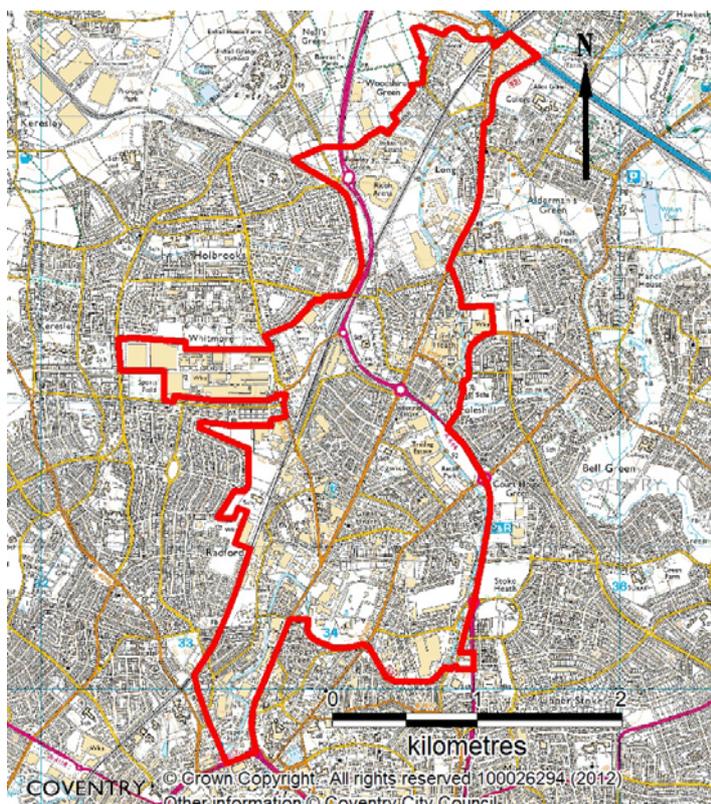


Foleshill Character Area**HLC Area 24****Location and Context**

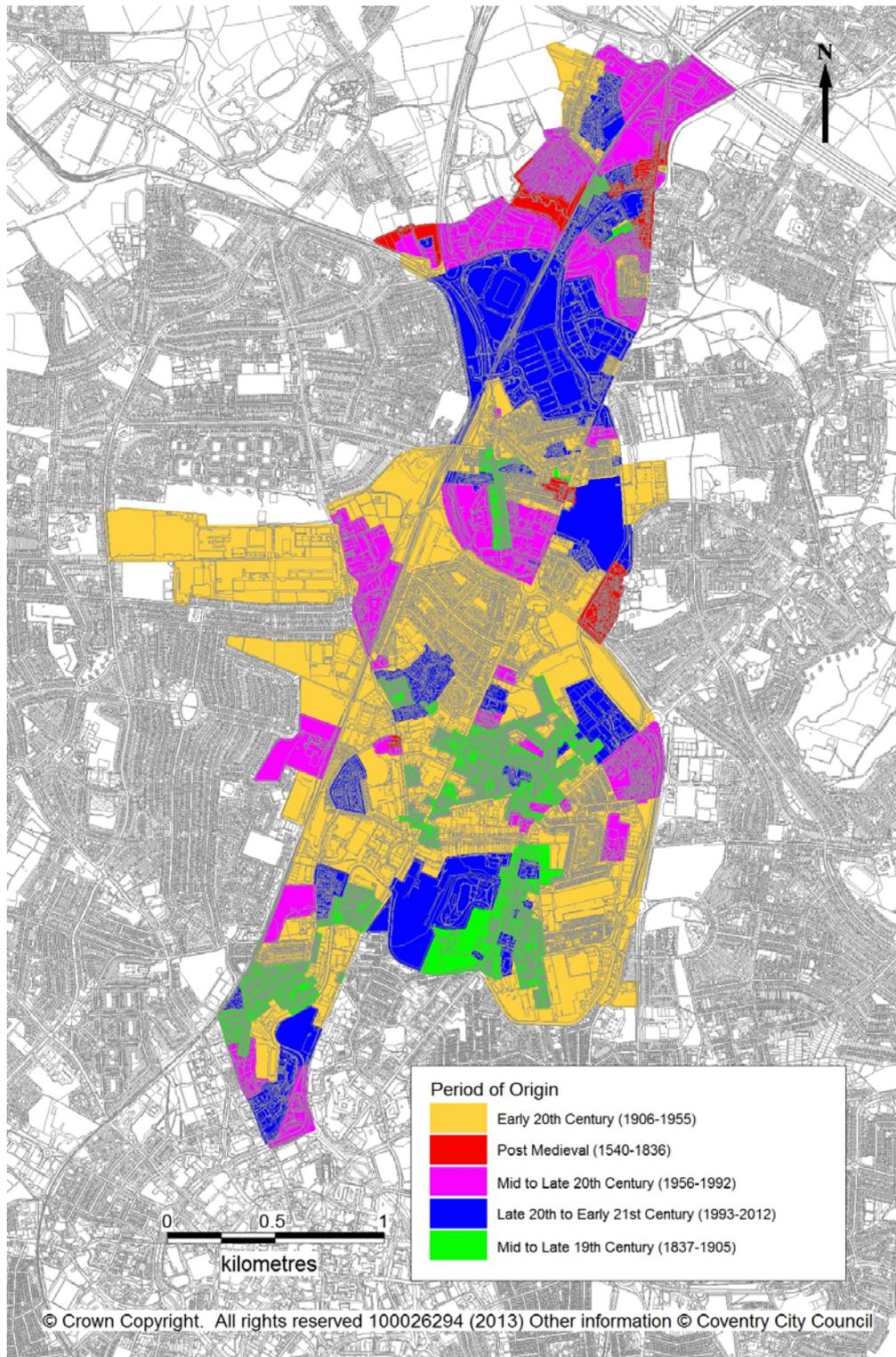
A mixed-use residential and industrial area to the north of the city centre. The Character Area follows the Coventry – Bedworth railway line and is sandwiched between areas of settlement. However, the predominant feature of the area and the reason for its industrial development is the Coventry Canal.

Legal Designations in the Area

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: 0
 Archaeological Constraint Areas: 19
 Listed Buildings: 2
 Locally Listed Buildings: 31
 Conservation Areas: 1
 Registered Parks and Gardens: 0

**Historic Development**

Much of the Character Area falls within the ancient parish of Foleshill. During the medieval period there may have been an area of settlement in the Old Church Road/Spring Road area surrounded by the open field systems of Edgewick Field, Shaw Field, Three Well Field and Church Field. To the south was a large area of waste or common land called Great Heath and to the west another called Little Heath. Elsewhere in the Character Area at this time it is likely that there were enclosures and assarts. At the time of the Inclosure of the commons and open fields in 1775 the Inclosure Award described enclosed fields already in existence as 'ancient'.



In addition to changes to the landscape as a result of the Inclosure, the late 18th Century saw the building of the Coventry Canal through the Character Area and the turnpiking of the Foleshill and Stoney Stanton Roads which improved access to coal supplies to the north. Initially this had little impact for the city's emerging trades of silk ribbon weaving and watchmaking. As the population grew, however, coalmining and the spread of the Coventry ribbon weaving industry into Foleshill resulted in the emergence of roadside squatter and

