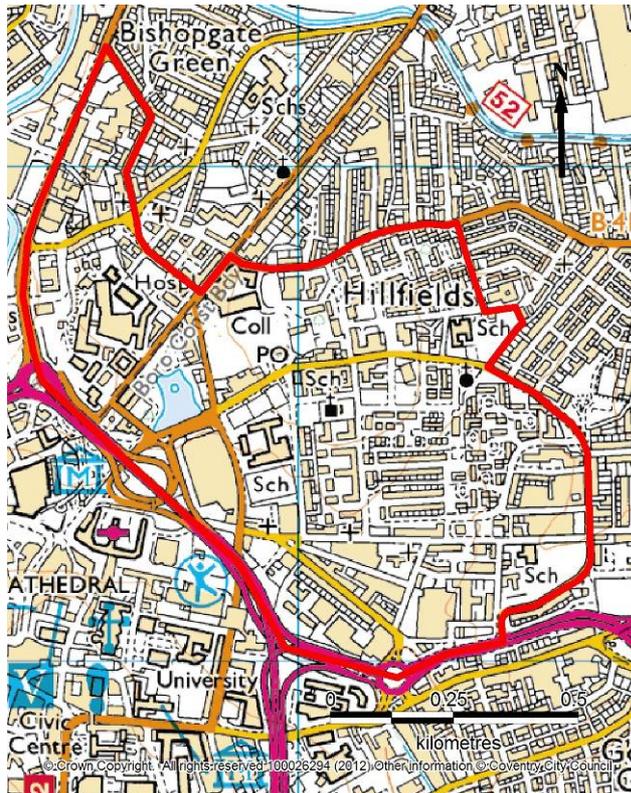


Location and Context

The Character Area is located to the northeast of the city centre. This is a mixed use Character Area comprising offices, residences – including some University Halls of Residence - and the former Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital. The Character Area is surrounded by suburbs to the east and the city centre to the south west.



Heritage Designations in the Character Area

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: 0
 Archaeological Constraint Areas: 13
 Listed Buildings: 5
 Locally Listed Buildings: 4
 Conservation Areas: 0
 Registered Parks and Gardens: 0

Historic Development

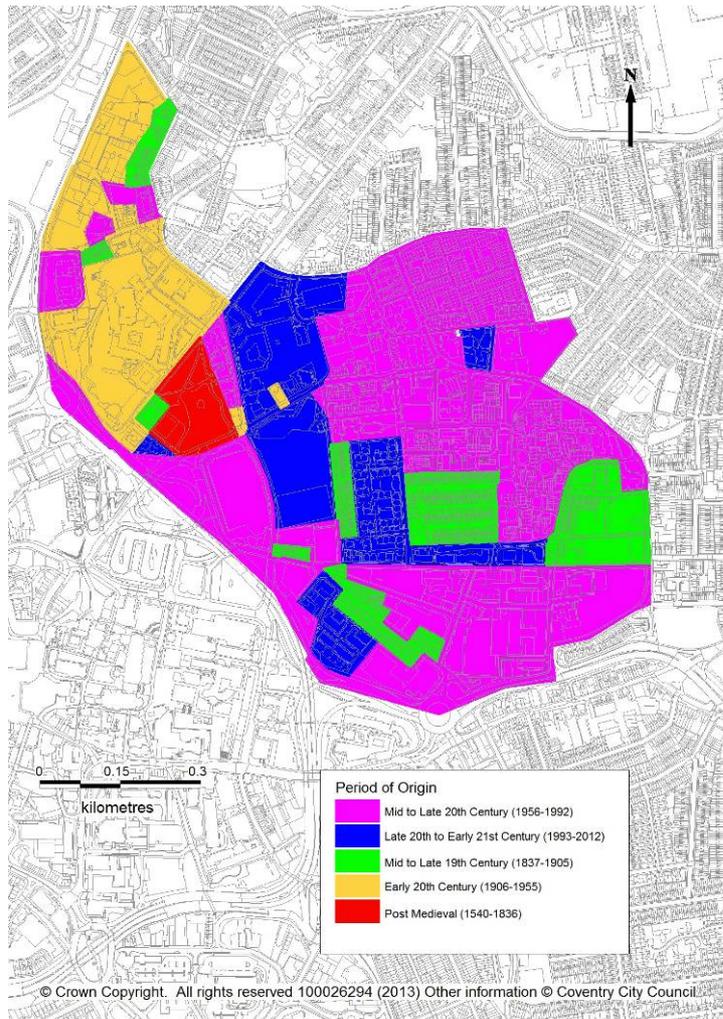
The area is likely to have been wooded in the Saxon period with archaeo-environmental samples, suggesting that trees were being coppiced nearby. In the later medieval period the area was principally agricultural land owned by St. Mary's Priory and lay beyond the built-up area of the city. The settlement of Potters Harnell which is known from documentary

