

## 7 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Approaches to the Conservation Area

**7.1** Six road approaches provide access to the conservation area through well-defined "gateways":

- Birmingham Road – north-west
- Kinwarton Road and Gunnings Bridge – north-east
- Seggs Lane – west
- Stratford Road – east
- Bleachfield Street - south
- Evesham Street – south-west

**7.2** From the northwest the line of the Roman Icknield Street formed the main A435 north, Birmingham Road thoroughfare until the construction of the western bypass. This approach is fairly flat and unremarkable until the junction with School Road/



*Figure 36. Approaching the conservation area from the north down Birmingham Road; the Minerva Works is to the right and the focal point building at the junction of School Road/Station Road is the early-19<sup>th</sup> century stucco-rendered Gresley House*

Station Road. The "gateway" is effectively formed by the solid brick built mass of the Victorian Minerva Works to the west (Figure 22), counter-balanced by the natural greenery of the cemetery opposite, Gresley House and the adjacent cottages lining the southern side of School Road.

**7.3** The Kinwarton Road from Great Alne approaches Alcester from the northeast through 20<sup>th</sup> century residential developments. Just before crossing the River Arrow at Gunnings Bridge, there is an area of larger buildings, former council offices, shops, a sports hall and High School. The relatively open nature of this approach is much improved by the fine mature trees flanking the riverbanks, which provide a natural foil to the bridge "gateway" into the conservation area.



*Figure 37. Gunnings Bridge looking north-east; the bridge was rebuilt in brick with stone dressings c.1814 and forms a natural gateway into the conservation area from the north-east*

**7.4** Although no longer a major thoroughfare into the town, Seggs Lane does however provide a significant visual gateway to the

conservation area from viewed from The Globe roundabout. Reputedly part of the historic Salt Way from Droitwich to Lechlade on the River Thames, the lane probably takes its name from the Seggs family who lived here in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup>

**7.5** Innocuous 20<sup>th</sup> century residential developments now line both sides of Seggs Lane when approaching the conservation area from the west. The north side has some attractive banks of trees and shrubs, which soften the suburban scene to some extent.

**7.6** There is a clear division between this residential area and the buildings adjacent to The Globe roundabout, i.e. the civic buildings on the north side and brick-built workshop/timber framed cottages opposite. This clear division reflects historical and contemporary changes of use, which are important to the character of the conservation area.



*Figure 38. Seggs Lane looking west from the Globe Roundabout; the 19<sup>th</sup> century red brick workshop provides an important visual contrast with the adjacent timber framed cottages*

**7.7** The eastern approach to Alcester originally wound its way through Oversley Green and over an impressive c.1600 stone bridge across the River Arrow. Road changes during the 18<sup>th</sup> century have given Stratford Road a much straighter alignment across open countryside with pleasant views towards the mature trees along the riverbank. This screening of natural greenery is essential to the overall setting of the town's eastern aspect (Figure 10).

**7.8** Bleachfield Street provides the southern approach to the conservation area. It traverses the archaeologically significant "Blacklands" part of the settlement and the adjacent fields/allotments to the eastern boundary are a scheduled ancient monument.

**7.9** This approach is arguably the most pleasant due to the fact that Bleachfield Street is no longer a major thoroughfare. A footpath from the footbridge over the River Arrow near Oversley Mill gradually becomes a wider track and then a metalled road as it nears the settlement.

**7.10** The remains of an old bridge over a dried up watercourse, mature trees and hedgerows and a surprising distant view of St Nicholas' church tower all contribute to an essentially unchanged rural setting. Despite 20<sup>th</sup> century residential and commercial development to the west of Bleachfield Street, this southern

"gateway" provides a distinct and enjoyable transition from countryside to townscape, a fundamental consideration in defining the qualities of the adjoining conservation area.

**7.11** Also of major significance are the long, open and totally unspoilt panoramas to the south over the water meadows of the River Arrow. The distant view of Oversley Wood and Primrose Hill is of particular note (Figure 12).

**7.12** Evesham Street forms an important thoroughfare from the town centre through to the southern end of the A435 western bypass. The conservation area is approached from the southwest along a pleasant tree-lined road, which crosses over the former track of the Evesham – Redditch railway line.

**7.13** A short section of the road immediately prior to the conservation area is flanked by modern residential development, which includes a petrol station. Although these features detract a little from the visual setting, they do define a clear gateway to the conservation area.

**7.14** Further along Evesham Street the spacious grounds and mature planting of the large Victorian and Regency houses frame a natural vanishing point as the road curves gently to the right (Figure 22).

## Identification of Character Zones

**7.15** There are nine distinctive character zones within the conservation area boundary as follows:

- A - The town's historic core comprising; High Street, Church Street, Butter Street, Meeting Lane and Henley Street
- B - Malt Mill Lane, Gas House Lane and adjoining residential developments
- C - Bleachfield Street, Swan Street, Evesham Street and part of Stratford Road
- D - Stratford House site
- E - Priory Road and School Road (west)
- F - Station Road and Birmingham Road Cemetery
- G - School Road (east) and Moorfield Road (north)
- H - Moorfield Road (south), recreation ground and central car park area
- I - The River Arrow

These character zones and their interrelationships are identified on Map 11. Each zone will be assessed in turn to establish its key contributions to the conservation area's character and appearance as a whole.



**Character Zones  
Map 11**

- Revised Conservation Area Boundary  
September 2008
- Character Zones

Where property boundaries define the limits of the Conservation Area, all features forming the boundary (e.g. walls, hedges, trees etc.) are assumed to be wholly within the Conservation Area.

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## Activity and Prevailing Uses

**7.16** Development and activity arising from the linkages between the town's 19<sup>th</sup> century needle making industry and the deep burgage plots, which supported it, are a defining feature of the conservation area. Although the majority of the former workshops and factories were demolished long ago, some buildings have been successfully regenerated and returned to beneficial uses.

**7.17** The "footprint" left by the complex of workshops to the west of the High Street has determined the form and extent of the central area car park/retail developments within character zone I.

**7.18** Conversely, the residential regeneration of Malt Mill Lane in the 1970s took place within an established medieval street framework and maintained the established spatial relationships/massing of the buildings.

**7.19** The High Street, Swan Street and upper part of Evesham Street are a focus for traditional shopping and convenience stores, along with banking and social activities. Church Street supports some office and professional activities.

**7.20** All of the cultural and civic facilities are neatly contained within the modern complex of buildings on Priory Road. There are no significant industrial uses within the conservation area, other than the commercial units housed within the regenerated

Minerva Works on the corner of Station Road.

**7.21** Residential use is extensive and accounts for over 80% of the available land use within the conservation area. Apart from the interspersed public houses and religious buildings, Stratford Road, Bleachfield Street, Butter Street, Church Street, Malt Mill Lane, Gas House Lane, Henley Street, School Road and Meeting Lane are all residential areas. Only Priory Road and the High Street have readily discernible mixed-use attributes.

**7.22** The pedestrianised Malt Mill Lane undoubtedly preserves and enhances its intrinsic medieval charm, whilst simultaneously making it a quiet and desirable residential area. Traffic along the High Street can become congested during busy periods and the ambiguity of the unmarked "pedestrian crossings" can make crossing the road hazardous.

**7.23** Alcester and its environs boast over 140 listed buildings and structures, 117 of which are located in the conservation area. The diversity of building styles reflects the development of the settlement over the last 500 years and is arguably the single most important factor in determining its present day character and appearance.

## Analysis of Character Zones

### *Zone A – High Street, Church Street, Butter Street, Meeting Lane and Henley Street*

**7.24** The town's historic core is focused on the surviving medieval street pattern and forms the heart of the conservation area. It features many listed buildings of exceptional architectural quality and historic interest, emboldened by distinctive spatial interrelationships and visual coherence.

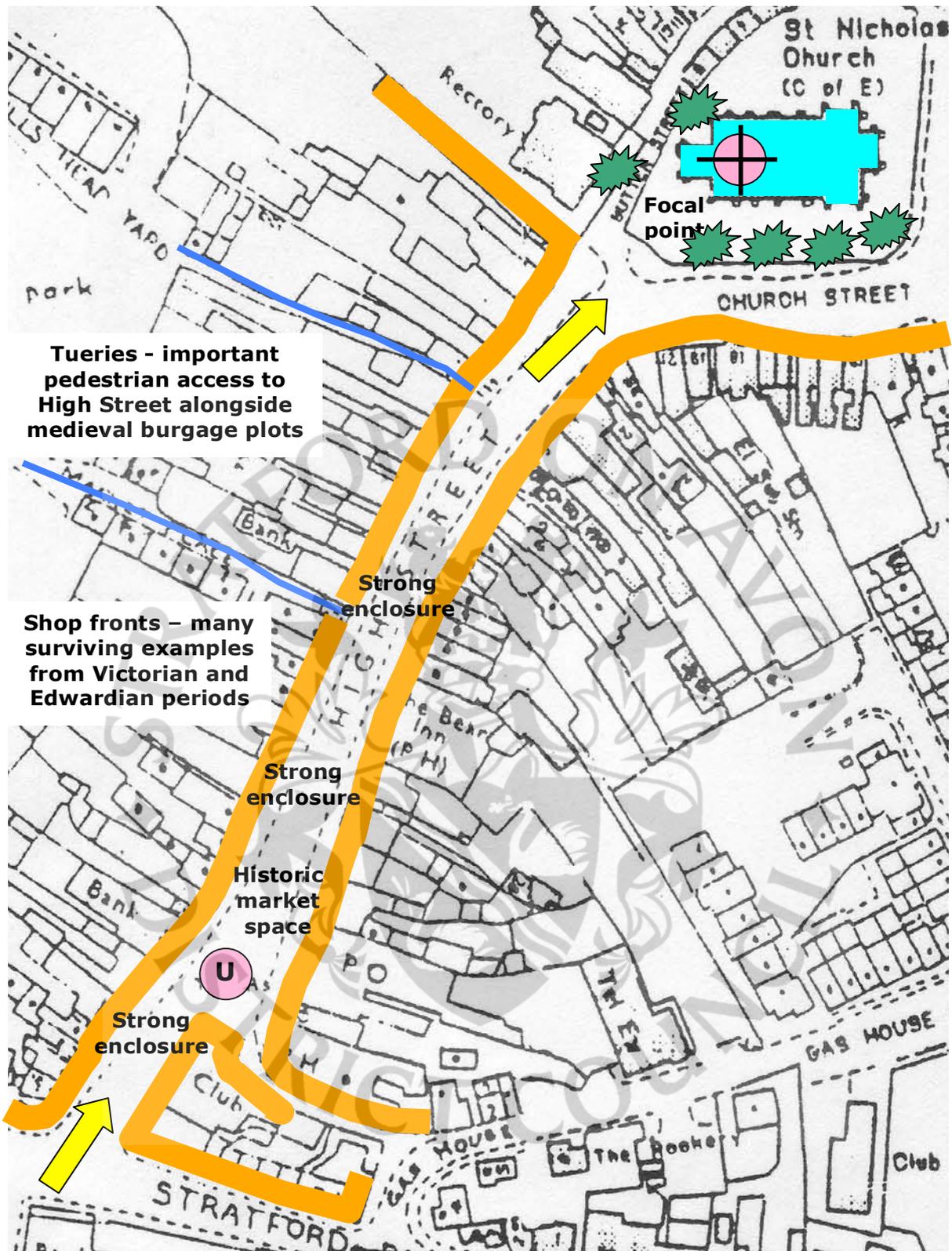
**7.25** Evolutionary patterns, adaptation and architectural fashion are particularly evident in the rich array of vernacular and neo-classical styles, which line the streets. Glimpses of earlier buildings remain behind the facades of several of the re-fronted Georgian houses in Church Street. The overall character zone encompasses a largely intact historic environment which has evolved gradually to meet the necessities of its inhabitants over the last 500 years.

**7.26** The spatial relationships of the buildings along High Street are subtle due to the gently curving continuous street frontage, broken only by the narrow tueries running between adjacent burgage plots. In contrast, Henley Street, Butter Street and the buildings in the vicinity of the Memorial Town Hall have much more irregular and angular relationships; no doubt the result of evolution rather than design. The outward projection of

many of these buildings adds significant visual interest and greatly influences the unique character of the cumulative whole.

**7.27** Looking north along High Street from the junction with Swan Street/Stratford Road/Bleachfield Street, the unbroken building line on either side creates a strong sense of enclosure which frames the vista focusing on St Nicholas' church tower (refer to Figure 1). This vista makes a key visual contribution to the character of Zone A given that the dominant vertical emphasis of the tower cannot readily be appreciated from other vantage points within the conservation area.

**7.28** The lower west side of High Street is characterised by the simple forms and varied roof lines of the predominantly two-storey 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings; 67, High Street, on the corner with Swan Street being a classic example well-adapted to its corner plot location. Directly opposite, the taller forms of the Alcester Unionist Club and the adjacent buildings provide an increased scale and massing which give substance to the relative importance of the High Street. A handsome curved corner façade complements that of 67, High Street to create an informal gateway into the High Street proper.



Map 12. Zone A character analysis map showing the key attributes for the High Street; namely continuous building line, gently curving street orientation, enclosure and vista focused on St Nicholas' church tower

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- U Characteristic or historic uses/
- + Landmark within the streetscene
- Focal point building
- ★ Tree/s landscaping of townscape significance
- Historic/Characteristic Street/Building line
- ➔ Key View



Figure 39. Contrasting forms on the two corner plots at the lower end of the High Street; the tall 3-storey frontage onto Stratford Road (right) rises above the more traditional vernacular of 67, High Street (left)

**7.29** The projection formed by the Unionist Club and the adjacent block of buildings narrows the thoroughfare significantly and creates a strong sense of enclosure. Up until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century this site was undeveloped and much more open in aspect, having served as the town's "Bull Ring" since medieval times (refer to §5.31).

**7.30** Immediately beyond the projection, the east side of the High Street broadens back out to its historic building line before tapering down again just before The Bear Inn is reached. Despite considerable variation in eaves line, and the unfortunate intrusion of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Post Office building, the overall impression is one of coherence.

**7.31** Several sensitive modern shop-fronts contribute greatly to the streetscape appreciation as a whole. Insensitive examples such as "Superdrug" at No. 43 are less



Figure 40. The poorly-executed modern frontage at No. 43 is in stark contrast to the restrained elegance of the adjacent 3-storey townhouse and visually detracts from the overall streetscape group

impressive, visually "jarring" the overall harmony of the two adjacent building groups.

**7.32** The Three Tuns public house is a good example of a smaller-scale form, which reflects the altered and adapted nature of many of the historic buildings on the High Street.

**7.33** Good examples of Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts are to be found along the High Street. Bowen's drapery store at Victoria House/No. 6 on the east side (next door to the Turk's Head public house) is particularly impressive with its 19<sup>th</sup> century façade and plate glass windows.

**7.34** Progressing towards the church, the sense of enclosure becomes much more pronounced within the continuous "wall" of historic buildings, punctuated only by the two tueries on the west side. These run between Nos. 17 - 19 alongside a deep burgage plot into Bull's Head



Figure 41. Bowen's drapery store at Victoria House/No. 6 High Street retains its Victorian shop frontage within a 19<sup>th</sup> century façade which has been applied to an earlier 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century building



Figure 42. Looking down the broad tuary running between Nos. 29 & 31 on the west side of the High Street and into the Market Place beyond

yard and through the archway adjacent Nos. 29 & 31 to reach the broader space of the modern Market Place.

**7.35** The continuous building line finally breaks at the top end of High Street with the transition into Church Street. Many of Alcester's finest architectural examples are to be found in the vicinity of St Nicholas' church, including The Old Malthouse of c.1500, the Old Rectory and several other linked Georgian facades running the length of Church Street.

**7.36** The tall form and red brick mass of the Old Rectory makes a strong visual contrast with the weathered stonework of the church tower and the timbered/pastel rendered finishes of the neighbouring buildings.

**7.37** Viewed from the front of The Old Malthouse, the fine late Georgian façade of the Old Rectory and its set back aspect define a clear focal point which closes the vista looking west across the raised churchyard; without negating the sense of progression which exists into the adjacent High Street and Butter Street. The adjunct features of low brick walls, stone paving, planters, bollards and wrought-iron work add depth, interest and quality to the overall scene. This area opens up to form an irregular but well-defined open space around the church, interspersed with shrubs and the varying forms of the mature trees within its curtilage.



Figure 43. View west across the raised southern part of the churchyard to the Old Rectory, highlighting the well-defined open space, which exists at the centre of the town; note the contrasting forms and their different vertical/horizontal emphasis

**7.38** The parish church of St Nicholas sits comfortably on its slightly elevated site at the head of High Street and contained within the sweep of Church Street. A brick retaining wall takes the greenery of the churchyard right up to the Church Street pavement, highlighting the intimacy of the space to its townscape surroundings.

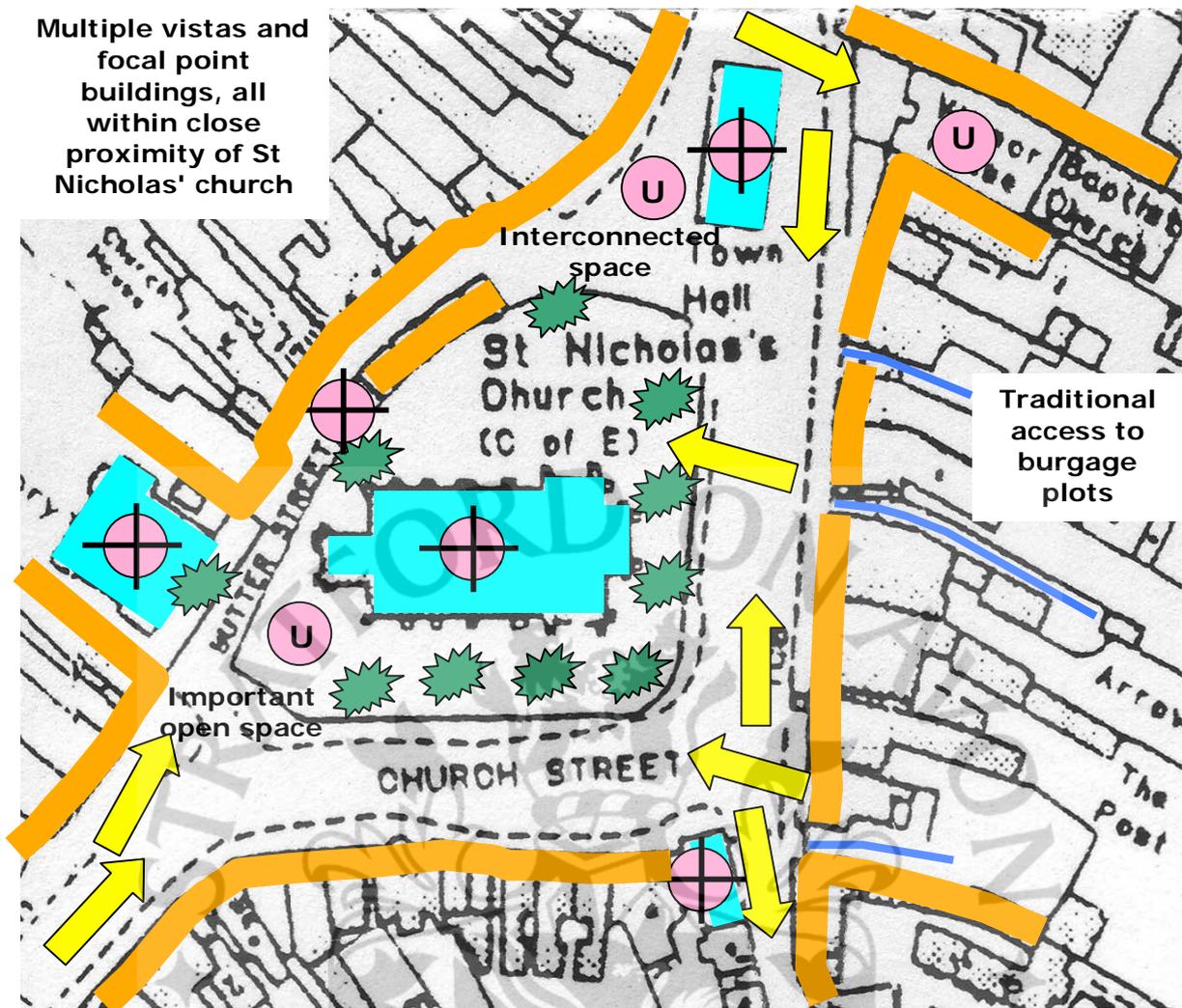
**7.39** Beyond the Old Rectory and to the west of the church, the narrow confines of Butter Street create an extremely picturesque, secluded and intimate area away from the busy High Street. Fully pedestrianised, the focal building looking north is undoubtedly the whitewashed

brickwork and mock battlemented parapet of Castle House at No. 6 Butter Street. A curved terrace of dwellings behind this house forms part of the northwest boundary to the churchyard, creating a timeless “world within a world” atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.