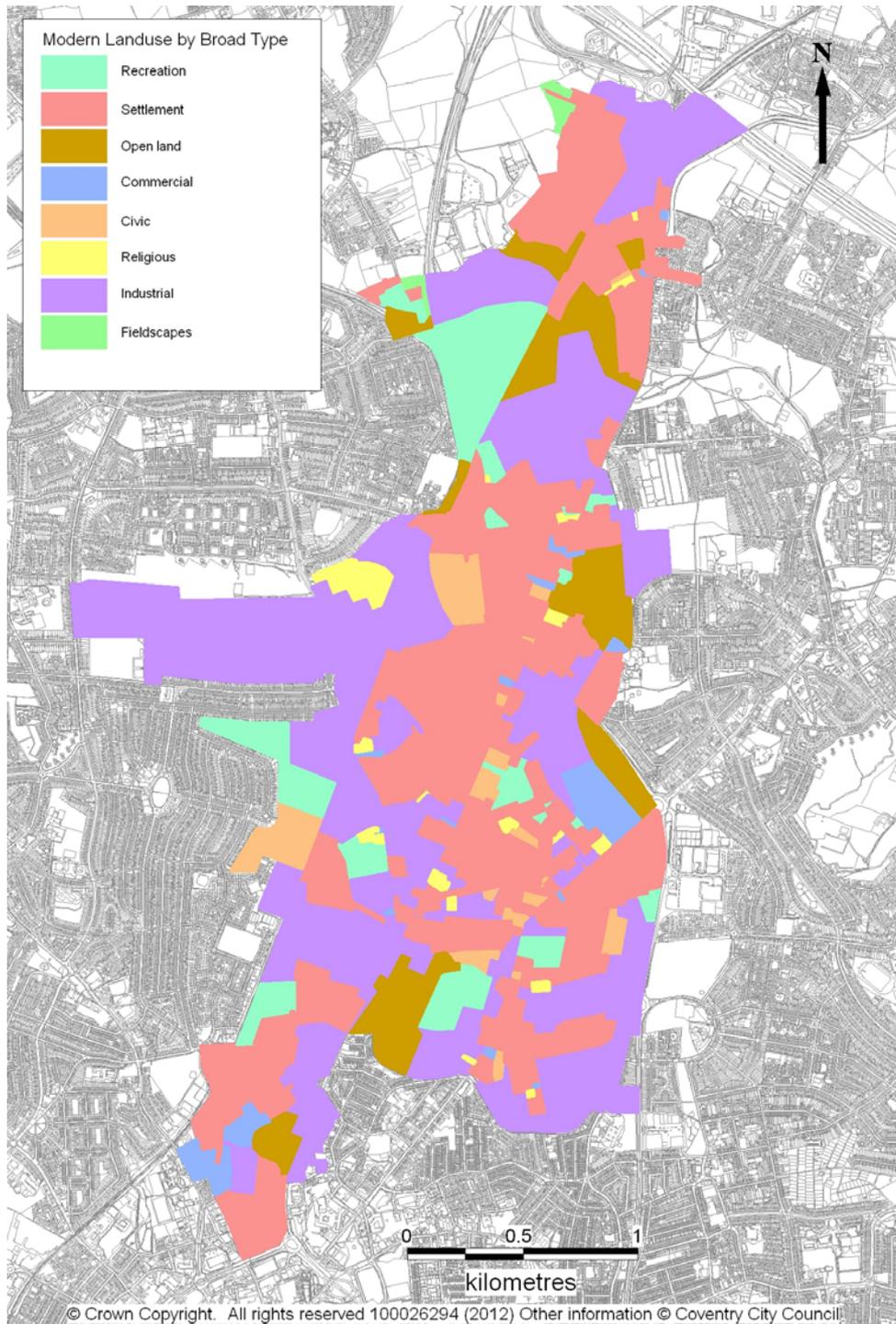
common land colonisation hamlets in the area. The enclosure of the extensive Foleshill heaths had also opened up new development possibilities for small communities strung alongside the newly defined turnpikes and enclosure roads and the new canals. The late ribbon weaving boom of the 1850's also intensified the sporadic roadside ribbon and squatter settlements developments across the enclosed heaths of Foleshill at Edgwick, Little Heath, Longford. New housing was also built as a result of an early building society movement, the Freehold Land Societies, which offered Coventry artisans the opportunity to leave the crowded city centre and buy available development land. Examples include houses on the north side of Red Lane that were built in about 1852. Communication links in the Character area were further improved with the opening of the Coventry and Nuneaton Branch Railway in 1850 and the tramway along Foleshill Road sometime before 1888.