sources is believed to lie somewhere within the area but has not yet been located by archaeology. A medieval landscape feature that still survives today is the Swanswell Pool which also belonged to St. Mary's Priory before the Dissolution. The pool served as a mill pond and a document of 1480 refers to people fishing and washing in the pool without the Prior's permission. The mill is recorded in a 1646 lease and was known as Old Swanswell House. At some point in the 18th century the original mill was demolished and the City Flour Mill was built on the same site which operated until the 1940s.

The area remained predominantly agricultural until the 1830's when the 'New Town', later known as Hillfields, was developed as a result of the successful growth of the ribbon weaving industry. Until this date grazing rights around the immediate outskirts of the city had prevented development expanding beyond the line of the city walls. The development of Hillfields is significant because it is the first expansion of Coventry outside the medieval core with new housing built along Primrose Hill Street, Victoria Street, King William Street, Canterbury Street, Yardley Street, Nelson Street, Waterloo Street, Albert Street, Charles Street, Wellington Street. To what extent it was a 'planned' or organised development is not clear but its significance to the city must have been recognised early on and is demonstrated by the fact it was referred to as New Town. A plan of the city dating to 1837 shows that the

new streets were already well built up albeit in a rather haphazard manner, and buildings ranged from a very formal terrace on the south side of Primrose Hill Street to several groups of 'back to backs' in courts.

Significant 19th century buildings in the Character Area include the Church of St Peter (c1841), the Church of St Mark (1869) and the Roman Catholic Church of St Mary and St Benedict (1893). The 1888 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map shows the majority of the Character Area as residential with some green spaces remaining. Several factories had sprung up including the Cox Street Mills (Chemical Works and Elastic Web Weaving) and



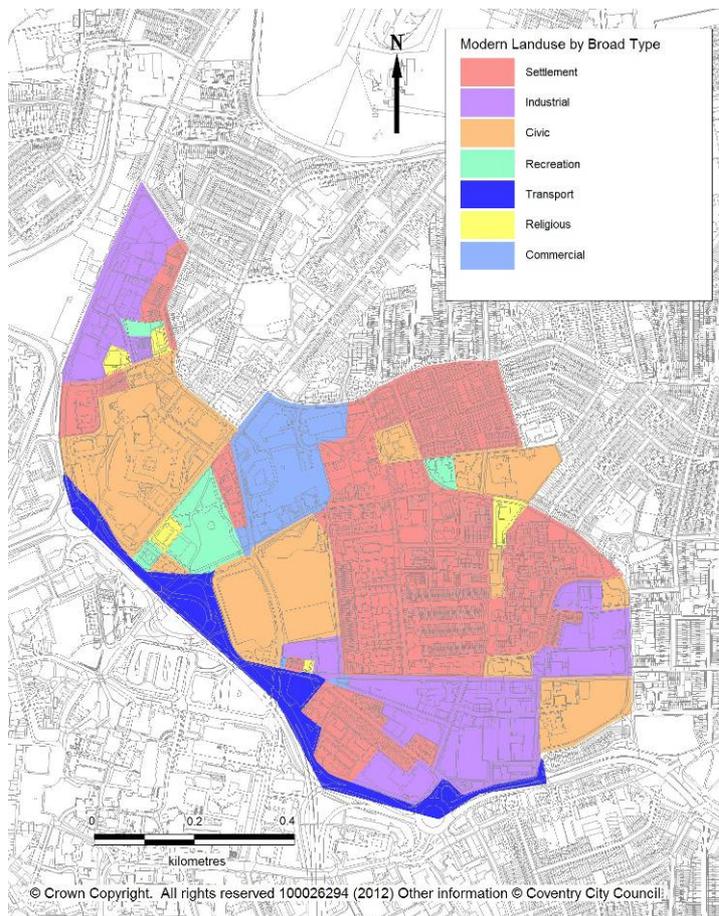
the Premier Cycle Works. A hospital was also present on the site of the now closed Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital although it was much smaller. By 1905 the remaining open spaces, mainly concentrated in the south of the area, had been developed for industry, including a cycle works and Saw and Planing Mills along the River Sherbourne. The Singer Motor Works along Vine Street is also first recorded in 1905. This large factory was demolished in the 1980s and replaced by Singer Hall university residences. The hospital expanded after 1888 but much of it was destroyed in the Second World War and rebuilt in the 1950s, although several early buildings do survive today and are listed buildings.