Figure 44. Looking west across the northern churchyard to the houses of Butter Street, Castle House is on the left

**7.40** Butter Street retains much of its original mediaeval character and scale and is exceptional for a total lack of commercialisation. The projection and recession of the buildings along the outer arc of the street becomes more pronounced as the Memorial Town Hall comes into view at the northern exit back onto Church Street. Churchill House with its elegant early-17<sup>th</sup> century façade and the adjacent Holly Bush Hotel visually combine to balance the strong pillars and blind arcading of the hall. A well-defined wedge-shaped space is formed between the opposing buildings (refer to Figure 14) but unfortunately its current use for car parking makes it almost impossible to appreciate the quality of this intimate area.



**Map 13.** Zone A character analysis map highlighting the key open spaces, vistas and focal point buildings in the immediate vicinity of St Nicholas' church; The Old Malthouse, Old Rectory, Castle House, Memorial Town Hall and the church

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**7.41** The position of the Memorial Town Hall at the end-on junction of Church Street and Henley Street marks a key visual transition point within zone A, with the following important townscape properties:

- Provides closure to the vista along Church Street
- Contains Church Street with another key vista focused on The Old MaltHouse; vanishing point into Malt Mill Lane
- Creates a focal point feature for the approach along Henley Street from Gunnings Bridge; the slight rise of the street accentuates the building's status
- Occupies an important space with irregular sub-spaces on either side; Butter Street confines (triangular space) to the west and the set-back Baptist chapel (rectangular space) to the east



*Figure 45. Looking south down Church Street from the Memorial Town Hall; The Old Malthouse closes the vista and invites exploration of the adjacent Malt Mill Lane with its fine jettied buildings*

**7.42** Completing the loop around St Nicholas church and back to the top of High Street, the quality townscape of Church Street becomes readily apparent. Elegant and varied 3-storey Georgian facades along the eastern side of the street provide a solid (and pleasingly colourful) counterpoint to the mature trees in the churchyard opposite, as well as framing the vista towards The Old Malthouse and Malt Mill Lane. These buildings retain an aura of high residential status and prosperity reminiscent of the early-19<sup>th</sup> century, despite being facaded enhancements of earlier timber-framed buildings.

**7.43** A pair of gated carriage entrances punctuate the otherwise continuous and coherent street frontage, giving a hint as to the building's earlier uses. Nos. 4 - 5 Church Street (pink and grey colourwashed brick) were the Angel Inn until 1865 and thence shops, whilst the red brick No. 6 served as the offices of the Alcester Brewing

Co. from 1886 until 1924. The red K6 telephone kiosk standing against the white stuccoed render and symmetry of No.9 is a pleasant reminder that this elegant 4-storey building was formerly Alcester's Post Office. Simple brick paving, restrained planting and fewer hanging baskets all help to reinforce the refined quality of this part of the conservation area.

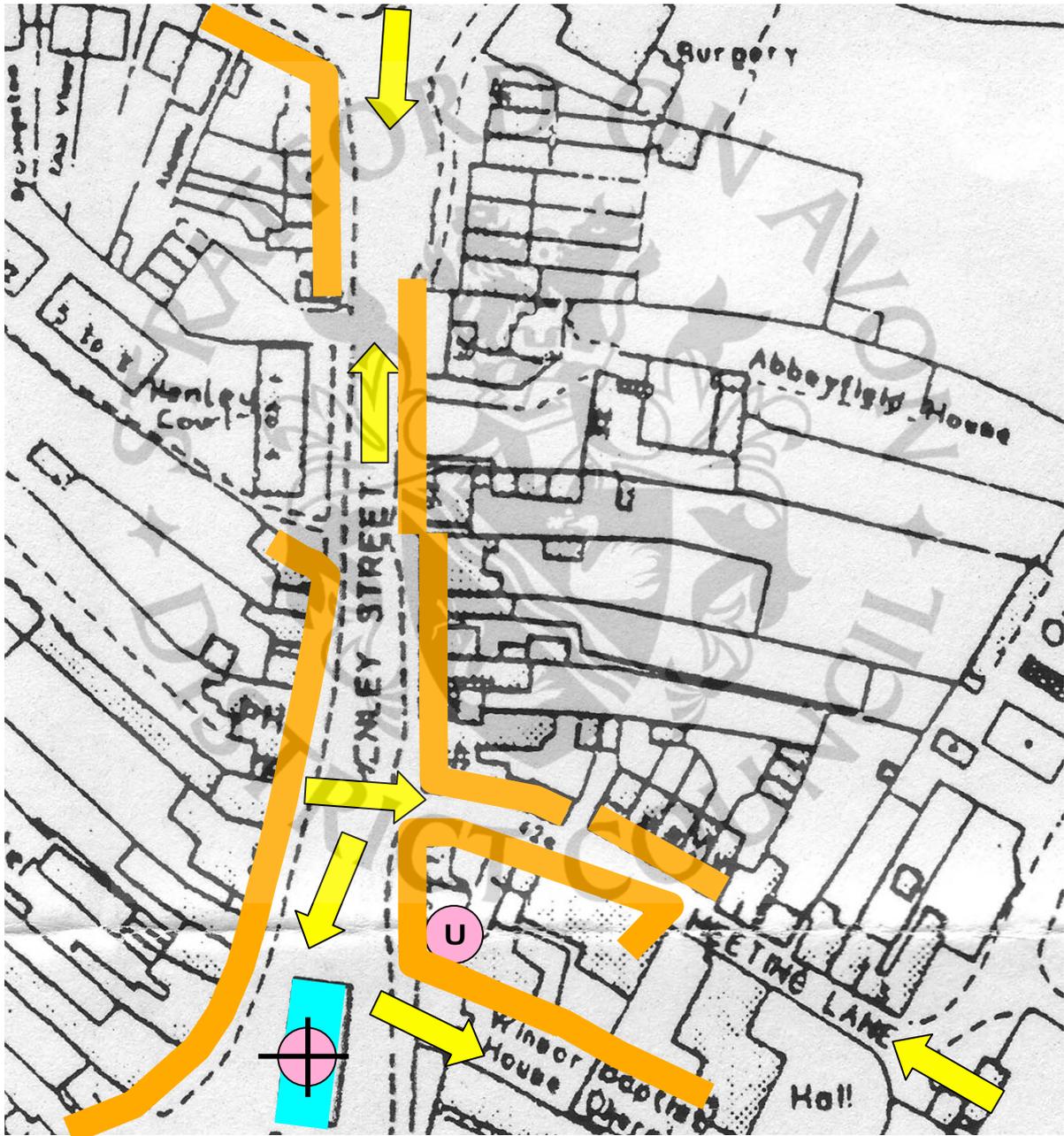
**7.44** The south side of Church Street contains a much more diverse mix of building forms and architectural styles. Timber-framed vernacular functionality and steep gabled roof lines dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century predominate, flanking both sides of a tall and confident early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> century red brick terrace at Nos. 13 - 17. The contrast in forms and material qualities of these two sets of buildings could not be more abrupt but they still harmonise remarkably well into the overall streetscape.



*Figure 46. Church Street looking west towards the High Street and highlighting the contrast between vernacular and later architectural forms/styles*

**7.45** Church Street is arguably unique within the conservation area in successfully maintaining a dialogue between substantial, regular and controlled 19<sup>th</sup> century facades and smaller, older, more haphazard timber-framed buildings. This is a key

contributing factor in Alcester's character, which gives coherence to its special sense of place. Also, the absence of any ground floor shop-frontage or similar modern alterations/interventions make this area extremely enjoyable and pleasant to explore.



*Map 14. Zone A character analysis map highlighting the more evolved and open development on and around Henley Street up to the junction with School Road*

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**7.46** North of the Town Hall, Henley Street forms a gradually tapering continuation of Church Street, down a slight slope towards Gunnings Bridge. This part of the town exhibits a more evolved variety in building form and architecture, virtually every type of vernacular style since the 16<sup>th</sup> century being represented. Irregular rooflines, and a few set back buildings such as Abbeyfield House punctuate continuous building lines. These provide an intricacy of meander when surveying the streetscene and greatly enhance its character.



*Figure 47. Church Street looking north past the Town Hall and into Henley Street; note fluctuation of streetscape introduced by projection of the close-studded Windsor House (Stylish Corner)*



*Figure 48. Henley Street highlighting the slope down towards Gunnings Bridge and the important tree screen closure*

**7.47** The consistent scale of the buildings, with clear contrasts in materials, surface finishes and colour schemes, gives an overall impression of richness within a simple form. The distant line of mature trees on the riverbank provides a very important closure to the vista looking northwards.

**7.48** Running off to the east the narrow Meeting Lane is a pleasant mixture of 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framing and 19<sup>th</sup> century brick which eventually gives way to simple but effective modern infill dwellings. The relative crowding of the older linked buildings just off Henley Street and narrow confines of the lane itself create an intimate sense of enclosure.



*Figure 49. Henley Street looking east into Meeting Lane; the jettied gable end of No.42 Henley Street and the slight curve define the sense of enclosure*

**7.49** Timber framed cottages on the corner of Henley Street and School Road form a definitive stop to the street and give an attractive focal point to the vista of the approach over Gunnings Bridge. The opposite (east) side of Henley Street ends with Arrow Lodge, an imposing 19<sup>th</sup> century brick building which overlooks the

river. This pivotal building defines the scale of the building line at the conservation area's northeastern approach and also gives closure to the view from the west along School Road. Its stone capped boundary walls and attractive landscaping complement the mature trees opposite. The cumulative effect is to significantly enhance the environmental qualities of this part of the conservation area.



*Figure 50. Arrow Lodge stands at the eastern end of Henley Street next to Gunnings Bridge*



*Figure 51. View south up Henley Street from the corner with School Road; note Town Hall projection and irregularity of building line on east side of street*

**7.50** Henley Street's historic buildings and quaint charm are marred only by the volume of

parked cars and the poor quality 20<sup>th</sup> century residential infill developments on both sides of the street mid-way down the slope.

**Zone "B" – Malt Mill Lane, Gas House Lane and adjoining residential developments**

**7.51** Malt Mill Lane runs in a gently curving southeasterly direction from Old Post Office corner on Church Street and drops down towards the river, where it meets Gas House Lane at right angles. The top end contains some of the finest 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framed buildings in the town, if not in the county of Warwickshire generally.

**7.52** The deep L-shaped plan of the Old Malthouse (Figure 18) extends along the west side of the lane and defines the start of an almost continuous building line. Characteristic timber jettying to the houses and cottages on both sides here creates a feeling of enclosed space which is broken only intermittently by access doorways leading to the rear yards and gardens (Figure 5).

**7.53** Although several cottages lower down the lane are relatively modern, the overall impression is very much that of the scale and texture of a mediaeval street, well preserved and sensitively refurbished. Pedestrianisation of the thoroughfare certainly adds to the townscape qualities and intimacy of this most tranquil part of the conservation area.



*Figure 52. Malt Mill Lane curving away to the southeast, The Old Malthouse is on the right with the former Excelsior Works on the left*



*Figure 53. Malt Mill Lane from the opposite direction; highlighting the sensitive introduction of new buildings with an historic environment*

**7.54** Colebrook Close is a modern development of single storey cottages, which stand to the rear of the houses along the east side of the lane. Access leads into an enclosed, irregular shaped courtyard, which has been paved and landscaped to create an attractive and peaceful environment.

**7.55** A smaller rectangular courtyard extends behind the cottages along the lower west side of the lane. This is similarly enclosed with sympathetic, small modern houses, which reflect the traditional materials and intrinsic character of the surroundings. Both courtyards benefit from long views of the treetops lining the riverbank to the southeast.

**7.56** Malt Mill Lane serves as a good example of how old and new buildings can be successfully combined to retain the historic character and appearance of a place without resorting to period reproduction (i.e. pastiche) or wholesale redevelopment.

**7.57** The southern end of Malt Mill Lane turns sharply into Gas House Lane. Originally known as Colebrook Lane, this was a semi-industrial area from the 1850s through to c.1955 when the two gasometers of the former Alcester Gas Light & Coke Company were demolished. New red brick terraced cottages define the curve overlooking the riverside and form a pleasing contrast with an older, semi-castellated white building which closes off Gas House Lane to the east.

**7.58** The new development forms a continuous U-shaped building line, which extends up Chestnut Court; to the rear of and parallel to Malt Mill Lane. The buildings here are of modern construction but again they reflect the scale, form and materials of their surroundings to promote an acceptable harmony. A 3-storey circular turret carries the corner into Chestnut Court; making a bold architectural statement with its slightly quirky conical roof.

**7.59** Chestnut Court affords a distant view of the church tower over the burgage plots and rooftops of Church Street. The view is enhanced by the slightly set back aspect of the houses within a retained enclosure provided by a row of brick and timber pergolas.

**7.60** The opposite corner of Chestnut Court and Gas House Lane is defined by a 3-storey square tower with a hipped roof and apex fleche. This acts as counterpoint to the turret whilst



*Figure 54. New development along the north side of Gas House Lane; note the distinctive 3-storey turret and tower*

maintaining the same scale and balance. The form of the tower and its unusual chamfered corners is not unlike that of a small brewhouse.

**7.61** Moving west along Gas House Lane, the modern housing continues away from the tower in a series of 2-storey terraced houses. A marked progression and recession of alternating blocks punctuates the streetscape, adding variety and interest to the overall scene. Tall elegant streetlamps reminiscent of traditional gaslights maintain a tangible link with the former industrial activities, which lent their name to this area of the town.



*Figure 55. Gas House Lane looking west; note strong vertical emphasis of tower, punctuation of streetscape and mature, overhanging trees providing shading*

**7.62** Both of the modern housing schemes overlook the recreation ground, and sit pleasantly behind substantial mature trees.

**7.63** The western part of Gas House Lane is disparate in character. Alcester House forms a minor focal point with its discrete detailing, but the modern

telephone exchange and bleak open space adjacent are particularly jarring on the eye.

**7.64** Along Stratford Road, further 20<sup>th</sup> century residential infill developments successfully marry older 3-storey terraced houses to the rest of the town. Although their detailing is sparse, the scale and materials are sufficient to achieve a unifying effect not too dissimilar to that of their predecessors; albeit without the lost historic character (see Figure 25).

**Zone "C" – Bleachfield Street, Swan Street, Evesham Street and part of Stratford Road**

**7.65** Swan Street and the western end of Stratford Road define a transitional section between zones A and C.

**7.66** Large, key 3-storey Regency buildings such as The Swan Hotel (Figure 17) and Lloyds Bank on the corners of Bleachfield Street reflect the scale of the Alcester Unionist Club/No.2 Stratford Road facing them diametrically opposite.



Figure 56. The Swan Hotel and Lloyds Bank looking west into Swan Street



Figure 57. Looking east along Stratford Road from the High Street junction; note the diminishing scale of the houses and cottages towards The Cross Keys Inn

**7.67** Other 3-storey buildings nearby include No.2 Bleachfield Street, an adjacent modern infill development and the Dog & Partridge Inn opposite. They collectively form an important group with comparable massing at one of the town's key junctions (see Figure 28 for aerial view) and present an impressive sense of restrained grandeur.

**7.68** Elsewhere within this zone, the buildings are mostly 2-storey residential forms and to a slightly smaller scale. The notable exceptions are the 3-storey blocks included as part of the new Laing Homes development mid-way down Bleachfield Street. Fortunately these apartments built on the former Abbey Works site are set back far enough from the traditional building line so as not to unduly dominate the streetscape.

**7.69** Starting at the southern end of Bleachfield Street, unremarkable modern suburban housing lines the west side (Figure 24). Directly opposite a

large open field affords attractive uninterrupted views towards Oversley Wood and Primrose Hill in the distance. The contrast between town and country could not be more striking at this most southerly point of the conservation area.

**7.70** The east side of Bleachfield Street is perhaps best assessed as a whole because it succinctly underlines the gradual transition from the natural environment to townscape. Open fields give way to a single detached cottage (formerly two) and then a semi-detached pair of dwellings, all neatly scaled and with their progressively larger gable ends parallel to the street (Figure 13). A short terrace of three modern houses then leads on to a continuous terrace of older, 2-storey cottages, followed by slightly larger terraced properties, a 3-storey group and finally, the substantial Lloyds Bank building (Figure 54). Definitive and harmonious closure to the streetscape is provided by



*Figure 58. Bleachfield Street, east side; note the coherent terrace, progressive increase in building scale towards Swan Street/Stratford Road and closure by 67, High Street*

67, High Street standing on the far side of Swan Street.

**7.71** The west side of Bleachfield Street is less satisfactory, largely due to its mixed-use origins and the large extent of the former Abbey Works site. Recently completed, the new Laing Homes development provides a unifying and accomplished street frontage of 2-storey terraced cottages. The sensitive use of simple lines, a slightly set back aspect and discrete chimneystacks reflect those of the genuine historic articles opposite without any attempts at parody.



*Figure 59. New terraced houses on west side of Bleachfield Street*



*Figure 60. Bleachfield Street looking north; note set back aspect of new houses and "link" provided by timber framed end elevation of the former New Inn (No.25 Bleachfield Street)*

**7.72** Removal of the conifer trees, which previously fronted the bank car park adjacent to No.25 Bleachfield Street, has given this building (the former New Inn) renewed prominence in the overall streetscape (Figure 60).

**7.73** The large public car park between the Dog & Partridge Inn and The Swan Hotel detracts somewhat from the general quality of Bleachfield Street through a combination of size and poor boundary treatments. Directly opposite, the late-1990s infill of Pembroke House forms an acceptable and logical extension to the original L-shaped plan of the c.1790 Lloyds Bank building.



*Figure 61. Pembroke House effectively extends the Lloyds Bank building down the east side of Bleachfield Street*

**7.74** Back on the corner in front of The Swan Hotel, the modern 3-storey frontage of No.5 Swan Street opposite gives a plausible emulation of the genuine Georgian article, without unduly compromising the appearance of the adjacent vernacular forms. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the top-heavy modern building at No.2 Swan Street.

This building combines traditional form with modern style and materials and stands on the site of the former Hodges Bakery. The fine old timber framed bakery was demolished in the 1950s as a precursor to the eventual widening of the Swan Street/Evesham Street/Priory Road junction and construction of the Globe Roundabout in 1965.

**7.75** Whilst no doubt functionally more efficient for 20<sup>th</sup> century motor traffic, the spatial expanse of the roundabout and loss of building line continuity seriously undermine the character of this part of the conservation area.



*Figure 62. The Globe Roundabout looking east into Swan Street; the modern façade of No.2 Swan Street dominates the neighbouring buildings*



*Figure 63. Swan Street looking west into Evesham Street c.1955, Hodges Bakery is on extreme left with Globe Hotel right*

**7.76** Continuing west beyond the roundabout and into Evesham Street, the continuous terrace on the south side resumes a similar scale and proportion to that of Swan Street. New cottages at Nos.4 & 6 Evesham Street respect the vernacular style and integrate well into the overall streetscape. At the opposite end of this modest painted brick terrace, the oblique form of the old Bell Inn (now converted into houses) defines the corner into Birch Abbey.

**7.77** The tall end elevations of No.18 Evesham Street on the opposite corner seem to dwarf the terrace and accentuate the narrowness of the entry into Birch Abbey. Some of the original character of this side street remains intact but it is being slowly eroded by unsympathetic modern developments further away from Evesham Street.