The ribbon weaving industry collapsed in the 1860s but a second boom period ensued in the 1890s with the development of the cycle industry, which quickly morphed into the car industry. The population of Coventry exploded in the early 20th Century resulting in intensive house building in the Character Area and areas of Foleshill were quickly filled with the tightly built, absolutely regular streets of the narrow fronted, tunnel back terraced houses typical of the Midlands. The opening of the Midland Lime and Brickworks (later known as Websters) in the late 19th Century in south of the Character Area was probably driven by the demand for the building materials needed for large areas of new housing.

Industrialisation of the area continued into the early 20th Century with the building of the Coventry Corporation Gas Works between Rowley's Green and Little Heath between 1905 and 1913, the Coventry Ordnance Works on Red Lane from 1906, the expansion of the Daimler car factory on Sandy Lane, the development of Courtauld's rayon works and a decade later the Standard and Swallow Motor Works and Dunlop in the former First World War munitions factory at Whitmore Park. By 1936 the vast majority of the Character Area was built up with industrial buildings interspersed with housing for the workers.

The boom period came to an end in the 1970s and most new housing since then has been built on 'brownfield' sites, land made redundant by contracting industrialisation. A major redevelopment on brownfield land is the Ricoh Arena and Arena Park supermarket on the site of the former site of the gasworks at Rowley's Green. Elsewhere large areas of the Character Area lie derelict and awaiting re-development such as the former City Council Central Depot of the Foleshill Road, Websters Brickworks on the Stoney Stanton Road and the former Courtauld's Works at Little Heath.

Modern Character



A small area of pre-industrial housing survives along Spring Road. Housing in this area nestles in the meander of the canal and has a sense of seclusion from the rest of the Character Area. Settlement here is recorded on a 1699 map and the 1775 Inclosure Map depicts the cottages. The majority are small semi-detached houses and small terraces. These houses have a plain style although some have bay windows or decorative lintels.

Elsewhere there are areas of mid-19th Century housing associated with the ribbon weaving and watchmaking industries. The terraces have small house plots and small gardens to the rear. They have little or no set-back from the road and are built right up to the street corners. Their boundaries are defined by low brick walls and the roads on which they sit are straight and form a grid pattern. The pavements are narrow and there are a large number of cars parked on the streets. The houses have a uniformity of architectural style and materials which, together with the straight roads, creates channelled views. Decorative features including bay windows, recessed doorways and decorative terracotta on the roof eaves and on the door and window lintels break up the monotony of the brickwork. The Character Area still has an industrial feel to it and much of the area contains light industrial uses comprising warehouses, depots and offices which have developed gradually over time. Industry is first recorded on the 1888 Ordnance Survey and continued to develop to the end of the 20th century although there was a boom of industrial development at this location between 1905 and 1936. In general the more modern industrial buildings tend to be large, plain sheds although the piecemeal nature of development does provide some variation in shapes, sizes, building materials and style. The siting of the industrial buildings is 'unplanned' with pockets of industry integrated within areas of housing that are set between the corridors formed by the canal, the railway, the Foleshill Road and the Stoney Stanton Road.

Amenities such as shops, churches and schools are located within the residential areas. In general, neither the industrial nor the residential developments respect former features of the pre-industrial landscape. Across the character area there is a lack of open green space and trees.



Typical street scene of late 19th Century terraced houses Brooklyn Road.



The early 20th Century Challenge Cycle Works on Foleshill Road

Much of the Coventry Canal Conservation Area is located within the Character Area and incorporates a number of important industrial buildings including those at the former electricity works at Sandy Lane and the Courtauld's buildings on Foleshill road, all of which have been converted for modern use.

Geology and Topography

The area overlies mudstone and sandstone. There is a drift geology comprising an alluvial deposit which follows the watercourses comprising of sand with clay and gravel. This is generally flat land between 95m and 100m above sea level.