city by buying available development land.

Chapelfields is now a Conservation Area and includes numerous locally listed buildings and some listed buildings. Conversely, the original Earlsdon area has no statutory status. Chapelfields is so-named because the new street layout was built on agricultural fields of the same name. The name is mentioned in a document of 1751 and Chappell Close is recorded in a document of 1581. The chapel in question was part of a medieval leper hospital and was originally called St Leonard's Chapel. It was located on the site of today's 13-19 Allesley Old Road. It is known to have existed by 1253 and by the 16<sup>th</sup> century was known as Magdalens Chapel. The chapel was probably associated with the Manor of Sponna; the manor house was located just outside the Character Area to the north on the site of the present Black Horse public house. Surveys dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century indicate that before the development of Chapelfields and Earlsdon, the Character Area as a whole comprised almost entirely of enclosed, agricultural fields. The surveys also indicate that the alignments of Allesley Old Road and Earlsdon Avenue North (then called Eylesden Lane) date to at least the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and probably earlier. The Coventry-Birmingham railway line was built in 1838 and the Coventry-Bedworth line was opened in 1850. The Character Area saw the rapid development of terraced housing at the turn of the century.



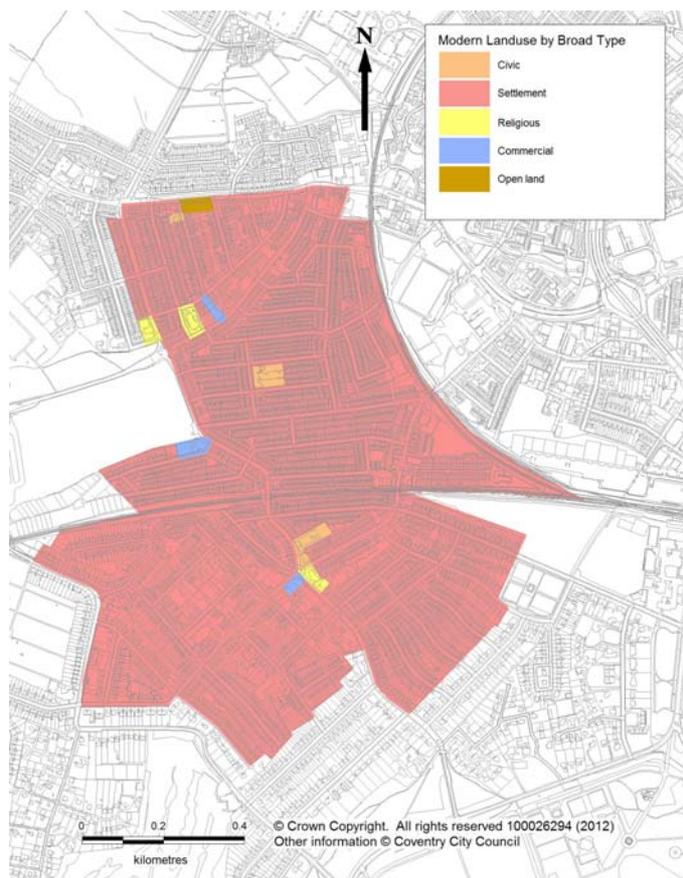
*Mount Street, Chapelfields*

Between 1906 and 1914 the geographically distinct suburbs of Chapelfields and Earlsdon were completely subsumed by housing developments that infilled the open spaces between them. Locally listed buildings built during early 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion include St Mary Magdalen's Church, Hearsall Community Primary School, Earlsdon Primary School,

Earlsdon Library, Earlsdon Methodist Church, City Arms Pub, and the former Allard Cycle Company.

### Modern Character

The vast majority of the Character Area comprises homogenous terraced housing built on long, straight roads arranged in a grid pattern. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century development of Earlsdon is a clear exception. Earlsdon Street, Poplar Road, Providence Street, Cromwell Street, Warwick Street, Clarendon Street and Moor Street contrast with the remainder of the



Character Area as the buildings in this area are arranged in blocks. The alignment of Poplar Road in particular cuts into the surrounding street pattern. The buildings in this area are also much more irregular in comparison with the rest of the Character Area. Industry and shops are integrated with the housing. Like the remainder of the Character Area, residential buildings take the form of small terraces which are set back slightly from the pavement and have back gardens. However, the terraces are shorter and have more variation in building style. Terraces in the Chapelfields development have similar proportions and layout as the rest of the Character Area and are less easy to distinguish from the turn of the century developments. These terraces are plain apart from decorative window and door lintels.



Craven Street, Chapelfields

They too are set back from the pavement and have low, brick wall boundaries. Terraces in both the historic cores of Chapelfields and Earlsdon have examples of surviving workshops for watch production to the rear of the properties. In the remainder of the Character Area, terraces are set back from the road with low brick walls and tend to be plain with decorative window and door lintels.

Some of the houses built at the turn of the century have bay windows. None of the properties have parking facilities and the narrow streets and pavements are congested with on-road parking. In general this is an area of compact, uniform housing with no trees or open green spaces, although some amenities such as schools and libraries are present.

### **Geology and Topography**

The Character Area overlies sandstone and argillaceous rocks (sedimentary rock formed by clay deposits) which are a mixture of sandstone and conglomerate. It is relatively flat and lies between 95m and 100m above sea level.