*Figure 64. Evesham Street looking west; Birch Abbey turning is in the shadows below the tall red brick end wall*

**7.78** On the opposite side of the street, the continuous building line gradually tapers down from the dominant red brick mass of Lawrence's building (formerly

known by the rather grand name of the "Jennings Eastern Emporium Ltd.") to the diminutive timber framed cottage facing Birch Abbey. Progression of building form and scale is very apparent and important in this part of the conservation area.



*Figure 65. Evesham Street looking east towards Swan Street, No.17 Evesham Street is on the left with the twin-gabled form of Lawrence's above and beyond*



*Figure 66. Evesham Street looking east c. 1905; except for the demolition of the Globe Inn in the distance and the imposition of modern street lighting, the built environment has altered little*

**7.78** In contrast, the remaining section of Evesham Street up to the western boundary of the conservation area assumes a more relaxed and spacious feel. This is undoubtedly due to a combination of factors including:

- Building line on south side of street is no longer continuous; spaces appear between adjacent houses and there is a gradual tapering/set-back from road
- Larger houses and detached villas standing in their own plots; notably along north side of street, e.g. Acorn House, Laurel House and former coach house (now Finial House)
- Prevalence of mature trees, hedges and shrubs; notably those fronting Acorn House (Figure 33) and Laurel House
- Boundary walls
- Strips of grass verge



*Figure 67. Evesham Street at the extreme western boundary of the conservation area; Lawrence's building is still the distant focal point but note the more spacious feel and mature hedges*

**7.79** Situated between Laurel House and No.17 Evesham Street, the mock "Jacobethan" style of the 20<sup>th</sup> century White Lion public house appears a little too striking at first glance. Overall, though, its U-shaped

frontage does not unduly impose on to the streetscape as the use of natural materials makes a real attempt at harmonisation with those of the neighbouring buildings.



*Figure 68. Acorn House stands well back on the north side of Evesham Street; the coach house is now a detached residence*

**7.80** Immediately to the north of Evesham Street, Seggs Lane also converges on to the Globe Roundabout at the important V-intersection formed by Lawrence's building. The lane has some attractive timber framed cottages and a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick former workshop building on its south side which present a particularly attractive vista (Figure 38).

**7.81** The 2-storey workshop is an important "edge" building and its red brick end elevation provides a logical boundary between the conservation area and modern residential development further west. Municipal buildings opposite are partly shaded by mature trees, which help to soften their detrimental impact on the area's appearance.

## Zone "D" – Stratford House Site

**7.82** The zone takes its name from the large Victorian house, which previously stood on the site, together with some single-storey industrial buildings. Redeveloped in the late-1990s with the less than inspiring Corinthian Court residences, this part of the conservation area is important for several reasons:

- Substantial group of fine mature trees bounding site and defining visual screen for approach from east
- Trees provide contrast with buildings lining north side of Stratford Road
- Extensive landscaping helps create a "green lung" for the town
- Trees and landscaping merge with open countryside to the south and east down to the river; emphasising the zone's main characteristic as an area of transition before entering the townscape proper
- Abuts an established semi-public amenity to the west, i.e. allotment gardens to rear of houses/cottages on east side of Bleachfield Street (Figure 13)
- Preserves the important views south over the "Blacklands" area towards Oversley Wood and distant Primrose Hill (Figure 12)



Figure 69. Corinthian Court stands to the south of Stratford Road; part of the mature tree screen is visible on the left



Figure 70. Looking east along Stratford Road from Swan Street; the mature tree screen is in the centre background

## Zone "E" – Priory Road and School Road (west)

**7.83** Priory Road forms an important north-south thoroughfare, which effectively bypasses the medieval town centre streets. It is part of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century turnpike route that linked Birmingham with Stratford and Evesham.

**7.84** The essential character of this zone derives from the relationship between the fairly continuous line of (mostly early-19<sup>th</sup> century) buildings on the east side of the road and the more discontinuous, varied and

spacious nature of the plots facing them along the western boundary of the conservation area.

**7.85** There is an almost straight alignment between the Globe Roundabout and the junction with the Birmingham Road, save for a shallow curve approximately mid-way between the two points. This “pivot” corresponds to the projecting corner of the picturesque 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed cottage at No.57 Priory Road and the group of mature arching trees directly opposite. It defines a convenient basis for assessing the character of the streetscape in two discrete sections thus:

- Southern section; smaller-scale, modest terraced properties, mostly set hard against the pavement, some with small front gardens
- Northern section: larger-scale with villas and large detached properties set back from the road and standing in own grounds

**7.86** The c.2000 aerial view of Alcester illustrates the contrast between these two sections to good effect (Figure 28). Priory Road is clearly shown on the left-hand side of the photograph.

**7.87** Moving north from the former Brooklyn Ford garage site on the roundabout, a pair of small shops at Nos.17 & 19 Priory Road define an important end stop for

the neighbouring sets of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses. The stepped roofs of the shops, with their whitewashed elevations and offset chimneystacks give essential contrast and variation to the streetscape.



*Figure 71. Nos.17 - 35 Priory Road showing the visual contrasts and punctuation introduced by the two shops, Hertford Place (centre) and the adjoining blank gable end of No.29*

**7.88** Hertford Place is a pleasantly designed red brick terrace of four villas dating from c.1888. The set back façade, fronted by small gardens with low brick walls, introduces recession, which breaks up the otherwise straight alignment of the building line. Bay windows, bold central chimney stacks and a pair of continuous tiled awnings is amongst the various details, which add interest to this terrace. The scale here relates well to both the individual building and to the streetscape as a whole

**7.89** The adjoining terrace has earlier origins and conforms to a more modest composition. Several of the cottages have modern uPVC replacement windows which cast a bland

reflection on their otherwise unspoilt traditional character.

**7.90** These detractions set the tone rather for what follows; No.37 Priory Road or “Rykneild” is a modern 1970s detached house which looks out of place with its period neighbours. The recessed aspect coupled with the drive-in/out access and a large area of tarmac breaks the otherwise strong continuity of the building line and introduces a distinctly suburban feel.

**7.91** One minor redeeming feature is the uninterrupted view afforded of No. 43 Priory Road. This important end-stop to the terrace has a deep L-shaped return and contrasting elevations, which define a pattern for the remaining cottages up to the pivot point at No.57.



*Figure 72. Nos.43 - 55 Priory Road with the projecting corner “pivot” of No.57 clearly visible; note tall end gable of No.59 beyond and mature trees giving strong vertical emphasis*

**7.92** Variation in roofline height also plays a part in emphasising the character transition between the southern and northern sections of the streetscape.

Nos.53 - 55 Priory Road introduce a discrete step up from the preceding uniformity, which is then eclipsed by the 3-storey gable end for the steeply pitched roof at No.59, Priory House. The tall elevations of this elegant Regency house complement the group of mature trees opposite and give a strong vertical emphasis about the pivot point.



*Figure 73. No.57 Priory Road looking along southern section of streetscape to Globe Roundabout in distance*

**7.93** Nos.61 & 63 (West View) maintains the vertical emphasis and hard building line set against the pavement. Progressing on towards the Lord Nelson public house, No.65 (Priory Cottage) is slightly set back behind a mature hedge and low brick boundary walls; extremely important visual features which slightly alleviate the unfortunate imposition of the neighbouring modern house (No.67). The gable-ended frontage here is visually jarring and out of character with the rest of the streetscape.

**7.94** Immediately before the Lord Nelson, the narrow footpath vista into Nelson’s Tuery opens up between solid flanking walls

and framing greenery. The tuary provides an important and well-used link back to the rest of the town. Standing on its own, the 19<sup>th</sup> century public house maintains the scale, mass and proportions of the preceding 3-storey buildings, although the adjacent open-fronted car parking area has a rather bleak aspect.

**7.95** On the opposite side of the road, the ample mature grounds of Our Lady and St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church and the former school provide balance to the immediate built environment. Several key features make this a vitally important part of the conservation area:

- Deep recession of church and angular extension of adjoining buildings
- Emphasis of church's form by "incident" value of the distinctive bell tower fleche (Figure 32)
- Contrast in material colours and textures through use of coursed and dressed local blue lias limestone
- Wrought-iron gates, gate piers, rock-faced stone walls, natural timber paling
- Groups of mature trees forming effective screening
- Deep planting schemes including shrubbery close to road; extensive lawns
- Multiple short views and glimpses west through breaks in planting and entrance gateways (2-off)

7.96 Continuing past the church, a robust late-Victorian terrace of three houses is the last significant building on the west side of the road. Low brick boundary walls, stone-capped piers and shallow front gardens define the setting of this key group. The quality of the building's construction is readily apparent and the stone corbelled chimneystacks give variation to its rectangular form.

**7.97** The adjacent car showroom and blocked-off junction with Cross Road seriously detract from the overall streetscape at the top end of Priory Road.

**7.98** Traversing back to the east side of the road, the large expanse of white painted flank wall at No.71 contrasts with the red brickwork of the connected chimney stacks above. Nos.71 - 77 constitute an important group because of their slightly irregular forms, set-back aspect, offset chimney stacks and the diversity of boundary treatments; low brick walls, mature hedging, metal gates and colour variation.



*Figure 74. Nos.71 - 77 Priory Road form an important group within the northern section of zone F; note variety of boundary treatments and trees*

**7.99** The northern section along the east side of Priory Road culminates in three early-19<sup>th</sup> century houses of distinctive character and varied forms; Yew Trees (No.79), The Priory (No.81) and Gresley House (standing at the junction with School Road/ Birmingham Road). Their scale and massing progressively build towards the crossroads and are well complemented by the density and maturity of the surrounding greenery.



*Figure 75. Yew Trees and The Priory, its "Gothick" style imparts a distinct landmark quality*

**7.100** Whilst the eccentricity of the "Gothick" Priory is strictly "out of keeping" with the local vernacular style, the depth of plot, castellated gable elevation, materials and (worn) colour scheme are entirely appropriate within the overall setting. Gresley House, by contrast, is a cool and elegant pivotal building at the northern gateway of the conservation area. Its "terminal" function is emphasised by the single-storey Salt Box Row (Nos.45 - 54 School Road), which abut it from the east (Figure 36).

**7.101** In finalising the characterisation of this zone, mention must be made of the Globe Roundabout and the modern municipal buildings on the lower west side of Priory Road.

**7.102** Since its construction in the late-1960s, the Globe Roundabout has evolved into a seasonally colourful piece of flat geometry at the Alcester's busiest road junction. Local transportation company Severn-Lamb Ltd presented the ornamental globe sculpture to the town in 1996, to commemorate 50 years of peace since the ending of World War II in 1945.

**7.103** The land and buildings fronting the east side of the roundabout between No.17 Priory Road and Swan Street were devoid of any qualities, which made a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. They included the Brooklyn Ford garage site (currently under mixed-use redevelopment), and the Alcester Methodist Church.

**7.104** The municipal buildings are not actually within the conservation area boundary but nonetheless have an influence on the setting and overall character. In particular, the maturing trees, grassed areas and general landscaping on this difficult oblique site enhance what could otherwise be an unimpressive grouping.

## **Zone "F" – Station Road and Birmingham Road Cemetery**

**7.105** This relatively small zone at the northern gateway to the conservation area is of vital importance to the overall character and townscape quality for a number of reasons:

- Cemetery space forms a key transitional interface to the conservation area proper
- Extensive mature trees and traditional walling along cemetery boundaries (Figure 31)
- Highly distinctive "point" tree on corner of Priory Road/Station Road; acts as vertical counterbalance to Gresley House opposite
- Offset focal point given to southbound entry by precise symmetry of Nos. 1 & 2 Station Road
- "Deflected" closure given to School Road vista by Nos. 1 & 2 Station Road
- Strong vertical emphasis given by former Minerva Works
- "Framing" of Gresley House looking along Station Road from western extremity of former Minerva Works

**7.106** The late-19<sup>th</sup> century character of Station Road is maintained by a row of terraced houses standing in the shadow of the former Minerva Works.



*Figure 76. Approaching the northern gateway of the conservation area along Birmingham Road, cemetery is on left with white end elevation of Gresley House in distance*



*Figure 77. Illustrating the juxtaposition of two different scales; the massive former Minerva Works on the left with the Victorian terraced cottages opposite, framing Gresley House in the distance*

**7.107** The dominance of scale is readily apparent here, with the highly fenestrated and functional red brick façade dwarfing the smaller elevations of the residential properties opposite. The outstanding visual and landmark qualities of the former Minerva Works cannot be overstated; not to mention the immense cultural significance that the building represents as a surviving link to Alcester's famous needlemaking industry.

**7.108** Extensive terracotta detailing to the facades further enhances the aesthetic qualities of this fine building. The open space fronting the east façade on to Birmingham Road adds to the impression of the building's scale but could benefit from a more comprehensive boundary treatment to complement the hedge and railings.

**7.109** The Edwardian terraced houses also serve as a reminder of the long-vanished railway station and goods yard which once thrived at the end of Station Road. Up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century this area and Station Road in particular functioned as the town's main commercial artery for the transportation of raw materials and finished goods.

**7.110** Standing apart from the rest of the terrace, Nos.1 & 2 Station Road ("Railway House" and "Moss Side" respectively) are built to a very high standard and display a range of stone and terracotta detailing which further



*Figure 78. Nos.1 & 2 Station Road stand on the junction with Priory Road; they impart an essentially unchanged Victorian charm to this important gateway into the conservation area*



*Figure 79. Vista west along School Road with Gresley House and Nos.1 & 2 Station Road in the distance; the "deflection" closure generated by the latter arouses the expectation of further interest beyond the screening trees*

enhances their major contribution to the conservation area. Flanking trees, raised lawns, low brick walls and smooth blue paving setts underline the late Victorian charm, which these properties impart to their surroundings.

**7.111** The relative importance of this zone is reflected in its proposed extension to encompass both sides of the Birmingham Road as far north as the Alcester Grammar School (see Section 11).

### ***Zone "G" – School Road (east) and Moorfield Road (north)***

**7.112** Lying along the broad upper section of the conservation area, this T-shaped zone provides an important thoroughfare between the Birmingham Road gateway and the town centre. The immediate impression is one of spaciousness with an abundance of deep plots and greenery; mature trees, tall hedges and wide grass verges. Significant buildings are generally smaller, modest late 19<sup>th</sup> century

dwellings, which combine to create some interesting pieces of streetscape, and also define an edge to the important parts of the town.

**7.113** Progressing east along School Road, the flanking greenery of the cemetery trees and the solid brick retaining wall frame an inviting vista as the road gently falls towards a natural vanishing point. Although this part of the road and the Ropewalk estate are outside of the conservation area boundary, their varied boundary treatments make an important contribution to the re-entry point just past the modern Malin Court building.



*Figure 80. View east down School Road with the (western) Ropewalk turning on the right; the conservation boundary crosses the road in the far distance*

**7.114** Nos.38 & 40 School Road are pivotal buildings, positioned as they are on the inner radius of the right-hand bend. The mature hedge at the rear of these two properties is a key visual contributor at the boundary point, closing the vista of the western end of School Road.

**7.115** The modest traditional cottage at No. 39 on the opposite side of the road is another key building. Its simple, extended form and obtuse angle to the corner offer “deflection” to the reverse view west. Along with Nos.38 & 40 and Nos.30 & 32 further down the road, this cottage establishes much of the semi-rural character of the zone.

**7.116** School Road continues almost due east past the turnings for Moorfield Road and Moorfields to join Henley Street by Gunnings Bridge. The spacious and relaxed character along this entire stretch derives from a number of factors:

- Well set-back aspect of post-1945 semi-detached houses along north side (see Figure 23)
- Variations in style, alignment and materials of semi-detached houses
- Attractive tree and hedge screening alongside north pavement
- Grass verges and intermittent grassed areas
- Grouping of traditional cottages and small houses along south side; much progression/recession of building line
- Important glimpses through gaps in buildings lining south side; mature tree screens to rear
- Vista looking east, focusing on Arrow Lodge



Figure 81. Looking west along School Road from outside Nos.30 & 32 to the deflection point at No.39; note how setting is enhanced by backdrop of trees in cemetery beyond



Figure 82. View east from corner by No.39 School Road; Arrow Lodge is the tall building in the far distance

**7.117** Standing on the corner of School Road and Moorfield Road, Nos.2 & 4 Moorfield Road are a simple but accomplished pair of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached houses that provide a key fluctuation to the streetscape at its mid-point. Despite the recent insertion of uPVC glazing to No.4, these modest dwellings retain a great deal of their original quality and demarcate an important enclave area immediately to the southeast.

**7.118** The enclave provides a link through to the “old” Moorfield



Figure 83. Nos.2 & 4 Moorfield Road with the enclave leading through to Moorfields just visible to the right.

Road; subsequently renamed as “Moorfields” when this part of The Moors area was developed and the road re-aligned during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (compare the c.1903 Map 6 with the c.2006 Map 1 to see the revised alignment of Moorfield Road).

**7.119** The Moorfields area has interesting qualities, which are for the most part derived from the street pattern, which feels older than the buildings that define it. The varied assortment of cottages form an attractive group, unified by colour-washed brick and render, most probably dating from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**7.120** The east-west route of the enclave appears to align with an old path through to Henley Street, emerging at the 17<sup>th</sup> century former Red Horse Inn (Nos.25 - 27 Henley Street). A row of cottages (Nos.10 & 12 Moorfield Road) further emphasise this impression. Changes to the road layout around the enclave have created some barren areas, which would benefit from boundary planting.

**7.121** Two pairs of semi-detached dwellings lead to another track running towards Henley Street, which is surprisingly picturesque and no doubt has established historic significance.

***Zone "H" – Moorfield Road (south), Recreation Ground and Central Car Park area***

**7.122** The qualities of this part of the conservation area are inevitably less impressive from an historical perspective than those of the adjoining zones. Nevertheless for many people the central zone will be the first point at which they leave their car and experience the town as a pedestrian. It is therefore an area of considerable importance in the perception and setting of the conservation area as a whole.

**7.123** The tract of land along the west side of Moorfield Road constitutes an essential public space, which is already enclosed by residential development (refer to §6.5 - §6.6). It falls into four distinct segments; the Moorfield Road recreation ground, tennis courts, grazing area (site of Roman settlement) and the Alcester Infants School (now a vacant site and awaiting redevelopment).

**7.124** The amenity value of the recreation ground is enhanced by the diagonal tree-lined path leading across to join Nelson's Tuery, a narrow alley running out on to Priory Road next to the Lord Nelson public house (refer to §7.94 and Figure 30).

**7.125** Recent tree planting and natural timber paled fences along the west side of Moorfield Road have improved the boundary up to the former school site. The line of mature trees running east to west along the school's perimeter with the grazing area is very important visually and must be retained as part of any future development of the site.

**7.126** Traditional brick boundary walls on the opposite side of the road and at the lower corner of Moorfields (with Old Rectory Gardens) are also significant contributors to the appearance and quiet charm of this area. Old Rectory Gardens itself is a group of modern detached dwellings that unfortunately reflect few of the characteristics of the conservation area.

adversely affected their setting. Additional tree planting and effective screening is essential in order to restore the natural balance here and also to improve the views out from the recreation ground.



*Figure 85. Cottages on lower Moorfield Road dominated by rear of superstore*

**7.128** Moorfield Court, the recent residential development along the east side of Moorfield Road, has made a successful contribution by giving some form of identity to this hitherto unpopulated zone. Up until the early-1960s, only the narrow thoroughfare of Bulls Head Yard (linking Moorfield Road and High Street) boasted any appreciable buildings. Most of the area south of this thoroughfare retained its original full-length medieval burgage plots, some given over to development for the town's needlemaking industry but the majority staying cultivated as gardens or orchards (see Figure 27). The challenge in creating the central amenity area has been to cohesively knit a large and disparate private area into the town's overall fabric; certain aspects work well whilst others are not so successful.