In 1951, Hillfields was declared one of three Areas of Comprehensive Development in Coventry and 53% of the houses

were considered unfit to live in. Compulsory purchase orders were served and redevelopment began in the 1960s. By the 1970s, many of the mid-19th Century terraces had been demolished and the street plan associated with the 19th century housing was mostly removed. To the north of King William Street the terraces were replaced with high rise tower blocks with distinctive 'gull wing' roofs in a landscaped setting. Some of these tower blocks were subsequently demolished c2004 to make way for the City College buildings. Pockets of 19th century terraced housing remain on Lower Ford Street, Winchester Street, Raglan Street and Colchester Street. A listed terrace of weavers houses survive on Charles Street.

Modern Character

A dominant feature of the Character Area is the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital site which now mostly been cleared apart for the Victorian buildings and some large, square-shaped utilitarian buildings with areas of car parking. Challenge Business Park is located to the north of the hospital and consists of small, low-lying warehouses. More warehouses are located to the south of Vauxhall Street. The remainder of the Character Area is residential. Small terraces dating to between 1888 and 1905 survive along Raglan, Winchester and Colchester Streets.



These terraces have a unique layout for Coventry. The front of the houses, which are built right up to the pavement, open out to a pedestrianized areas and vehicle access is to the rear only. This is not how they were originally built and it is likely that the change was made in the 1970s when the surrounding area was being redeveloped. The architecture of the terraces is uniform and fairly plain. The small, densely arranged, long terraces situated on straight roads have a homogenised appearance and create narrow, tunnelled views. Although many of the rear gardens have been converted for parking, the narrow road to the rear of the properties is congested. This road plan contrasts with terraced houses that were developed in the 1970s in the vicinity of Vernon Close and

Yardley Street which are arranged along curving roads and cul de sacs. The later properties have parking to the front and small gardens to the rear. There are also small pocket parks, off road parking and tree planting integrated with the housing. The architectural style in these areas is uniform and very plain. In the 1960s a cluster of tower blocks were built to the north of the Character Area. A small area around each of the tower blocks is landscaped with trees and parking facilities are also present. In the 1980s a student hall of residence was built on the site of the Singer factory. It has a strongly defined boundary and comprises small apartment blocks arranged in courtyards on brick surfaced roads. Every apartment block is built to the same architectural design which has simple lines with decorative brick work. In general, the area as a whole has a disparate character due to its mixed use and repeated episodes of redevelopment.



Listed cottages on Charles Street, Hillfields



Primrose Hill

Geology and Topography

The Character Area overlies sandstone to the east. To the west it overlies sandstone and mudstone. The topography is relatively flat and low lying between 80m and 85m above sea level.