*Figure 86. Moorfield Court; a new development of terraced cottages that links with the adjacent Bulls Head Yard*

**7.129** Although several of its old buildings were lost to the cause of "modernisation", Bulls Head Yard is now beginning to develop into a pleasantly structured piece of townscape. New shops and housing integrate quite well within the surviving framework of



*Figure 87. Bulls Head Yard looking west; the terrace of traditional cottages on the left (Nos.2, 3 & 4) have been restored*

historic buildings, reflecting a suitable scale and materials that are in keeping with the local vernacular style. Traditional paving materials would enhance the overall appearance and ambience still further.

**7.130** The pedestrian route through to the High Street via Bulls Head Yard tuery creates a tranquil air and helps tie the area together. Regeneration of a derelict single-storey (listed) cottage to the rear of No.15 High Street adjacent this tuery would help restore some of the lost historic character along the route.

**7.131** Another route between the central area and the High Street is provided by the Market Place tuery and some associated new development. This shows signs of influencing the structure and frontage along the east side of the car park. Apart from offering some attractive views of the church and High Street rooftops to the northeast, the entire car park area is open, barren and unimaginative. Effective visual screening and boundary treatments are essential if this key part of the town is not to remain blighted as an eyesore.

**7.132** The northern section of the car park is reasonably well defined as a space by virtue of surviving brick walls and trees lining some of the old plots. Seen from the north, however, the rear walls of the new shops on Bulls Head Yard and the Moorfield Road

“overspill” car park convey an austere appearance.



*Figure 88. Central car park with Bulls Head Yard in foreground; Market Place to left and superstore at far right*



*Figure 89. Market Place as seen from Bull's Head Yard by public toilets*



*Figure 90. Market Place looking through to covered tuery entrance between Nos.29 & 31 High Street*

## **Zone "I" – The River Arrow**

**7.133** The river forms an important natural boundary to the eastern side of the town. Its dense tree-lined banks mark a clear edge, which is clearly apparent when approaching from the east along the Stratford Road (Figure 10) and also from Kinwarton Road.

**7.134** The northern part of this zone is very heavily wooded, but on the edges there are some very fine open views, particularly westwards towards Ragley Mill.

**7.135** The modern Greig Sports Hall sits just outside the northeastern boundary of the conservation area but still quite close to the riverbank. Fortunately sufficient mature trees remain to ensure that it is screened from the town view, particularly along Henley Street. Retained hedgerows around the building also help to integrate this scheme into the natural surroundings.

**7.136** Gunnings Bridge dates from c.1814 and is an attractive triple-arched brick structure with stone dressings (Figure 37). The modern footbridge running along the north side has a single-span and simple form that gives a good close-up view of its historic companion and the riverbed.

**7.137** Southeast of the bridge there are attractive views of the shrub and tree-lined retaining walls fronting the riverbank from the grounds of Arrow Lodge. On the opposite bank a modern

detached house encroaches too much on the otherwise natural river setting.



*Figure 91. The River Arrow to the south of Gunnings Bridge*

**7.138** Moving further south and following the river meanders, the tree-lined banks continue to be a real asset to the town even though much of the river's course is shielded from public vantage points. A pocket of development has taken place around Tibbetts Lane at the end of Meeting Lane. Pleasant trees screen some, but the modern houses nearer to the river clash with the landscape setting; to the detriment of the conservation area's character.

**7.139** Meeting lane also gives access on to The Bowling Green, a pleasant rural feature said to date from Elizabethan times and formerly owned by the Angel Inn. There are good open views from

here across the short branch to the River Alne and the meadows to the southeast.

**7.140** A bend in the river takes it almost to the bottom end of Colebrook Close before turning sharply to create a semi-formal open space. Defined by mature trees and new developments along Gas House Lane, this pleasant area should improve as further trees mature along the Stratford Road. The glimpse back upstream from this point highlights a single-span timber lattice footbridge in the distance, which creates an attractive scene.



*Figure 92. The River Arrow running past Gas House Lane recreation ground, the footbridge is just visible set against the background greenery*

**7.141** The raised flood banks with their well-tended grass are an attractive and functional feature along the eastern boundary of the Gas House Lane recreation ground. Recent heavy rainfall has underlined the susceptibility of the river to flood, particularly in the vicinity of Gunnings Bridge. Any further development within the floodplain area to the east or northeast of the town would simply compound the flooding problem for the future.

**7.142** The river continues south of the Stratford Road towards the confluence with the River Alne to create an attractive landscape setting for the town along its southeast quadrant as viewed from Oversley Green.

## **8 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITIES OF THE BUILDINGS**

### **Essential Characteristics**

**8.1** Alcester is a sizeable market town and the extent of the conservation area reflects different phases of development over a significant period of time. Almost inevitably this gives rise to considerable variation of architectural styles, forms and features, reflecting the underlying progressive changes in building techniques, materials availability, social change and even fashion.

**8.2** Many of the older buildings have undoubtedly been re-fronted, altered and adapted to different uses during their life. Glimpses of the remains of earlier buildings and structures are evident in the historic core, most notably from the burgage plots, which extend back from the properties fronting High Street, Church Street and Henley Street. The underlying theme is one of forms and functions created by evolutionary needs, rather than outright design.

**8.3** The essential architectural forms and characteristics can be generalized as follows:

- Mix of detached, villa pairs, cottages and terraced housing
- High ratio of public houses and former coaching inns
- Mostly 2-storey construction; several notable 3-storey buildings of historic significance; one 4-storey (No.9 Church Street - Old Post Office)
- Few large-scale landmark buildings; St Nicholas' Church and former Minerva Works
- Continuous building lines along High Street, Butter Street, Church Street, Henley Street, Malt Mill Lane, Meeting Lane, Swan Street, Bleachfield Street, Evesham Street and Priory Road (east side)
- Buildings fronting either directly onto the pavement or slightly set back with small front gardens
- Deep extensions and outbuildings along narrow burgage plots
- Mostly traditional pitched roofs, with some hipped variations
- Relatively few full gables fronting on to street; rooflines generally follow orientation of street
- Simple detailing to facades
- Abundance of attics and well-scaled dormer windows on older properties
- Covered access at street level to tueries and courtyards; High Street, Church Street and Malt Mill Lane in particular
- Residences accessed via (some locked) doorways on the High Street (14A, 8A, 8C, etc)
- Larger properties have doorways raised above pavement level

- Virtual absence of modern loft conversions and porches
- Low-to-medium chimney stacks with a variety of clay pot styles
- Predominance of timber framed windows; multi-paned casement and hung sash types
- Generally consistent and similarly scaled elevations and rhythm; building line has an overriding horizontal emphasis

## Building Materials

### Walls

**8.4** The majority of historic buildings in the conservation area are constructed of timber frame or brick. Stone accounts for only a small minority owing to the limited availability of good quality local freestone.

**8.5** Alcester boasts some of the finest timber framed buildings in Warwickshire. There are excellent examples of both the standard square box frame type and the more refined close-studded work in the vicinity of Church Street, Malt Mill Lane and Henley Street. The Old Malthouse of c.1500 is undoubtedly the best illustration of the latter type (Figures 5 & 18). Overhanging timber jetties and the detailing of the various timber posts and rails are particularly notable features. No.19 Henley Street retains its medieval timber cruck construction internally and has been scientifically dated c.1385.

**8.6** Painted or limewashed wattle and daub or lath and plaster infill panels are still evident on many of the timber-framed buildings, protected by virtue of their listed status. Brick historically replaced this traditional material due to its better thermal properties. Henley Street has good examples of these varying treatments (Figures 47 – 49). The late-16<sup>th</sup> century box-framed houses at Nos.40 - 42A on the corner of Meeting Lane display a restored panel where the internal timber staves and withies that make up the wattle are clearly visible.

**8.7** Brickwork elevations are mostly laid to Flemish bond using orange-red stocks bedded on soft lime mortar. The c.1688 Baroque-style façade to Churchill House on Henley Street is a fine example of the handsome, slightly smaller stocks then in use. Other good examples of period brickwork include the 3-storey Regency buildings at the corners of Swan Street, High Street and Bleachfield Street; namely The Swan Hotel (Figure 17), Lloyds Bank building (Figure 56) and Nos.46 – 50 High Street opposite. Elsewhere, No.6 Church Street, Nos.18 – 20 Evesham Street (Figures 64 & 65), Acorn House (Figure 68) and the Old Rectory are all representative of high-quality work.

**8.8** Many buildings display painted and colour-washed brickwork to surprisingly good effect. The widest range of colour variation is the pastel-shaded

scheme along the east side of Church Street (Figure 45). Fine stucco render finishes and decorative effects are also to be



Figure 93. Greyhound House (Nos.29 – 31 Henley Street) dates from c.1600 and was formerly an inn; it has original lath and plaster infill panels and ornate scroll brackets to the timber jetty bays



Figure 94. Churchill House on Henley Street is a timber-framed building with a fine c.1688 red brick façade

residences here; No.7 (The Limes) is scored to resemble ashlar work whilst No.8 (Arrow House) has its c.1830 stucco façade modeled along neo-classical lines with fluted Doric pilasters. More coarse rendered finishes exist at some of the cottages along Moorfield Road and also to the upper storey of the Memorial Town Hall (masking the fine narrow timber panels of the original construction; see Figures 14 & 15).

**8.9** Detailing to the eaves and verge “oversailing” brickwork, and the limited use of shaped terracotta “specials” provides variation to otherwise smooth elevations. Some buildings feature quite elaborate cornice detailing to add visual interest and give a relatively plain facade an air of distinctiveness. Terracotta string courses and recessed round-headed windows are used to relieve the massive repetitive red-brick elevations of the former Minerva Works; the twin-bay coach house at Acorn House uses a similar principal, with large radius “blind” arches.

**8.10** Brickwork arches to window lintels are also prominent features on many of the late-18<sup>th</sup>/early-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings;

found applied to the grander



Figure 95. Flemish bond brickwork with terracotta modillion cornice at The Swan Hotel



Figure 98. Nos.48 - 50 High Street turning the corner into No.2 Stratford Road has good quality gauged brickwork



Figure 96. Former Minerva Works highlighting terracotta detailing, brick buttressing and semi-circular headed (cast-iron) windows with top-hung opening lights



Figure 97. Simple 3-course brick dentil eaves at 67, High Street on the corner of High Street and Swan Street; note arrangement of courses and restrained projection of dentil bricks

Nos.11 – 11A and No.50 High Street are classic examples.

**8.11** The high cost of moving stone from distant quarries generally restricted its use to highly prestigious buildings only. Sir Fulke Greville's Town Hall of c.1618 (Figure 15) is a classic example, the distinctive and highly workable oolitic limestone being specially obtained from the Chipping Campden quarry of mason Simon Whyte over 22 miles away. Not until the development of the railways from the 1840s onwards did it become cost-effective to transport bulk building stone any appreciable distance.

**8.12** Material from the blue liassic limestone outcrops in the Arden Forest area to the north were used in the construction of the 13<sup>th</sup> century St Nicholas' Church tower. This rather friable material can also be found re-facing an earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century building at No.42 High Street, the c.1874 infilling of the Town Hall collonade and as a roughly coursed base plinth for the box-framed No.57 Priory Road.



Figure 99. Coursed liassic limestone at No.42 High Street contrasts with the colour-washed brickwork of the adjoining Royal Oak Inn

**8.13** Dressed stonework is confined to window lintels, quoins, porch hoods, coping and other embellishments. Large parts of St Nicholas Church were rebuilt using limestone ashlar c.1730 following a fire, which destroyed most of the nave, aisles and chancel.



Figure 100. Illustrating the diversity of wall construction and finishes at the top of Church Street: Memorial Town Hall (left) with original colonnade of Campden limestone, (later) lias infill and roughcast rendered upper storey; timber framing of Windsor House (centre); colour-washed brickwork to Nos.2 – 4 Church Street (right)

**8.14** Traditional materials, combined with high-quality craftsmanship and attention to

detail are those attributes that distinguish the conservation area's historic buildings.

### Roofs

8.15 The predominant roofing materials within the conservation area are plain red clay tiles and Welsh slate. From the 1840s onwards, the development of rail transportation made the larger-format and lighter slate a highly cost-effective replacement for most vernacular materials.

8.16 Many of the older timber framed houses still retain their traditional hand-made tiles whilst others have been re-roofed using modern machine-cut tiles. The balance is a pleasing compromise between the various types



Figure 101. Traditional plain clay tile hipped roof and brick lateral chimney stack; Windsor House/Stylish Corner (No.1 Church Street)



Figure 102. Replacement plain clay tile roof and casement dormer at No.57 Priory Road; note patterned tiles and crested dormer ridge

although it must be said that the undulations and irregularities of the older clay tile roofs provide colour and textual variations which simply cannot be emulated by the mass-produced modern item.

**8.17** Other types of roof covering include red clay pantiles (Nos.11 - 11A High Street) and sheet lead for hip flashings, e.g. Old Baptist Meeting House and Gresley House. The front awnings at Hertford Place (Nos.21 - 27 Priory



Figure 103. Clay "fishtail" awning tiles at Hertford Place; Nos.21 - 27 Priory Road

Road) are "fishtail" clay tiles, which form a distinctive band along the building's street elevation. Terracotta panels and

band coursing to the upper storey complete the decorative effects to this pleasant terraced group.

**8.18** Modern concrete interlocking tiles have been used to replace traditional roof coverings on some buildings within the conservation area. The end results are rarely satisfactory from a visual standpoint and often detract from the character of a group of adjacent buildings, not just the building undergoing the change. Increased loading of the underlying roofing structure is another point often not fully taken into account.

**8.19** Ridge detailing is restrained on the majority of buildings, being mainly plain angle or capped angle ridge tiles with some roll tops and half-round clay tiles. Hertford Place has a Welsh slate roof with distinctive pierced clay ridge tiles, whilst the former Minerva Works uses spiked "brattishing" on alternate ridge tiles. Both decorative effects add interest and variation to the buildings.

**8.20** Most buildings within the conservation area have at least one traditional chimneystack. These are exclusively of red brick construction and range in height from fairly squat ridge stacks to taller offset/lateral forms on the older buildings (see Figure 101).

**8.21** A diverse range of clay pots breaks the uniformity of the rooflines and adds visual interest, especially along the southern section of Priory Road. The three diagonally set square stacks at Greyhound House on Henley Street are quite unique and have dome-shaped funnel pots. Simple brick corbelling is a common detail and only a few stacks incorporate any stonework.



*Figure 104. Old plain clay tile roof with simple ridge stacks and a variety of buff-coloured chimney pots; Nos.53 - 55 Priory Road*

**8.22** Parapet walls are rare within the conservation area, being confined to the grandeur of Nos. 8 - 10 Church Street and the esoteric castellated gable at The Priory. Nos.11 - 11A High Street has a low parapet but the majorities of buildings suffice with a very simple eaves and verge arrangement.

**8.23** Other roof-related features, which enhance the character and appearance of the buildings within the conservation area include:

- Cast-iron guttering and decorative hopper heads

- Plain timber painted bargeboards
- Hip irons below bottom hip tiles
- Rooflights recessed below the level of the roof covering; i.e. approved "conservation" types

### **Windows and Doorways**

**8.24** Traditional timber windows are still very much in evidence within the conservation area. The two main domestic types are the multi-paned side-hung casement and the double-hung sliding sash; their sizes and number of panes varying in accordance with the period of the building. For shop frontages, bow and canted bay windows are dominant features; the Gothick style of those at Bowen's Drapery (No.6 High Street) being particularly unusual (Figure 41).

**8.25** Most of the late-18<sup>th</sup>/early-19<sup>th</sup> century houses and shops along the main streets have retained their distinctive period "8-over-8" or "6-over-6" paned sashes, including the slender "lamb's tongue" glazing bars which give the window assembly a delicate appearance. Combined with front doors of elegant paneling or simply painted boards, these basic finishing elements of construction make key visual contributions to the character and appearance of their respective buildings, as well as enhancing the streetscape generally.



*Figure 105. Traditional "8-over-8" double-hung timber sliding sash window with gauged brick flat arch; 1<sup>st</sup> floor level of No.11 High Street*

**8.26** The Old Rectory on Butter Street provides a good example of how the doors and windows define the "face" of the building. Here the 3-storeys are designed with graduated sash window sizes; "8-over-8" to the ground floor, "6-over-6" at 1<sup>st</sup> floor and "3-over-3" for the attic storey. The Lloyds Bank building arguably has the finest fenestration in town with its mix of Venetian windows topped by attic storey lunettes (Figure 56).

**8.27** Note that some "sash windows" are not what they seem; the upper sections can be disguised as top-hung casements, as at The Swan Hotel (Figure 95). Large-pane sash windows such as the 3-over-3 types at Nos.39 & 41 High Street illustrate the later Victorian trend towards higher levels of natural lighting.

**8.28** For the more modest 2-storey brick terraced houses, the usual arrangement comprises a single window to each storey and an offset boarded front door. The windows are typically "8-over-8" sliding sash or "6-by-6" side-hung casement types; set under a segmental brick arch at ground floor level and directly beneath the wall plate for the upper storey. Malt Mill Lane and Evesham Street provide interesting varieties of these different window/door arrangements.

**8.29** Many timber-framed buildings retain timber or wrought-iron casement windows, set slightly back from the panels and with the sill supported by a longitudinal timber rail. Window sizes are generally smaller than those of the Georgian and Victorian periods which reflects the age of the building and the



*Figure 106. Traditional timber casement windows and simple part-glazed panelled doors at Nos.47 - 55 Priory Road; note variation on segmental and flat arch heads*

historic manufacturing limitations on glass "quarries", i.e. small panes. Recent restoration schemes such as the one carried

out at No.41 Malt Mill Lane has seen the reinstatement of traditional metal-framed casements with leaded-lights. The end result is a most pleasing appearance and retention of the historic character.

**8.30** Some of the smaller terraced houses within the conservation area have unfortunately been quite radically "modernized" by replacement



*Figure 107. Unsympathetic replacement window styles; Nos. 33 & 35 Priory Road; note extensive amount of poor brickwork matching above ground floor windows*



*Figure 108. Replacement double glazing of inappropriate design and materials at No.46 Henley Street; modern sheet glazing to the upper storey erodes the character of this important group of buildings (note the comparison with the old "8-over-8" sash below)*

window frames of inappropriate materials and/or design, e.g. large-size "picture" windows and uPVC sealed double-glazing units. These are readily identifiable by their uniformity, clumsy oversized glazing bars and glazing, all of which visually jars with their traditional counterparts. Such major changes to the face of a building essentially destroy its historic character and are detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area.

**8.31** Alcester is fortunate in having a large number of historic buildings with traditional windows that can be used as "models" for future restorations of buildings where the original windows have been removed. The extensive refurbishment and regeneration of Malt Mill Lane during the 1970s set a valuable conservation precedent, which it is important to respect and maintain.

**8.32** Good examples of traditional solid timber doors are evident at the majority of buildings within the conservation area. The Regency period houses along Church Street display the finest quality work, having highly decorative doorframes of carved wood or stucco set around multi-paneled doors and fanlights to create an imposing entrance.

**8.33** Many period doors are part-glazed and the Victorian properties in particular have a rectangular transom light set above the doorframe to improve internal lighting and give the impression of a more formal entrance. Simpler boarded/ledged

and braced doors survive at the terraced houses and cottages, and also where there is a shared central passageway for rear access; Nos. 61 & 63 Priory Road (West View) offer a well-preserved example of this type of doorway.



Figure 109. Different types of timber front door; solid timber 4-panel front door with moulded/reeded wood surround and corner roundels at No.63 Priory Road (left), more humble entrances at No.7 Butter Street (right)

**8.34** Unfortunately there are examples of transom lights being filled in and/or the doors replaced with new types of inappropriate materials and design. Modern neo-Georgian paneled doors with a semi-circular fanlight set into the door itself have no historical precedent and are inappropriate for buildings within the conservation area. The balance and character of the terrace at Nos.29 - 35 Priory Road in particular has suffered due to excessive “modernization” of this form.

**8.35** Pairs of large timber boarded gates giving access

to rear courtyards and former stables are also notable features, especially around Church Street and Henley Street. Iron gates are well represented too with an impressive set remaining in-situ under the covered access adjacent to No.55 High Street. The wrought-iron gates, overthrow and hanging lantern at the entrance to St Nicholas’ churchyard are important historic features which greatly enhance the overall setting of both the church and the lower part of Butter Street (Figure 6).

**8.36** The styles of porches and porch hoods range widely throughout the conservation area according to the function and status of the building. The Swan Hotel has a particularly ostentatious arrangement of fluted Doric columns with a broken pediment above but most examples are far simpler and more practical. No.53 Priory Road uses a pair of arched timber braces to support a shallow double-pitched porch arrangement, which is effective as well as being a feature within the overall streetscape. The most basic designs are almost as effective and less intrusive, however, as the flat bracket supported hoods and shallow drip sills along the lower part of Malt Mill Lane demonstrates.

### ***Paving and Ground Surfaces***

**8.37** The vast majority of public footpaths and road surfaces within the conservation area are of resurfaced tarmac flanked by modern concrete kerbstones, which have no historic

significance. Few historic paved surfaces survive, except within St Nicholas' churchyard, the confines of private gardens and the tuery which runs through to the Tudor Rose café at the rear of Nos.9 & 9A High Street (Figure 9).

**8.38** Evidence of traditional treatments can also be seen at Nos.1 & 2 Station Road and in the assortment of front doorway/entrance steps along High Street, Church Street and Henley Street. Some sections of old stone kerb remain outside The Swan Hotel.

**8.39** Major re-surfacing of pedestrian thoroughfares has taken place within the town's historic core over recent years. Malt Mill Lane is neatly paved using interlocking herringbone pattern pavements and narrow pebblestone verges; the concave surface water run-offs accentuate the building line and provide an interface between the different surfaces (Figure 5). Butter Street and Colebrook Close have received a similar treatment and there are replacement flagstones along both sides of Church Street.

**8.40** The tueries leading off the High Street have benefited from extensive facelifts during 2005-06. Whilst some of their old charm and character may have been lost, they are now much brighter, smarter and welcoming places for local people and the visitor alike. Oak Tuery was the first to be completed, followed by Bulls Head Yard Tuery and the new Market Place link (Figure 42). They each feature a circular mosaic set into the paved

surface, the results of a public art competition to find local designs, which reflect different aspects of the town's heritage.

**8.41** The tuery improvement works and their associated pedestrian crossing points over the High Street were carried out by Advantage Alcester, a partnership of local individuals, community groups, businesses and representatives focused on regeneration issues. This partnership is funded by Advantage West Midlands as part of the government's Market Town Initiative and plays a key role in improving many of the town's amenities.

**8.42** The setting of Windsor House and the Baptist chapel on Church Street benefit from a neatly paved area set back from the pavement (Figure 20).



*Figure 110, Oak Tuery with its new paved surface and distinctive oak leaf mosaic; view standing at corner of Royal Oak public house and looking towards Gas House Lane*



Figure 111. Bulls Head Yard Tuery and house backs on west side of High Street

## Local Details

**8.43** Alcester retains many excellent examples of late-Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts along the High Street. These make a vital contribution to local distinctiveness and have a strong cultural significance within the community; the many and varied awnings complete the picture. Nos.3 - 7 (Figure 21), No.8, Bowen's drapery (Figure 41), 67, High Street (Figure 39) and No.29 (Barclays Bank but formerly the Alcester Chronicle newspaper offices) are particularly good examples of craftsmanship with quality timber mouldings and joinery detail.

**8.44** Nos.5 - 7 High Street (now Select & Save) is a long-established grocers shop going back to Georgian times. For many

years it sported a replica 19<sup>th</sup> century sugar loaf hanging from an iron bracket above the front entrance; the bracket remains but the sugar loaf has gone.

**8.45** Another good example of local metalworking skills is the unusually long hanging sign at the Dog & Partridge Inn, Bleachfield Street. The sign adds an interesting dimension to the diverse range of buildings in this area (Figure 16).

**8.46** Clocks also feature prominently in enhancing the character of the streetscape. The most noticeable example is the large external dial face to St Nicholas' Church clock, positioned at an angle on the southwest corner of the tower to make it more visible along the length of the High Street (Figure 21). A more ornamental clock used to project from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor frontage of Lawrence's in Evesham Street until quite recently. It displayed the lettering "1875 A. Simpson 1900" in a curved band above the dial face but appears to have been removed following damage.

**8.47** Several pre-1960s cast-iron street name signs survive around the town and their characteristic black-on-white embossed lettering enriches the overall streetscape. Striking examples are the "Church Street" sign on the end of Windsor House and the "Henley Street" sign at Greyhound House. Both signs also highlight the rich timber framing of their respective buildings.



Figure 112. Traditional cast-iron street sign fixed to the end of Windsor House

**8.48** Many of the timber-framed buildings also feature quite elaborate carvings and scroll brackets, which are important examples of local variations on traditional building practice. Greyhound House has good examples of carved brackets supporting its jettied bresummer beams along the front elevation to Henley Street.

**8.49** Apart from the brick and terracotta eaves detailing already mentioned (refer to §8.9 and Figures 95 - 97), the only other notable variation to the later buildings is the propensity of decorated window sills and embossed lintels. A fashionable trend having its origins in the Victorian period, these simple touches of colour enliven many of the brick buildings along the town's streets, even if it is not strictly unique craftsmanship to Alcester!

**8.50** There are many other examples of traditional craftsmanship and unusual local details which make small but valuable contributions to the



Figure 113. Carved timber scroll bracket at Greyhound House, Nos.29 & 31 Henley Street



Figure 114. Overhanging sign and embossed, painted lintels at the Dog & Partridge Inn

character of the conservation area as a whole. A (non-exhaustive) summary is as follows:

- "Angel" plaque on front wall of Angel House, No.4 Church Street
- Grecian-style wrought-iron balcony and railings with honeysuckle motif, No.10 Church Street

- Pyramid-shaped stone cappings to boundary walls, e.g. Arrow Lodge
- Traditional hand-painted fascia signage to shop fronts
- Traditional hand-painted hanging signs at the various hostelries
- Painted panel depicting Lord Nelson at public house of same name, Priory Road
- Ornate metal bracket lamps along tuery at rear of Nos. 11 - 11A High Street (see Figure 9)
- Wrought-iron gates, overthrow and hanging gas lantern at entrance to St Nicholas' churchyard
- Wrought-iron gates to covered access next to No.55 High Street
- Stone war memorial and flagpole in St Nicholas' churchyard
- Iron gates to Birmingham Road cemetery
- Red type K6 telephone kiosk outside Old Post Office at No.9 Church Street; also K6 kiosk at new Post Office in High Street
- Victorian Royal Mail postbox set in wall; No.71 Priory Road
- Reproduction "period" gas lamps in Gas House Lane
- New cast-iron finger post signage in Church Street
- Various designs of flower baskets
- Modern tuery mosaics



*Figure 115. Examples of other local details (clockwise from top-left): "Lord Nelson" painted panel, hanging gas lantern at St Nicholas churchyard; "VR" postbox set into wall at No.71 Priory Road; wrought-iron gates adjacent No.55 High Street, balcony and flower basket outside No.10 Church Street*

## Statutory Listed Buildings

**8.51** Alcester and district's built environment includes many fine buildings of varied architectural and historic interest. This is reflected in the fact that of those buildings falling within the boundary of the conservation area, 114 are afforded statutory protection as "listed buildings", i.e. defined as having national significance and requiring consent from the LPA (i.e. Stratford District Council) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 before any works or alterations can be undertaken.

**8.52** Not surprisingly, the majority of the listed buildings are situated along the medieval street pattern within the historic core of the town. Many are contiguous attached buildings, which contain more than one shop and/or dwelling. A simple breakdown by street name is:

- Bleachfield Street (5)
- Butter Street (8)
- Church Street (17)
- Evesham Street (6)
- Henley Street (16)
- High Street (31)
- Malt Mill Lane (10)
- Meeting Lane (2)
- Priory Road (12)
- Seggs Lane (1)
- Station Road (1)
- Stratford Road (1)
- Swan Street (4)

**8.53** Over 95% of the buildings are listed grade II as being of "special interest", with seven having the higher grade II\* listing as being "particularly important" buildings thus:

- St Nicholas Church
- Churchill House
- Nos.9 & 9A High Street
- No.2 Malt Mill Lane
- Nos.5 & 7 Malt Mill Lane

Nos.5 & 7 Malt Mill Lane are contiguous extensions of The Old Malthouse situated on the corner with Church Street. This building (identified as Nos.11 & 12 Church Street, including Nos.1 & 3 Malt Mill Lane) is listed grade I as being of a building of "exceptional importance". The Memorial Town Hall is also a listed grade I building.

**8.54** There are also three discrete structures protected under the same legislation and all listed grade II:

- St Nicholas churchyard wall and gate piers, including wrought-iron overthrow and hanging gas lantern
- K6 telephone kiosk outside No.9 church Street
- Gunnings Bridge

**8.55** The important "Blacklands" archaeological area to the east of Bleachfield Street is protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 by virtue of being scheduled

ancient monument. No development is allowed in this area.

**8.56** Map 15 shows the respective locations of the listed buildings and structures. The national statutory list descriptions for these buildings (as maintained by English Heritage on behalf of DCMS; the government Department for Culture, Media and Sport) can be found at the Stratford-on-Avon District Council offices. Printed copies of the information are held at the council's offices for public viewing.

**8.57** Alternatively, the c.2001 English Heritage Images of England historic survey website [www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk) holds the same textual information (although not comprehensive) but with accompanying colour images (unless the building owner has opted out of the survey); IoE records 305172 to 305303 and 432323 (Minerva Works).

**8.58** Appendix C gives an outline summary of each listed building within the conservation area. The tabular information presented is not intended as a substitute for the statutory list description.

### **Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings**

**8.59** Many of the buildings within the conservation area make an important visual contribution to its character and also hold significance to the local community.

Despite not being listed in the statutory sense, these buildings can still be identified and recorded on a "local list" to be maintained and reviewed periodically by Stratford-on-Avon District Council. Such local lists help to safeguard local distinctiveness and are invariably consulted when new development proposals affecting the conservation area are submitted.

**8.60** Please note that not every unlisted building is included; purely those that are considered to make the most significant visual contribution to the conservation area; and whose loss and/or damaging alteration would have a detrimental impact on the overall streetscape.

**8.61** Map 15 also shows the locations of key "unlisted" buildings and a brief summary of their individual merits is included under Appendix D. The following breakdown by zone indicates their relative distribution within the conservation area:

#### **Zone "A"**

- Arrow Lodge, Kinwarton Road
- No.23 High Street
- Nos.39 & 41 High Street
- Walls to Bulls Head Yard Tuery and adjoining former stable building
- Nos.7 - 13 Henley Street (odd nos).

- Abbeyfield House, No.26  
Henley Street
- Stables to Churchill House,  
Henley Street
- Nos.3, 4 & 5 Meeting Lane



Figure 116. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses at Nos.7 - 13 Henley Street

### **Zone "B"**

- Nos.32 - 40 Malt Mill Lane  
(even nos.)

### **Zone "C"**

- Cottages, 70 and 72  
Bleachfield Street
- Nos.2 & 4 Birch Abbey
- 3 - 5 Evesham Street
- Nos.7 - 13 Evesham Street
- Nos.26 & 28 Evesham  
Street
- The White Lion public  
house, Evesham Street
- Perrymill, Evesham Street
- Poplar Cottage, Evesham  
Street
- Former workshop at  
Nos.12 & 14 Seggs Lane

- Nos.4 – 12 Stratford Road  
(even nos.)
- The Cross Keys Inn,  
Stratford Road



Figure 117. Cottages at lower end of Bleachfield Street (east side)

### **Zone "E"**

- Nos.17 & 19 Priory Road
- Hertford Place, Nos.21 - 27  
Priory Road
- Nos.29 - 33 Priory Road
- Our Lady and St. Joseph  
Roman Catholic Church and  
former school, Priory Road
- "VR" Royal Mail red postbox  
at No.71 Priory Road
- Terraced villas opposite  
Yew Trees, Priory Road
- Salt Box Row, Nos.44 - 54  
School Road

### **Zones "F" & "G"**

- Nos.1 & 2 Station Road
- No.39 School Road
- Nos.2 & 4 Moorfield Road

# ALCESTER

ROMAN TOWN  
(Site of)

## THE MOORS

Alcester  
Infants School

### Listed Buildings and Key Unlisted Building within the Conservation Area Map 15

Where property boundaries define the limits of the Conservation Area, all features forming the boundary (e.g. walls, hedges, trees etc.) are assumed to be wholly within the Conservation Area.

- Revised Conservation Area Boundary September 2008
- Listed buildings
- Key unlisted buildings

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## 9 CONTRIBUTION MADE BY GREEN SPACES, TREES, HEDGES AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

**9.1** Key public, semi-public and private open spaces within the conservation area have already been highlighted in terms of their important spatial qualities and the interrelationships with the various buildings (refer to §6.1 - §6.12).

**9.2** Natural planting in the form of trees, shrubs, hedges and private gardens plays a pivotal role in demarcating spaces and “softening” the boundaries of the built environment. Alcester is fortunate in retaining a large amount of natural planting around its historic core and every effort should be made to protect this “greenery” for the benefit of present and future generations.

### Green Spaces

**9.3** There are five significant areas of green space within the conservation area considered as crucial in retaining the balance between the built and natural environments. These correspond to the open spaces previously itemised (refer to §6.2) and shown on Map 10. The narrow riverbank area immediately to the north of Gunnings Bridge and the protected Blacklands area east of Bleachfield Street are also very important green spaces.

**9.4** Other smaller and less prominent green spaces still make a significant contribution to the setting of individual buildings

and streetscapes within the conservation area as a whole:

- Wide grass verges along Stratford Road at eastern gateway (Figure 11)
- Lawns fronting set-back aspect of Abbeyfield House, Henley Street
- Grassed areas either side of pathway leading to Baptist chapel, Church Street (Figure 20)
- The Bowling Green, Meeting Lane
- Private gardens to properties east of Meeting Lane down to the river (see Figure 34)
- The grassed area, trees and old wall between Moorfield Road cul-de-sac and Old Rectory Gardens
- Gardens and grassland surrounding Nos.38 & 40 School Road
- Small front gardens; No.36 Evesham Street and Nos.53 & 55 Henley Street



*Figure 118. Lawned frontage at Abbeyfield House, Henley Street*

## Trees and Shrubs

**9.5** Trees perform an essential role as harmonizing visual features within the conservation area, as well as functioning as “green lungs” for the local environment. There are many fine specimen trees growing in groups and as single “point” trees.

**9.6** Most forms are represented with their relative sizes ranging from sapling through to full maturity; evergreen and deciduous species. The larger trees tend to be found near to the green open spaces, which further enhances their aesthetic value. Many private gardens include a great variety of tree species and forms as the c.2000 aerial views of the town highlight (see Figures 24, 28 & 34).

**9.7** The important tree locations are identified thus:

- Mature trees and secondary screening along riverbanks from Gunnings Bridge through to Stratford Road (Figure 10)
- Lining riverbank north of Gunnings Bridge (Figures 48 & 50)
- Stratford Road; eastern gateway (Figure 11)
- Screen along eastern boundary of Corinthian Court (Stratford House site) (Figures 12 & 70)
- Gas House Lane recreation ground (Figures 29 & 55)
- St Nicholas churchyard; fine specimen trees and screen fronting Church Road (Figure 2, 8, 21 & 46)
- Specimen tree standing in front of No.10 Church Road (Figure 45)
- Seggs Lane (Figure 38)
- Evesham Street (north side) fronting/in grounds of Acorn House, Perrymill and Laurel House (Figure 33)
- Lining west side of Priory Road (screening municipal buildings) and in grounds/boundary of Our Lady and St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church (Figures 72 & 73)
- Rear garden of No.59 Priory Road; large specimen tree
- Bordering rear gardens of Nos.21 - 43 Priory Road (screening for superstore)
- Priory Road; grounds of large houses in northern section (Figures 74 & 75)
- Birmingham Road cemetery (Figure 31)
- Large “point” tree next to No.1 Station Road (Figure 78)
- Grounds of Nos.38 & 40 School Road backing on to The Moors and overhanging School Road (Figure 23)
- Moorfield Road and former Alcester Infant’s School site and recreation ground; boundaries and tree lined path across to Nelson’s Tuery (Figures 30, 84 & 86)



*Figure 119. Small trees bordering The Moors area at Nos. 38 & 40 School Road*

**9.8** Many of the smaller trees are complemented by shrubs, especially in private gardens and around St Nicholas' churchyard. Aerial perspectives of the town (Figures 24, 28 & 34) give the best illustration of their immense contribution to the conservation area but it is worth highlighting some of the more prominent locations thus:

- Baptist chapel; boundaries with Windsor House and Church Street (Figure 20)
- Old Rectory; front garden (Figure 6)
- Henley Street/Kinwarton Road; mature conifers at Arrow Lodge (Figure 50)
- Evesham Street; long rear garden of No.17 (Figure 65)
- Pockets of shrubs around residential developments in Gas House Lane and Chestnut Court

**9.9** Specific Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) apply to safeguard many of the trees within the conservation area. In addition, all trees above a certain minimum size i.e. 75mm diameter measured at 1.5 metres above ground level are protected from any felling, crowning or pruning works without prior consent from Stratford-on-Avon District Council.



*Figure 120. Small trees and shrubs in the Old Rectory garden provide a natural foil for the vista down High Street*

### Hedges

9.9 Mature and well-tended hedges create attractive natural boundaries to plots and spaces, as well as helping to frame the streetscape. Good examples are:

- Mature copper beech hedge at Acorn House, Evesham Street (Figure 67)
- Privet hedges; School Road behind grass verge and Evesham Street (south)
- Various low hedging types; Colebrook Close, Chestnut Court and Gas House Lane

## Hard Boundary Treatments

**9.10** Many of the buildings within the conservation area are set directly on to the pavement, thus having no requirement for front boundary treatment. Elsewhere a range of treatments is employed to define the various property boundaries. Where visible from public spaces, these make a particularly valuable contribution to the aesthetics and special interest of the area. Rear garden boundaries are also important within the overall context even though they are less visible.

**9.11** Prominent man-made boundary treatments include:

- Red brick walls of various heights and ages; laid to Flemish Garden Wall bond or stretcher bond variants
- Blue lias limestone rubblestone walls
- Variety of wall copings; dressed stone with weathering, angular, bullnose, saddleback blue bricks, brick soldier courses
- Low brick walls with hedge
- Gate piers with different types of decoration; stone finals, pyramid cappings
- Entrance gates; timber boarded and wrought-iron
- Emulations of traditional cast-iron bollards and iron railings
- Timber paling; untreated



*Figure 121. Old garden wall and simple timber paling at bottom of Moorfields*



*Figure 122. Hard boundary treatments at top of Priory Road; lias rubblestone wall, brick wall with blue bullnose finish, brick gate piers with painted stone cappings, timber and iron gates*

**9.12** Some modern boundary treatments are very harsh in appearance and visually detract from the more traditional building materials, which readily harmonise with their surroundings. Examples include the concrete slabs used as a retaining wall along Priory Road (west side) and metal railings set within tall brick piers.

**9.13** All walls and railings within the curtilage of a listed building are considered to be part of that building from a listed building consent standpoint.

## 10 ISSUES, PRESSURES AND THREATS

**10.1** Certain elements within the conservation area detract from its special character and offer potential for beneficial change. These include the consequences of harmful pressures such as the loss of front gardens to hard standing/car parking, well intentioned but unsympathetic home improvements, derelict or semi-derelict buildings and the existence of unattractive “gap sites”.

### Land and Buildings of Poor Visual Quality

**10.2** Several modern buildings in prominent locations have a negative impact on the visual quality of their immediate surroundings. This is largely through a combination of poor design that is out of keeping with the local vernacular styles and the use of materials/construction, which do not respect the historic character of the streetscape.

**10.3** The following buildings detract from the character of the conservation area and could suitably be replaced by more visually pleasing forms if the opportunity for change arose in the future:

- No.43 High Street; c.1960s utilitarian shop frontage totally out of character with streetscape (Figure 40)
- Post Office, High Street; dominant, modern
- Modern shops between No.18 High Street and Bear Hotel; dominates adjoining buildings, poor design, unsympathetic materials
- Telephone exchange, Gas House Lane; inappropriate structure
- Nos.6 - 20 Henley Street; modern 4-storey terraced houses with integral garages and split rooflines spoil vista east along School Road
- No.2 Swan Street, modern detached building forming two shops; top-heavy and over-scaled,
- Methodist chapel; poorly designed modern brick building, set way back from building line
- No.37 Priory Road “Rykneild”; large, modern detached house set back from adjacent terraced houses, through access
- Nos.67 Priory Road; modern detached house with gable end to street (out of character with streetscape although some improvement on bungalow which stood on plot c.1993)
- Modern house occupying corner plot at School Road/ Moorfield Road turning; angular design, big windows, concrete tile roof



Figure 123. Modern Post Office at Nos. 36 – 40 High Street; dominant, out of character with adjoining historic buildings



Figure 126. Former Brooklyn Ford garage with Methodist chapel in background; poorly designed modern building currently undergoing redevelopment.



Figure 124. Nos. 6 - 20 Henley Street; modern 4-storey housing which is out of character with its surroundings and spoils the vista east along School Road



Figure 127. No. 37 Priory Road "Rykneild" employs a disproportionately large design, breaks the continuous building line and has large off-street parking area



Figure 125. No. 2 Swan Street presents an uncharacteristic, top-heavy and over-scaled imposition on the streetscape



Figure 128. Detached house at corner of School Road and Moorfield Road; unsympathetic materials and over-large picture windows

**10.4** Other spaces that have a visual quality that is detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area include:

- Car showrooms and corner frontage at junction of Priory Road/Cross Road
- Frontage of former Minerva Works at corner of Station Road and Birmingham Road
- Central car park area (Figures 88 & 89)
- Moorfield road “overspill” car park
- Bleachfield Street car park

**10.5** Car parking is a difficult issue within the town because many vehicles park along the main streets despite the large capacity of the central area facilities. Lack of adequate or sympathetic boundary treatments exacerbates the openness and negative effects that the car parks have on their surroundings.



*Figure 129. Site of former Brooklyn Ford garage; site has been cleared for mixed-use redevelopment*



*Figure 130. Highlighting the current unattractive long view through to the central car park*



*Figure 131. Warwickshire car showrooms; view down Priory Road*



Figure 132. Moorfield Road "overspill" car park to north of Bulls Head Yard



Figure 134. Area to south of Nos.2 & 4 Moorfield Road; poorly kept space



Figure 133. Bleachfield Street car park occupies the large site between The Swan Inn and the Dog & Partridge Inn



Figure 135. Bulls Head Yard looking east; a generally untidy space with the (curtilage listed) former stables/outbuilding at Nos.9 & 9A High Street in front of the parked car

**10.6** General untidiness is also a significant factor in making other small but prominent sites detract from the overall appearance of the conservation area. These sites include the following:

- Area to south/south-east of Nos.2 & 4 Moorfield Road
- Alley leading off Swan Street to Swan Court
- Area to north-east of Bulls Head Yard bordering High Street outbuildings at Nos.9 & 9A High Street
- South-east corner of central car park bordering rear of High Street burgage plots

**10.7** Some historically significant buildings within the conservation area are vacant and/or in a dilapidated condition requiring major repairs. These include two buildings alongside Bulls Head Yard Tuery:

- Derelict single-storey (listed) cottage to the rear of No.15 High Street
- Former stables/outbuilding to rear of Nos.9 & 9A High Street (curtilage listed)

Loss of these buildings would further erode the heritage of Alcester and every effort should be made to repair them to a state suitable for alternative beneficial use.



Figure 136. Derelict cottage to rear of No.15 High Street showing dilapidated condition of walls and roof

**10.8** The municipal buildings occupy the corner site between the lower west side of Priory Road and the northern entrance into Seggs Lane. They comprise Globe House (Local Authority offices and Alcester Heritage Centre), Fire Station, Police Station, Library and Health Centre. Previously referred to as The Civic Centre, these buildings were originally proposed for inclusion within the conservation area for the following reasons:

- Low-profile, low-key design with diagonal orientation
- Open plan approach; no attempt made to “monumentalise” their functions
- Extensive landscaping with triangular planting areas, paving and grassed boundaries to corner

**10.9** Although these buildings are distinctly modern in their appearance they do not really detract from the streetscape character of the traditional buildings opposite. The overall site is effectively “neutral” because of the significant contribution of its maturing greenery (refer to §7.104).



Figure 137. Part of the municipal buildings on the corner of Priory Road and Seggs Lane; western edge of conservation area

### Alterations

**10.10** The special architectural and historic character of the conservation area has been (and continues to be) eroded by well-intentioned home improvements, such as the insertion of uPVC double-glazed windows and doors, minor extensions and an array of satellite TV dishes.

**10.11** Certain minor works and alterations can be undertaken to residential property without any requirement for planning permission. These are termed “permitted development” or “PD rights” under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 and preceding legislation

(refer to §2.8). Replacement glazing, new roofing materials, hard standing areas and the removal of chimney stacks and front boundary walls under one metre high are all stated PD rights.

**10.12** The resultant detrimental impact on buildings and the overall streetscape warrants careful consideration so as to prevent further loss to the intrinsic character of the area. It may be appropriate to consider the use of Article 4(2) directions to remove PD rights for the following works:

- Replacement or insertion of windows and doors
- Erection, replacement or removal of boundary walls, fences and gates
- Cladding, rendering and painting of building facades
- Changes to roof covering
- Replacement of rainwater goods
- Alteration of roofing alignment/pitch and insertion of rooflights
- Removal of chimney stacks and pots
- Installation of satellite TV dishes and other intrusive equipment to front elevations
- Erection of garden structures
- Creation or alteration of hard-standing areas

**10.13** No.39 School Road provides a good reference example for a well-executed, sensitive alteration to a historic cottage in a prominent location within the conservation area. The proportions, materials and detailing of the original building are respected by the simple and subservient nature of the extension. Consequently, its character is retained and the extended form enhances the overall appearance and contribution to the streetscape.



*Figure 138. Well-executed extension at No.39 School Road*

## New Developments

**10.14** Parts of the conservation area include post-1950s development, which, whilst not necessarily of poor visual quality, does not contribute to the special character or historic interest. Some “neutral areas” such as the former Abbey Works on Bleachfield Street have been successfully redeveloped to provide housing (refer to §7.68 and Figure 59). The Brooklyn Ford garage buildings adjacent to the Methodist chapel on Priory Road are being redeveloped as mixed-use. Elsewhere there may be the potential for future enhancement:

- Telephone exchange site in Gas House Lane
- Warwickshire car showrooms on Priory Road
- Land and workshop buildings to south of Nos.2 & 4 Moorfield Road
- Rear of Salt Box Row Cottages – yard
- Rear of Barclays Bank – Market Tuery
- Rear of 5-7 High Street, small area used as a car park
- Old Fire Station site, Stratford Road

**10.15** Generally speaking, the conservation area is a low-density settlement that has evolved around the town’s historic core. Current Planning Policy Guidance (PPG3) and local planning policies support higher densities where sites are being considered for

redevelopment; posing a potential threat to the character and appearance of the area.

**10.16** It is essential that existing character, for example building-to-plot ratios, plan forms and architectural scale, massing and detailing are fully considered in any new development. Large 3-storey residential units (i.e. flats or large houses with over-sized attics) are generally unsuitable within the conservation area because they distort the established scale of the built environment.

**10.17** Demolition of any buildings or structures in the conservation area will require Conservation Area Consent from Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

**10.18** High priority should always be given to retaining existing historic buildings and finding new uses for them, rather than demolition and replacement with something of (invariably) poorer quality.

## Boundary Treatments

**10.19** The erection of timber panel fencing along plot boundaries gives a distinctly suburban appearance. These fences do not respect the traditional materials within the conservation area and visually undermine the setting of historic buildings.

**10.20** Much of the fencing along the southeastern burgage plot boundaries with the central car park is ad-hoc, poorly maintained

and falls under the “unsightly” classification.

**10.21** Other examples of poor or non-existent boundary treatments include the following:

- Gates to rear of High Street burgage plots; high-level “security” construction
- Concrete bollards and metal vehicle security hoops along pavement at Warwickshire car showroom (Figure 133)
- Tall brick piers with steel railing panels at No.37 Priory Road “Rykneild” (Figure 128)
- Concrete slabs used as “retainers” along part of western boundary on Priory Road
- Lack of any effective boundary treatments to car parks; Bleachfield Street, central area and Lord Nelson Inn especially
- Frontage to superstore; the area of red tarmac identifying the important Roman building outline is particularly disappointing
- Unpainted galvanised steel railings at pedestrian crossing; Priory Road/ School Road junction

**10.22** The planting of fast-growing conifers is generally not in keeping with traditional natural boundary treatments and often results in neighbour and/or highway disputes once the trees exceed recommended heights.

**10.23** In some cases, certain species of conifer provide effective screening of unsightly features, thus contributing to the spatial quality of the conservation area, e.g. Arrow Lodge (Figure 50) and Abbeyfield House (Figure 121). Removal under these circumstances would most likely incur a negative visual effect.



Figure 139. Unsightly fencing panels to rear of High Street burgage plots



Figure 140. Security gates in boundary walls at rear of High Street



Figure 141. Concrete slabs used as

*“retainers” to this bank along Priory Road clash with the more traditional (and orthodox) stone and brick boundary treatments further along*



*Figure 142. Car park at Lord Nelson inn with open view to The Ropewalk behind; a low hedge or brick wall with planting scheme would greatly enhance this rather bland and unattractive space*

## Highway Works

**10.24** Highway improvements, including signage and works carried out by “statutory undertakers” such as water and electricity utilities, has had an adverse impact on parts of the conservation area.

**10.25** Excessive signage, modern street furniture, unattractive street lighting and the swathes of utilitarian tarmac to roads and footpaths all erode the character of the street scene, vistas and views. It is unfortunate that many of the finest buildings in the conservation area have their frontages and appearance compromised by the siting of dominant, utilitarian streetlights!

**10.26** It is essential that works of this nature be carried out in full consultation with Stratford-on-Avon District Council and local

amenity groups, and in accordance with best practice advice and guidance gained from comparable schemes in other conservation areas.

10.27 Specific examples of where highway works make a negative impact include:

- Tall, angled steel street lights located in front of many of the historic buildings, e.g. Lloyds Bank building (Figure 70), Nos.71 - 73 Priory Road (Figure 74), Bulls Head Yard (Figure 87) and Windsor House (Figure 100)
- Standard pattern galvanised railings to pedestrian crossings
- Unsightly “patch” repairs to many of the road surfaces and pavements
- Inconsistent road surface materials and colouring
- Concrete kerbs replacing traditional materials
- Over-wide double yellow lines
- Proliferation of excessive and repetitive road signage along the through routes

## Shop Fronts and Advertisements

**10.28** Most of the advertisement signage on commercial properties within the conservation area tends to dominate the façade of the building in terms of height and projection. Also, the extensive use of modern synthetic materials and back lighting has a detrimental effect on the building’s character and appearance.

**10.29** Examples of prominent historic buildings being visually impacted by poor quality and unsympathetic signage include:

- Nos.5 – 7 High Street; Select & Save; out of proportion and character to the building and the streetscape
- No.29 High Street, Barclays Bank; large embossed lettering to fascia with “corporate logo” hanging sign (unnecessary)
- No.33 High Street; Thresher Wine Shop; more discrete fascia but double-bracketed hanging sign
- Morris Mica Hardware store, Swan Street (adjoining The Swan Hotel); garish blue and white scheme which detracts from building and the overall streetscape

**10.30** Traditional hand-painted timber signs are much more pleasing on the eye and respect the building’s character in a way that synthetic materials cannot match. Good examples can be found at The Tudor Rose café (Nos.9 & 9A High Street), The Turks Head public house (No.4 High Street), The Red Cross shop (No.2 High Street) and The Holly Bush Hotel (No.35 Henley Street). Many hanging signs are really unnecessary street “clutter” because they simply reiterate what is written on the (larger) fascia.

**10.31** The modern fascia-clad shop frontages at 5-7 High Street (currently Select & Save) and Morris Mica Hardware adjacent to The Swan Hotel, are intrusive to the character and appearance of the street scene; they are also unnecessary. The designation of conservation area status gives the opportunity to revert to a more traditional form of signage and fascias on these buildings in particular.



*Figure 143. Inappropriate modern fascia and superfluous hanging signs in the lower High Street; note more restrained and sympathetic fascia to intermediate premises and the colourful shop awning*



*Figure 144. Inappropriate modern fascia-clad signage at Morris Mica Hardware, Swan Street*

## 11 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

**11.1** Conservation area designation is only the first step in safeguarding its character and appearance. Even though Alcester was one of the first English market towns to receive such status in 1968, considerable changes have taken place over the intervening decades; many of which are not appropriate. A management strategy that identifies mid- to long-term objectives for preserving and enhancing the area is key to its overall sustainability for present and future generations.

**11.2** Ongoing monitoring of the area by both the LPA and the community will ensure that issues requiring further and/or detailed work are identified for inclusion under the management strategy. The primary aim here is to foster pride and awareness of the local heritage environment so that the local community is encouraged to play an active role in enhancing their own properties and spaces.

### Proposed Boundary Change to Conservation Area

**11.3** The present boundary of the conservation area is as shown in Map 1. This represents a significant expansion from the original c.1968 boundary, which excluded Bleachfield Street, Evesham Street, Seggs Lane, Station Road and School Road.

**11.4** Subsequent revisions during the 1990s recommended the inclusion of a short section of the Birmingham Road, from the

junction with Priory Road/School Road as far north as the Alcester Grammar School. This small area was not incorporated at that time but is now proposed for inclusion as an expansion of zone "F" for the following reasons:

- The cemetery, boundary walls and trees should be viewed as a single homogenous entity; the brick/stone walls, iron gates and lychgate in particular are attractive and distinctive features fronting the road (Figure 76)
- The William Smallwood Almshouses possess architectural merit and have a strong cultural significance within the local community; William Smallwood was an Alcester auctioneer and gave £4,000 for the construction of the six almshouses in 1894<sup>48</sup>
- Nos.4 - 20 Birmingham Road (opposite the almshouses) are a mixed row of terraced houses, some from the early-19<sup>th</sup> century; Nos. 8 & 10 retain traditional timber casement windows and boarded doors
- Better development control over the plot between No.4 Birmingham Road and the former Minerva Works



Figure 145. The William Smallwood Almshouses immediately to the north of Birmingham Road cemetery



Figure 147. Distinctive whitewashed Brick store adjoining Salt Box Row



Figure 146. Cemetery boundary walls and lychgate



Figure 148. Small area of open space behind store and corrugated iron structures backing on to The Ropewalk

**11.5** The land to the rear of Salt Box Row (Nos. 44 – 54 School Road) is not presently included within the conservation area. It is recommended that this small area and the associated 2-storey brick building be added to zone “E” for the following reasons:

- The store is an historic building which retains many traditional features and conforms to the identified character of the area
- Demolition/redevelopment of any structures would be subject to planning controls
- More definitive boundary

**11.6** Redevelopment of this site could adversely impact the setting of Salt Box Row and the rear of the listed buildings along Priory Road, e.g. Gresley House and The Priory.

**11.7** Periodic re-assessment of the conservation area boundary should be undertaken on a five-yearly cycle as part of the monitoring for the management strategy.

## **Design Guidance and Conservation Advisory Leaflets**

11.10 Stratford-on-Avon District Council already publishes a comprehensive range of information covering various aspects of building design, local materials, listed buildings and conservation areas. The most relevant documents for owners and occupiers of properties within the conservation area include:

- The Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide; A4 format design guidance for all those involved in the planning process
- The Countryside Design Summary and Character Map; A1 poster format detailing the character of the district with general design principles
- Conservation Areas – Living & Working; visit [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)
- Listed Buildings; visit [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)

**11.11** An overview of the Alcester conservation area should be prepared to summarise the key features and character, as well as some of the consequences of living and working. The format for this short-form document would be the same as that already existing for many of the other conservation areas in the district; i.e. A3 double-sided, fan-fold sheets in colour. Content to include:

- Advice for owners and occupiers of properties

within the conservation area as to how the designation affects them

- Map of the conservation area which shows the important features of the built and natural environments
- Advice on how Article 4(2) directions affect owners/occupiers in terms of what they can/cannot do to their properties without obtaining prior planning consent
- Give guidance on appropriate maintenance, repairs and alterations to historic buildings

**11.12** A range of concise “conservation advisory leaflets” should also be made available which cover the more detailed aspects of historic building repair and maintenance, e.g. masonry, roofing materials, doors and windows, cast- and wrought-ironwork, etc.

### **Consideration of Buildings for a “Local List”**

**11.13** Buildings recognised as being of historic, architectural and cultural significance to the local community are as noted under §8.59 - §8.61 and indicated on Map 18. Appendix D gives an outline summary of their respective features but a full survey by Stratford-on-Avon District Council is recommended before adding them to the “local list”.

**11.14** Residents must be advised as to the LPA rationale that warrants a “local list” and how it differs from the statutory list maintained by English Heritage/ DCMS. In the event of any building being deemed worthy of inclusion on the statutory list, the owner(s) must be fully briefed as to the likely development implications well in advance.

### **The Streetscape**

**11.15** Street improvement and repair works carried out by statutory undertakers need to respect the intrinsic character of the conservation area. Materials must be commensurate with those of the local area, following the same guidelines as those set out in the English Heritage/Department of Transport “Streets for All” booklet.<sup>49</sup>

**11.16** The importance of building a good working relationship and mutual respect between county highways and the local authority cannot be overstated. In addition to being given the statutory notice period for works, Stratford-on-Avon District Council should be actively involved in helping highways implement schemes with an emphasis on “character and appearance”, as well as the usual practicality and safety. Recent experience gained from work in Suffolk highlights the mutual benefits to be gained from this type of joint approach.<sup>50</sup>

**11.17** Possible future enhancement measures for the

conservation area could include:

- Audit of public realm details including road surfaces, footpath materials and street furniture
- Use of traditional pavements, kerbs and road surface materials; including narrower yellow lines where parking restrictions apply
- A lighting appraisal to encourage sensitive and appropriate illumination of streets and historic buildings, whilst maintaining a safe environment
- Rationalisation of traffic signage, focusing on careful siting of necessary signs and dispensation of others
- Review of street structures such as bollards, telephone kiosks and bus shelters, in order to protect and preserve focal points and important vistas/views within the conservation area

### **Alterations and New Development**

**11.18** Ensure that new development is designed to retain all buildings, spaces and features that contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Any extension, alteration or other minor building works to a property must take into account the scale, size and materials of existing buildings in the immediate vicinity and wider neighbourhood. By seeking a high standard of design and ensuring the building is sympathetic with its surroundings, it can make a

positive contribution to the local environment to the benefit of all.

**11.19** Improving the appearance of an existing building invariably contributes towards a higher market value and encourages neighbouring owner/ occupiers to maintain their properties too.

**11.20** Green open spaces, trees and hedges are vital elements in a conservation area. The need to protect these may make it necessary to preclude new development in most cases.

### **Article 4(2) Directions**

**11.21** These would be beneficial in seeking to preserve and enhance certain features, which have been shown to contribute to the special character of the conservation area, and to be worthy of protection.

**11.22** Article 4(2) directions would be particularly appropriate where the building to be protected is adjacent to a listed building or fronts a relevant location such as a footpath, highway or open space. The case of terraced houses is particularly pertinent. Whilst some groups may not warrant statutory listing, any slight alterations to one dwelling will have an effect on the appearance of the whole terrace, e.g. No.7 Henley Street (Figure 117).

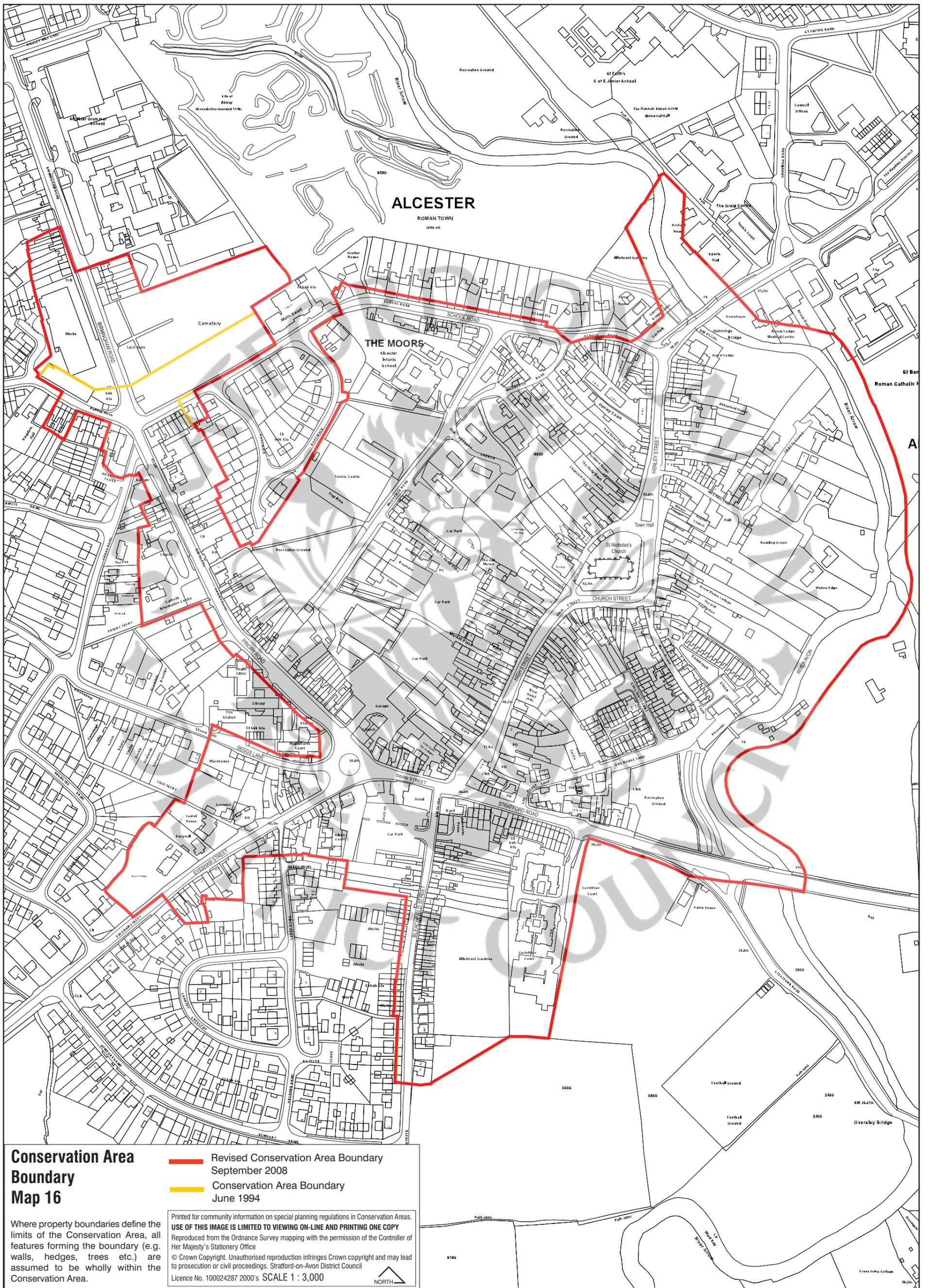
**11.23** Introduction of Article 4(2) directions by Stratford-on-Avon District Council would be subject to full public consultation and committee debate.

Compensation is not payable to householders for the removal of their PD rights; but there may be an entitlement if proposed works are then refused. The implementation of Article 4(2) directions is not retrospective.

**11.24** Implementation would likely remove PD rights for a variety of minor works affecting the front elevations of buildings, and include some or all of the examples listed under §10.13.

**11.25** Planning permission would then be a requirement for any of the stated works categories. Where a direction has been made, typically "like-for-like" replacement of original materials is encouraged. Changes to windows or doors must be of the same materials, details and types of decorative finish as the originals.

**11.26** Householders and developers who carry out unauthorised alterations to a property covered by such a direction could face enforcement action brought by the LPA.



**Conservation Area  
Boundary  
Map 16**

- Revised Conservation Area Boundary  
September 2008
- Conservation Area Boundary  
June 1994

Where property boundaries define the limits of the Conservation Area, all features forming the boundary (e.g. walls, hedges, trees etc.) are assumed to be wholly within the Conservation Area.

Printed for community information on special planning regulations in Conservation Areas.  
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## 12 SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

### *Stratford-on-Avon District Council*

The Stratford-on-Avon District Council Local Plan and Local Development Framework contain relevant information and policies on development, the environment and heritage within the district.

[www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)

For further advice on heritage and conservation issues, contact:

Heritage and Design Team  
Planning Services  
Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
Elizabeth House  
Church Street  
Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6HX  
Tel. 01789 260303  
e-mail: [planning@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

For planning enquiries contact Planning Services (address as above):

Tel. 01789 260304  
e-mail: [planning@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

### *Other Useful Contacts*

For information and advice on local archaeology and Scheduled Ancient Monuments, contact:

Historic Environment Record Manager  
Warwickshire Museum Field Services  
The Butts  
Warwick CV34 4SS  
Tel. 01926 412734

For information on various issues relating to historic buildings, their construction, maintenance and repair, contact:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)  
37 Spital Square  
London E1 6DY

Tel. 0207 377 1644  
e-mail: [info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)  
web: [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

The Building Conservation Directory  
Cathedral Communications Limited  
High Street  
Tisbury  
Wiltshire SP3 6HA

Tel. 01747 871717  
e-mail: [info@buildingconservation.com](mailto:info@buildingconservation.com)  
web: [www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com)

For information on Alcester local history, archive documents and historical maps, the following sources are useful:

Archivist  
Warwickshire County Council  
County Record Office  
Priory Park  
Cape Road  
Warwick CV34 4JS  
Tel. 01926 738959  
e-mail: [countyrecordoffice@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:countyrecordoffice@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
web: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/countyrecordsoffice](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/countyrecordsoffice)

*Alcester - A History*  
Editor: G. Edward Saville  
Published: K A F Brewin Books, Studley  
Date: 1986

*Alcester In Camera*  
Author: G. Edward Saville  
Published: Quotes Ltd., Whittlebury  
Date: 1992

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Coventry CV4 8JE

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## Appendix A - Alcester Timeline within the National Historic Context

	3020 - 2910 BC	Middle ditch at Stonehenge
800 - 100 BC	Likely period of Iron Age settlement	500 BC Roman Republic founded
43 - 410 AD	Period of Roman occupation; Alauna	79 AD Vesuvius erupted: Pompeii destroyed
650 - 850 AD	Possible settlement by Anglo-Saxons	480 - 543 AD St Benedict, founder of European monasticism
C8	Local ironworking industry in existence	877 AD Alfred the Great defeats the Danes
1086	Alcester omitted from Domesday Book	1066 Norman Conquest of Britain
C12	1st Lord of the Manor; Sir Robert Corbet	1095 First Crusade to the Holy Lands
1140	Alcester Abbey founded by Ralph de Boteler	1170 Murder of Archbishop Thomas a'Becket
C13	Medieval field system with tenant farmers farmers, "villeins" and "serf" labour	1215 Magna Carta signed at Runnymede
1274	Walter de Beauchamp Lord of the Manor Royal charter granted for weekly market	1258 Simon de Montfort's rebellion
1299	Establishment of Alcester Court Leet	1264 Foundation of imperial government
1350	St Nicholas tower constructed	1220 - 66 Salisbury Cathedral built during Henry III's reign
1385	Alcester's oldest house built (No.19 Henley St)	1301 Edward II invested as 1st Prince of Wales
		1337 Start of 100 Years War with France
		1348 - 49; 1361 Black Death plagues sweep Britain
		1381 Parliamentary taxation forces Peasants Revolt
1444	Sir John Beauchamp Lord of the Manor	1455 - 1487 Wars of the Roses
1466	Alcester Abbey absorbed by Evesham	1534 Henry VIII forms Church of England
1490	Alcester Grammar School founded	1539-40 Dissolution of the Monasteries
C16	Maltsters established in Malt Mill Lane	1588 Spanish Armada
1536	Greville family become Lords of the Manor	1594 William Shakespeare writes " <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> "
1618	Town Hall built (upper storey added in 1641)	1605 Gunpowder plot attempts to blow up James I
1623 - 24	Bleachfield Street destroyed by fire	1620 Pilgrim Fathers voyage to America
1645	Parliamentarian forces rampage through town	1642 - 51 English Civil Wars; Charles I executed in 1649
1650	Baptist meetings recorded in Alcester	1650 Tea introduced into England
1677	Quaker meeting house built off High Street	1660 Restoration of the Monarchy: Charles II
1720	Presbyterian chapel in Bull's Head Yard	1714 George I; start of the Hanoverian/Georgian Era
1729 - 33	St Nicholas church restored after fire damage	1759 James Brindley builds Bridgewater Canal
1753	Stratford to Alcester road turnpiked	1769 Richard Arkwright; father of the factory system
1771	Alcester Enclosure Award	1796 Richard Trevithick develops steam locomotive
1801	Population of Alcester 1,600 approx.	1805 Battle of Trafalgar; Admiral Lord Nelson killed
1813	Lord Hertford becomes Lord of the Manor	1815 Napoleon defeated at Battle of Waterloo
1839	Gunnings Bridge rebuilt in brick and stone	1839 Queen Victoria ascends to throne
1841	Population of Alcester 2,400 approx.	1841 Age of "Railwaymania" grips Britain
1843	National School founded on School Road	1843 Brunel's SS Great Britain; first iron steam ship
1850	Mains gas supply installed	1844 Factory Act to regulate use of child labour
1857	Corn Exchange built on High Street	1848 Public Health Act to improve sanitation
1859	New Baptist chapel built on Church Street	1859 Charles Darwin's " <i>Origin of the Species</i> "
1866	Arrival of Evesham & Redditch Railway	1864 Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge opens
1871	Victorian "restoration" of St Nicholas' church	1870 Elementary Education Act; State education
1873	Saxon Tau Cross discovered at Old Rectory	1876 Telephone invented by Alexander Bell
1876	Alcester Railway opens from Bearley	1877 William Morris founds The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
1880	Allwood Minerva Works opens	1881 1st Boer War in South Africa
1886	Alcester Brewery Co. founded	1897 Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee
1893	F G Jackson's 3,000 mile journey to Siberia	
1901	Population of Alcester 3,200 approx.	1901 Marconi invents radio transmission
1909	Parish boundary enlarged to include Oversley	1903 Wright brothers achieve first powered flight
1912	Grammar School moves to Birmingham Road	1914 - 18 First World War
1919	Town Hall purchased by townspeople and renamed Alcester War Memorial Town Hall	1922 BBC founded
1960	Demolition of The Rookery on Stratford Road Alcester Civic Society founded	1939 - 45 Second World War
1964	Railway closes to all traffic	1951 Festival of Britain exhibition
1965	Demolition of The Globe Hotel	1952 Elizabeth II crowned Queen
1967	Statutory listing of important historic buildings	1963 - 68 Beeching era of mass railway closures
1968	Alcester Conservation Area designated	1966 England win football World Cup
1994	Conservation Area boundary amended	1967 Civic Amenities Act; Conservation Areas
1996	Globe sculpture presented to Alcester	1974 Local government boundary changes
2001	Population of Alcester 6,200 approx.	1981 IBM launches the Personal Computer (PC)
2006	Mosaic designs and re-paving of tueries Re-appraisal of Conservation Area	1994 Opening of Channel Tunnel
		2000 Human genetic code is deciphered
		2005 English Heritage Conservation Area guidance
		2006 Britain records highest temperatures since 1659

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## Appendix C: Table of Statutory Listed Buildings

Zone	Address	Grade	Period	Building Type	Date Listed	IoE No.
A	Cottage on Bulls Head Yard Tuery; to rear of No.15 High Street	II	C16th	Cottage; now derelict	21/06/1985	305176
A	No.1 Butter Street	II	Late-C17th/ early-C18th	Attached cottage	01/02/1967	305180
A	Nos.2 & 4 Butter Street	II	C17th	Pair of cottages	01/02/1967	305177
A	Nos.3 - 7 Butter Street	II	Early-C17th	Pair of cottages	01/02/1967	305181
A	Castle House, No.6 Butter Street	II	Early-C19th	House	11/12/1969	305178
A	Nos.7A & 9 Butter Street	II	Early-C17th	Pair of shops; now houses	01/02/1967	305182
A	No.11 Butter Street	II	C16th	House	11/12/1969	305183
A	Nos.13, 15 and Church House, Butter Street	II	C18th	Two houses and church rooms	11/12/1969	305184
A	Baptist Church, Church Street	II	c.1859	Baptist chapel	11/12/1969	305187
A	Old Rectory, Butter Street	II	c.1796	Rectory	01/02/1967	305185
A	No. 1 and Windsor House, Church Street	II	C16th	House; No. 1 now shop (Stylish Corner)	01/02/1967	305186
A	Nos.2 & 3 Church Street	II	C17th	Pair of houses	01/02/1967	305188
A	Angel House, No.4 Church Street	II	Early-/mid-C18th	Former inn; now house	01/02/1967	305189
A	No.5 Church Street	II	Mid-/late-C17th	Former inn; now house	01/02/1967	305190
A	No.6 Church Street	II	Early-/mid-C19th	House; now 5 flats	01/02/1967	305191
A	The Limes, No.7 Church Street	II	Early-/mid-C18th	House	01/02/1967	305192
A	Arrow House and Arrow Cottage, No.8 Church Street	II	C17th C & early-C18th	House/flat and outbuildings converted to cottage	01/02/1967	305193
A	No.9 Church Street	II	Early-C19th	Former Post Office; now offices	11/12/1969	305194
A	No.10 Church Street (with attached iron railings)	II	Early-C19th	House	01/02/1967	305195
A	The Old Malthouse, Nos.11 & 12 Church Street	I	c.1500	House	11/12/1969	305196
A	Nos.13 - 17 Church Street	II	Early-/mid-C19th	Terrace of 5 houses	01/02/1967	305197
A	Nos.18 (Tudor House), 18A, 19 and 19A Church Street	II	Mid-C16th	Houses; now offices and flats	01/02/1967	305198
A	Building 100m to rear of No.18 Church Street	II	C17th	Small building of uncertain function	21/06/1985	305199
A	Nos.20 & 21 Church Street	II	Early-C17th	House and shop	01/02/1967	305200
A	Church of St Nicholas, Church Street	II*	C13th, C15th, C18th & C19th	Church	01/02/1967	305201
A	Churchyard wall and gate piers to Church of St Nicholas	II	c.1730	Churchyard wall and gate piers	21/06/1985	305202
A	K6 telephone kiosk, outside No.9 Church Street	II	c.1935	Telephone kiosk	01/03/1988	305346
A	Town Hall, Henley Street	I	c.1618	Town Hall	10/02/1956	305224
A	Churchill House, Henley Street	II*	Early-C17th	House	01/02/1967	305223
A	Nos.1 - 5 Henley Street	II	C17th	Row of 3 cottages	11/12/1969	305216
A	No.19 Henley Street	II	Mid-C14th	House	01/02/1967	305217
A	Nos.21 & 23 Henley Street	II	C17th	Two houses	01/02/1967	305218
A	Nos.25 & 27 Henley Street	II	Mid-/late-C17th	Former Inn, now 3 houses	01/02/1967	305219
A	Arden House, No.28 Henley Street	II	Early-C17th	House	01/02/1967	305209
A	Greyhound House, Nos.29 & 31 Henley Street	II	c.1600	Former inn; now house	01/02/1967	305220
A	Mona Villa, No.30 Henley Street	II	C17th	House	01/02/1967	305210
A	Nos.32 & 34 Henley Street	II	C17th	House	01/02/1967	305211
A	Hardwick House, No.33 Henley Street	II	C17th	House	01/02/1967	305221
A	Nos.36 & 38 Henley Street	II	Mid-C19th	Two houses	01/02/1967	305212
A	The Holly Bush, No.35 Henley Street	II	C17th	Inn	01/02/1967	305222
A	Nos.40, 42 & 42A Henley Street	II	Late-C16th/ early-C17th	Two houses	01/02/1967	305213

Zone	Address	Grade	Period	Building Type	Date Listed	IoE No.
A	No.44 Henley Street	II	Mid-/late-C17th	House	01/02/1967	305214
A	No.46 Henley Street	II	c.1830-40	House	01/02/1967	305215
A	Royal Oak Inn, High Street	II	Late-C18th/ early-C19th	Inn	11/12/1969	305240
A	The Bear Hotel, High Street	II	C17th	Inn	01/02/1967	305234
A	No.2 High Street	II	c.1625	House	01/02/1967	305226
A	Nos.3 - 7 High Street	II	Late-C16th/ C17th	houses, now shops and dwellings	01/02/1967	305242
A	Turk's Head, No.4 High Street	II	C17th	Inn, now shop	11/12/1969	305227
A	Victoria House, No.6 High Street	II	C17th	House; now shop and dwelling	11/12/1969	305228
A	No.8 High Street	II	Late-C17th /C18th	House; now shop	11/12/1969	305229
A	Nos.9 & 9A High Street	II*	Late-C16th	Former inn; now shops and offices	01/02/1967	305243
A	No.10 High Street	II	Late-C17th /C18th	House; now shop	11/12/1969	305230
A	Nos.11, 11A & 13 High Street	II	Early-C17th	Houses; now shops and dwellings	01/02/1967	305244
A	No.12 High Street	II	C17th	Cottage; now shop	11/12/1969	305231
A	No.14 High Street	II	Early-C19th	Shop	11/12/1969	305232
A	No.15 High Street	II	Mid-C19th	Shop and dwelling; now shop and offices	21/06/1985	305245
A	Nos.16 & 18 High Street	II	Mid-C19th	Pair of shops	11/12/1969	305233
A	Nos.17 & 19 High Street	II	C17th	Houses; now shops and dwellings	21/06/1985	305246
A	No.21 High Street	II	C17th	House; now shop and dwelling	21/06/1985	305247
A	Nos.25 & 27 High Street	II	Mid-C19th	House; now shops	21/06/1985	305248
A	No.26 High Street	II	C17th	Part of former inn; now shop and dwelling	21/06/1985	305235
A	No.29 High Street, Barclays Bank	II	C16th & C17th	House; now bank and dwelling	01/02/1967	305249
A	No.30 High Street	II	C17th	Part of former inn; now shop and dwelling	21/06/1985	305236
A	No.31 High Street	II	16th C	Former inn; now shop and offices	01/02/1967	305250
A	No.32 High Street	II	C17th	Part of former inn; now office and dwelling	01/02/1967	305237
A	Nos.33 - 37 High Street	II	Early-/mid-C19th	Houses; now shops	21/06/1985	305251
A	No.34 and Talbot Cottage, High Street	II	C17th	House; now public house and dwellings	01/02/1967	305238
A	No.42 High Street	II	C17th	House; now offices	01/02/1967	305239
A	Nos.45 - 53 High Street	II	Mid-C18th	Terrace of houses; now shops, offices and dwellings	01/02/1967	305252
A	Alcester Unionist Club, Nos.46, 48 & 50 High Street	II	Late-C18th/ C19th	Club; now club, offices and dwellings	01/02/1967	305241
A	No.55 High Street, HSBC Bank	II	C17th	House; now bank and offices	01/02/1967	305253
A	No.57 High Street	II	C17th	House; now shops and dwelling	01/02/1967	305254
A	No.59 High Street	II	C17th	House; now shops and dwelling	01/02/1967	305255
A	Nos.61 - 67 High Street	II	Late-C18th/ early-19th	Houses; now shop	01/02/1967	305256
A	Gunnings Bridge, Kinwarton Road	II	Early-C19th	Bridge	21/06/1985	305259
A	Oak House, No.2 Meeting Lane	II	Early-C17th	House	01/02/1967	305272
A	Old Baptist Meeting House, Meeting Lane	II	c.1735-36	Baptist chapel; now meeting rooms	21/06/1985	305273
B	No.2 Malt Mill Lane	II*	c.1610 & C18th/C19th	Houses; now dwellings	21/06/1985	305261
B	Nos.4 & 8 Malt Mill Lane	II	C16th	House	21/06/1985	305262
B	Nos.6 & 8 Malt Mill Lane	II	Late-C17th	House	11/12/1969	305263
B	Building 3m to rear of Nos.4, 6 & 8	II	C17th	Outbuilding	21/06/1985	305264

Zone	Address	Grade	Period	Building Type	Date Listed	IoE No.
B	Nos.10 and 12 Malt Mill Lane	II	Late-C18th/ early-19th	Pair of cottages	11/12/1969	305265
B	Nos.14 - 18 Malt Mill Lane	II	Late-C18th/ early-19th	Row of 3 cottages	11/12/1969	305266
B	Nos.20 - 28 Malt Mill Lane	II	C17th	Row of 5 cottages	11/12/1969	305267
B	Nos.5 & 7 Malt Mill Lane	II*	Mid-C16th	House	11/12/1969	305269
B	Nos.9 & 11 Malt Mill Lane	II	Late-C18th/ early-19th	Pair of cottages	11/12/1969	305270
B	No.41 Malt Mill Lane	II	C17th	Cottage	11/12/1969	305271
C	Nos. 8 & 10 Bleachfield Street	II	Late-C18th/ early-C19th	Pair of adjoining houses	01/02/1967	305171
C	Nos. 12 & 14 Bleachfield Street	II	Mid-/late- C17th	Pair of adjoining houses	01/02/1967	305172
C	Dog & Partridge Inn, Nos. 13 & 15 Bleachfield Street	II	Early-/mid- C19th	Public House and dwelling	01/02/1967	305173
C	Nos.17 & 19 Bleachfield Street	II	Early-C19th	Adjoining cottages	11/12/1969	305174
C	Nos.21 - 25 Bleachfield Street	II	C17th	Former inn, now row of cottages	11/12/1969	305175
C	Nos.8 & 10 Evesham Street	II	Early-C19th	Pair of terraced houses	11/12/1969	305206
C	Nos.12 & 14 Evesham Street	II	Early-C19th	Pair of terraced houses	11/12/1969	305207
C	Rose and Crown House, No.15 Evesham Street	II	Mid-C17th	Former inn; now house	11/12/1969	305203
C	No.17 Evesham Street	II	C17th	Cottage	11/12/1969	305204
C	Nos.18 & 20 Evesham Street	II	Mid-C19th	Pair of shops; now houses	21/06/1985	305208
C	Acorn House and attached coach house and walls, Evesham Street	II	c.1800	House	11/12/1969	305205
C	Nos.8 & 10 Seggs Lane	II	C17th	Pair of cottages	11/12/1969	305294
C	Lloyds Bank, Stratford Road	II	c.1790	House; now bank	01/02/1967	305296
C	No.2 Stratford Road	II	Late-C18th/ C19th	Contiguous group with Alcester Unionist Club	01/02/1967	305241
C	The Swan Hotel, Swan Street	II	C18th/early- C19th	Hotel	11/12/1969	305305
C	Nos.7 & 9 Swan Street	II	C17th	Pair of cottages; No.9 now shop	11/12/1969	305302
C	No.11 Swan Street	II	C17th	House	11/12/1969	305303
C	No.13 Swan Street	II	C17th	House	11/12/1969	305304
E	Lord Nelson Inn, Priory Road	II	Early-/mid- C19th	Inn	01/02/1967	305289
E	Gresley House, Priory Road	II	Early-C19th	House	11/12/1969	305293
E	Nos.43 & 45 Priory Road	II	Early-/mid- C19th	Two shops; now cottages	11/12/1969	305282
E	Nos.47 - 51 Priory Road	II	Late-C18th/ early-19th	Terrace of 3 cottages	11/12/1969	305283
E	Nos.53 & 55 Priory Road	II	Late-C18th/ early-19th	Pair of cottages	11/12/1969	305284
E	No.57 Priory Road	II	17th C	Cottage	11/12/1969	305285
E	Priory House, No.59 Priory Road	II	Late-C17th/ early-C18th	House	01/02/1967	305286
E	West View, Nos.61 & 63 Priory Road	II	Early-/mid- C19th	Pair of houses	11/12/1969	305287
E	Priory Cottage, No.65 Priory Road	II	Early-/mid- C19th	House	11/12/1969	305288
E	Nos.71 - 77 (odd) Priory Road	II	Early-/mid- C19th	Row of 4 houses	11/12/1969	305290
E	Yew Trees, No.79 Priory Road	II	c.1820-30	House	11/12/1969	305291
E	The Priory, No.81 Priory Road	II	c.1830	House	11/12/1969	305292
F	Minerva Needle Works	II	c.1880-85	Factory; now offices	11/12/1969	432323

## Appendix D – Unlisted Buildings Recommended for Inclusion on a “Local List”

When considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area, the following questions might be asked when conducting a full survey:

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials or any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the street layout, medieval burgage plots, parks, or a landscape feature?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

In English Heritage’s view, any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and values have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.

The following summary descriptions are based on external assessments only and purely provide a base level of information. More detailed surveys and photographic records (internal and external) will be necessary prior to reaching any decisions as to which buildings and structures appear on a “local list”.

**Zone "A" – High Street, Church Street, Butter Street, Meeting Lane and Henley Street**

- Arrow Lodge  
Kinwarton Road
- Late-19<sup>th</sup> century 2½ storey large brick detached house with plain clay tile roof and ornate pierced ridge tiles; L-shaped plan. Dentil, oversailing and decorative frieze to eaves on Henley Street/Kinwarton road elevation. Moulded bargeboards to gable ends and paterae mouldings with terracotta brackets supporting eaves on wing to rear. Sash windows with stone sills and lintels, squared and canted bay windows to ground floor. Henley Street elevation has six fixed lights containing stained glass. Front door has semi-circular fanlight and pointed Gothic arch over. A dominant and important focal point building standing at the north eastern gateway to the conservation area.
- No.23 High Street
- Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century 3-storey attached building in colourwashed brick with Welsh slate roof. Eaves have boarded soffits supported on wood brackets. Period timber double-shop frontage with large-pane sash windows to upper storeys; heavily rendered sills. Side access boarded door with 3-panel transom light over. An important building which forms part of the continuous building line along the west side of the High Street.
- Nos.39 & 41  
High Street
- Mid-/late-19<sup>th</sup> century 3-storey brick building on brick plinth and with Welsh slate roof. Bracketed eaves and large-pane sash windows to upper storeys; heavily rendered sills. Console brackets supporting shallow hoods and solid triangular pediments above 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows. Ground floor has a projecting double shop frontage, large fixed window with side lights and a double-boarded side entrance door. An impressive and architecturally pleasing building which forms part of the continuous building line along the west side of the High Street. Performs an important "terminal" function too in that it abuts the ugly modern imposition of No.43 High Street (Superdrug).
- Nos.3, 4 & 5  
Meeting Lane
- Early-19<sup>th</sup> century terrace in red brick with plain clay tile roof. Simple dentil and oversailing courses to eaves, ridge stacks. Timber casement windows and boarded doors. A simple example but adds considerable character to this narrow lane.

- Walls to Bulls Head Yard Tuery and adjoining former stable (rear of High Street)
- Red brick walls to both sides of tuery with mix of copings; red brick angular style and single weathered blue lias stone coping. Former stable building to rear of Nos.11 & 11A is 1½ storey red brick with plain clay tile roof, probably late-18<sup>th</sup> century construction. Simple brick eaves, timber boarded doors and segmental brick arches. Recessed metal-framed skylight and some modern lean-to additions but still an important “point” building at the car park entrance to the tuery.
- Nos.7 - 13 Henley Street (odd nos.)
- Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey brick terrace with Welsh slate roof. Dentil and oversailing courses to eaves/verge. Sash windows having rendered sills and lintels. Four 4-panel front doors with distinctive rendered stone frieze and cornice. Forms an important group on west side of Henley Street, contiguous with the earlier timber framed houses at Nos.1 - 5. This group collectively defines the entrance “framing” to the conservation area when viewed from Gunnings Bridge and Arrow lodge.
- Abbeyfield House No.26 Henley Street
- Early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey detached house of red brick with Welsh slate roof. Boarded eaves and single ridge stack above south gable end. Prominent rendered band course at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level and rendered plinth. Semi-circular headed casement windows with fanlights and rendered sills; brick arches over. Central entrance doorway is modern but semi-circular fanlight above appears contemporary with 19<sup>th</sup> century style. Extension to north aspect reflects same style as house but is scaled down. An interesting building which enhances the streetscape along Henley Street through a combination of its interesting architectural style and deep, set-back aspect.
- Stables to Churchill House Henley Street
- Early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey red brick building with plain clay tile roof. Dentil and oversailing courses to eaves and gables. Small-pane timber casement windows with segmental brick arches. Stable door is of simple timber boarded construction. A good example of a simple building, which retains most of its historic character, despite some more recent unsympathetic alterations.

### **Zone "B" – Malt Mill Lane and Gas House Lane**

- Nos.32 - 40  
Malt Mill Lane  
(even nos.)
- Late-18<sup>th</sup>/early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey stepped terrace in red brick with modern plain clay tile roofs. Small-pane sash windows with rendered sills and segmental brick arches over those on ground floor. Modern timber boarded doors with doorcases and simple hoods. This terrace completes the continuous building line along the east side of Malt Mill Lane. Although their chimney stacks were removed as part of the c.1970s refurbishment, the simple detailing and stepped nature of the terrace considerably enhances this part of the conservation area.

### **Zone "C" – Bleachfield Street, Swan Street, Evesham Street, Stratford Road (part)**

- Cottages at lower end of Bleachfield Street
- Late-18<sup>th</sup> century 1½ storey cottage in colourwashed brick with plain tile roof. Segmental arch casement windows to ground floor and pair of gabled dormers above. Offset chimney stack. Modern extension to rear in style sympathetic to that of original building. Defines limit of buildings on east side of Bleachfield Street; low form emphasised by succeeding buildings.
- Nos.2 & 4 Birch Abbey
- Early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey attached building in part brick/part render with plain clay tile roof; stepped in height (No.4 eaves are higher). Brick dentil eaves and timber casement windows. Makes an attractive group at end of Birch Abbey when viewed from Evesham Street.
- Nos. 3-5 Evesham Street
- Late-19<sup>th</sup> century 2½ storey double gabled building in red brick with plain clay tile roof. Ornate brick dentil course at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level and moulded frieze to gables. Shop fronts at ground floor level. A key building at the end of Evesham Street which terminates the north-side streetscape and Seggs Lane junction prior to the Globe Roundabout.

- Nos.7 – 13 (odd)  
Evesham Street
- Late-18<sup>th</sup> century 3-storey terrace of four properties in brick and part-colourwashed brick with Welsh slate roofs. Formerly shops at ground floor; Nos.7 & 9 have square bays whilst Nos. 11 & 13 have small-pane bow windows with a slate lean-to roof over. Sash windows to upper storeys. Forms an attractive continuous group along the north side of Evesham Street.
- Nos.26 & 28  
Evesham Street
- Late-18<sup>th</sup> century pair of 2-storey houses in colourwashed brick with plain clay tile roof. Rendered plinth and brick dentil oversailing to eaves. No.28 has 4-panel door with fanlight and triangular pediment over, sash windows to both storeys. Three large brick ridge chimney stacks with simple corbelling and interesting range of clay pots. Important examples of period brick buildings on the south side of Evesham Street.
- The White Lion  
Public house  
Evesham Street
- c.1930s 2-storey public house in mock Jacobethan style with brick lower storey and mock timber framing above; plain clay tile roof. Large central brick chimney to front elevation with three square offset stacks. Mix of leaded light and stained glass windows. Matching pair of lean-to porches. Symmetry, plan and detailing adds interest to streetscape west of No.17 Evesham Street.
- Perrymill  
Evesham Street
- Late-18<sup>th</sup> century 2½ storey brick detached house with plain clay tile roof. Slightly projecting central gable with oculi and ornate pierced/scalloped bargeboards. Pair of large corbelled end ridge stacks. Sash windows and 4-panel front door. A good example of an individually designed period house standing in its own mature grounds. Significantly enhances the north side of Evesham Street and forms a highly distinctive group with Acorn House and its detached coach house.
- Poplar Cottage  
Evesham Street
- Regency style 3-storey brick house with Welsh slate roof. Bracketed eaves and plain painted bargeboards to gable ends. Sash windows and central bricked-up window to 1<sup>st</sup> floor. 6-panel front door with fanlight, open pediment and moulded architrave surrounds. An imposing building on the south side of Evesham Street whose tall, bold elevations complement the larger detached houses opposite.

- Former workshop at Nos.12 - 14 Seggs Lane - 2-storey red brick building now used as a store/light industrial premises; Flemish bond. Welsh slate roof with plain timber bargeboards. Timber casement windows with segmental brick arches over; timber boarded door. Provides a pleasing end-point to the cottages lining the south side of Seggs Lane and defines the conservation area boundary at its western end.
- Nos.4 - 12 Stratford Road (even nos.) - Early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey terrace in red brick with plain clay tile roof. Simple brick dentil eaves and ridge stacks. Mostly sash windows and modern timber boarded doors with segmental brick arches over. Forms a natural extension to the taller No.2 Stratford Road, but with lower upper storey.
- The Cross Keys Inn Stratford Road - Early-19<sup>th</sup> 2-storey building with single-storey extension at end of north-side terrace; on corner of Stratford Road and Gas House Lane. Colourwashed stucco and plain clay tile roof, ridge stacks. Modern leaded lights on ground floor with sash windows above. Timber boarded doors and attractive hanging sign. Appears to have been used for the sale of alcoholic beverages since c.1861 and was known as "The Crosswells Inn" in 1884, only becoming a fully-licensed public house in 1904.<sup>52</sup> Whitewashed elevations and stepped form provide an important focal point and end-point building when entering the conservation area along Stratford Road from the east.

**Zone "E" – Priory Road and School Road (west); including proposed additional area to east of Salt Box Row**

- Nos.17 & 19  
Priory Road
- Early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey buildings of colour washed brick adjoining north side of Brooklyn Ford garage. Welsh slate roofs with offset end chimney stacks and dentil oversailing to eaves. Small-pane bow shop frontages with sash windows above. No.17 has a timber boarded side door with large-pane sash window above. No.19 has an attic storey with segmental headed timber casement window in the gable end and small fixed light adjacent. These traditional and highly distinctive small shops define the (present) start of the continuous building line which runs along the east side of Priory Road.
- Hertford Place  
Nos.21 - 27  
Priory Road
- c.1888, 2-storey terrace of red brick with Welsh slate roof and ornate crested ridge tiles. Central terracotta wall plaque in simple brick surround "Hertford Place. 1888". Extensive details including decorative oversailing to eaves, terracotta band courses and canted bay windows with paired lean-to awnings over. The awnings are enhanced by timber arched braces and decorative fishtail clay tiles. A vital component of the Priory Road streetscape, despite some modern replacement windows. The low brick walls and small front gardens considerably enhance the setting of this particularly well-executed terrace.
- Nos.29 - 33  
Priory Road
- Late-18<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey terrace in brick with plain clay tile roof. Simple dentil oversailing to eaves and ridge stacks. Segmental brick arches over windows, many of which are unfortunate modern casements. Timber boarded doors. An important group despite the recent alterations.
- Our Lady and  
St.Joseph  
Roman Catholic  
Church and former  
school  
Priory Road
- Church and attached 2-storey buildings in coursed blue lias limestone with dressed quoins and clay tile roofs. Church has red double Roman tiles, pierced clay ridge, highly ornate fleche and twin-light geometric style Gothic windows with dressed stone tracery. Attached L-plan buildings have plain red tile roofs and coped gables; 2½ storeys with large 1-over-1 sash windows set within stone mullioned/transomed surrounds.

- "VR" Royal Mail red postbox at No.71 Priory Road
- An impressive group occupying a key position. Standard pattern cast-iron postbox set into end boundary wall of house and with blue bull-nosed brick surround. A rare and distinctive feature.
- Terraced villas opposite Yew Trees Priory Road
- Late-19<sup>th</sup>/early-20<sup>th</sup> century terrace of 2½ storeys in red brick with plain clay tile roof; some decorative fishtail coursing and ornamental ridge. Large offset brick chimney stacks, heavily flared and with stone band coursing. Three canted bay windows to ground floor with fishtail clay tiles; large-pane sash windows above. Keystone and springing stones for door arches are of dressed limestone. Front boundary walls have very distinctive painted cappings of pyramid form. An important group next to Our Lady and St. Joseph Roman Catholic church.
- Salt Box Row Nos.44 - 54 School Road
- Early-19<sup>th</sup> century 1½ storey terrace of colourwashed brick with modern plain clay tile roof. Small 6-pane timber casements with "Velux" projecting rooflights. Redeveloped as a wing of Gresley House but still an important group in its own right despite the modern interventions.
- Store adjoining No.44 School Road
- Early-19<sup>th</sup> century colourwashed brick building. Timber boarded doors. Slightly higher roofline emphasises its position at the end of School Row.

**Zone "F" – Station Road and School Road (west); including proposed additional area along Birmingham Road**

- Nos.1 & 2  
Station road
- Late-19<sup>th</sup> century pair of large 2½ storey semi-detached villas; red brick with Welsh slate roof. Twin gables with decorative timber arch bracing, pierced ridge tiles and gable finials. Large ridge stacks with recessed brick panelling and corbelling. Canted bay windows have stone lintels. Terracotta dentil detailing and large-pane sash windows. Central projecting twin-entry porch with stone corbels and lintel over; large transom lights, stone band course and parapet with decorative terracotta panels. Immensely important building at northern gateway of the conservation area.
- Lychgate and walls  
to cemetery  
Birmingham Road
- Painted timber lychgate on red brickwork base; Flemish bond with dressed stone top course. Steeply-pitched Welsh slate roof has twin stone crosses on ridge. Erected c.1908 in memory of "Revd. A H Williams MA, rector of Alcester for 38 years". Walls also to Flemish bond with brick plinth, dressed stone band course and cappings and brick/stone piers; decorative geometric cappings. A very important continuous low-level enclosing feature for the cemetery green space at the entrance to the conservation area.
- Nos.8 & 10  
Birmingham Road
- Late-18<sup>th</sup>/early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey terraced houses of red brick with plain clay tile roof. Brick dentil course and internal stacks to rear roof pitch. Timber casement windows with segmental brick arches over and timber boarded doors. Despite the modern enhancements to the rest of this terrace, Nos.8 & 10 are essentially unchanged and highly representative of period terraced dwellings in the simplest form of the local style.
- William Smallwood  
Almshouses  
Birmingham Road
- c.1894 terrace of 2½ storeys in red brick and mock close-studded timber framing to upper storey. Plain clay tile roof with four large red brick ridge chimneys; each comprising six offset stacks. Symmetric plan with triple gables to front and painted bargeboards. Segmental and pointed brickwork arches to entrance porches. Modern imitation leaded light glazing. Plaque "erected and endowed by Wm. Smallwood 1894". A very impressive group in the proposed extended area.

**Zone "G" – School Road (east) and Moorfield Road (north)**

- No.39  
School Road
- Late-18<sup>th</sup>/early-19<sup>th</sup> century 2-storey detached cottage in colourwashed brick and plain clay tile roof. Simple brick dentil course detail to eaves and pair of brick end ridge stacks; one original and the other rebuilt. Central projecting brick porch with double-pitch roof. Modern replacement uPVC casement windows but an important focal point building on account of its simple form and well-proportioned, sympathetic extension.
- Nos.2 & 4  
Moorfield Road
- Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pair of 2-storey semi-detached houses in red brick with Welsh slate roof. "Dogtooth" style brick oversailing course to eaves and single central ridge chimney stack. No.2 retains traditional style small-pane sash windows and 4-panel front door. No.4 has inappropriate modern window and door replacements. An important building occupying a prominent position.

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