

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

# Solihull

## *Conservation*

### *Area*

**Designated**

**March 1968**

**amended November 1977**

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## *An Introduction to Conservation*

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### **Need for Conservation**

The conservation of our architectural heritage is a priority today more than ever before as buildings and areas continue to be under threat because of economic pressures for renewal. In the past, change was slow, development was piecemeal and the resulting townscape is often quite an interesting and diverse mix of buildings from many eras. Today, however, pressures for change are so great that the natural process of renewal must be controlled unless buildings and areas essential to the character of towns and villages are to disappear.

Town and Country Planning is concerned with guiding changes in an attempt to create the best possible environment. In most towns and villages this will involve conserving most of what already exists and ensuring that the new is sympathetic with the old.

The statutory definition of a Conservation Area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The area can be any size from a town centre to a smaller group of buildings, streets, squares and terraces, and may be centred on “listed buildings or rather pleasant groups of other buildings”. Open spaces, and historic plan, village greens or archaeological features may also be significant and might contribute to the special character of an area. It is the character of the area, rather than the individual buildings, that is relevant for the purposes of designation as a Conservation Area.

Section 74 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, prohibits the demolition of any buildings in a Conservation Area without the consent of the Local Planning Authority. Additionally, trees in conservation areas must not be lopped or felled without the prior permission of the local authority who may impose a Tree Preservation Order in respect of any tree which is under threat. If Conservation is to be effective and worthwhile, however, it must be based upon a carefully considered policy formulated from an analysis of the fundamental qualities which comprise the attraction of a particular place. Thus, the design of the buildings, their relationship with each other and with the landscape, and the types of materials used, will be factors to be taken into account when making an evaluation of the area where a conservation policy is considered necessary.

It is important that conservation policies also take account of the social and economic pressures which contribute to a working environment. If the problem is approached in this way then change may be accommodated in a manner which does not conflict with the established setting and which may well enhance it. Positive proposals for the desirable change are often necessary and may include new uses of obsolete buildings or general enhancement schemes. The purpose of this document is not only to publicise the conservation policies of Solihull Council and to inform individuals and developers where it will exercise the legal rights to control change, but also to encourage individual interest in maintaining and, where possible, improving the quality of the environment.

## Legislative Background

Since 1947, the Town and Country Planning Act has contained legislation for the preservation of “buildings of special architectural or historic interest” but experience has shown that the preservation of individual buildings is insufficient to preserve the character of the areas. The importance of “environment” or “group value” came to be realised and the formal concept of Conservation Areas was introduced by the Civic Amenities Act, 1967. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, requires every local planning authority to determine which parts of their area shall be designated as “Conservation Areas” with advice being given in Ministry circulars and other publications.

There are certain classes of development specified in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 which are granted a general planning permission (Schedule 2). These tend to be minor and uncontentious developments which are subject to limits and conditions designed to protect the local environment and amenity. Permitted development rights are more limited in Conservation Areas than elsewhere. Nevertheless, these developments may have a potentially detrimental effect. Where there is reliable evidence to suggest that permitted development is likely to take place which could damage an interest of acknowledged importance, and which should be brought under full planning control in the public interest, the local planning authority can direct, by what is known as an Article 4 Direction, that permitted development rights are withdrawn. In the case of an Article 4(1) Direction, the Secretary of State for the Environment must approve the withdrawal of these rights, but an Article 4(2) Direction does not require their approval; the local authority must notify local people of the Direction and must take account of their views before deciding whether to confirm it. Article 4(2) Directions are used to withdraw certain permitted development rights specifically in relation to dwellinghouses in conservation areas.

# SOLIHULL CONSERVATION AREA

## *Introduction - the history of Solihull*

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Solihull Conservation Area comprises the whole of the historic core of Solihull town centre, parts of which have existed for over 400 years. Its history is reflected in the diverse building styles from many different eras which comprise the street scene and which are essential to the character of the area.

Due largely to the expansion of the West Midlands conurbation in this century and Solihull's consequent social and economic development, the area has developed from the original village into a thriving shopping centre serving a considerable population. The planning problems created by this expanding commercial function have been those of reconciling the shopping demands of a growing population with the aim of conserving the country town character of the centre. Although the construction of the Mell Square shopping precinct in the early 1960's has been successful in meeting shopping needs, this was achieved at the expense of many of the older properties in the central area itself. The conservation of the traditional character of the old parts of the town centre is consequently a prime necessity if Solihull is to retain any semblance of its country town identity.

In 1965 the Council issued its first policy statement in relation to development control of the High Street in an attempt to conserve the traditional character of the street, and to encourage the improvement of some of the less satisfactory buildings that had been erected before the advent of the post-war Planning Act. Such a policy achieved national recognition with the passing of the Civic Amenities Act, 1967, which made possible the designation of 'Conservation Areas' and the Council subsequently designated the High Street as a Conservation Area in March, 1968, in continuation of its policy. At this time the area included for conservation was expanded to include parts of Poplar Road, Station Road, Park Road, and the area immediately to the south of St Alphege Church. The extent of the conservation area was reduced in November 1977 when Malvern House, on Park Road, was removed. The High Street was pedestrianised in October 1994.

The strict control of development over these years has been fairly successful in retaining the traditional appearance of the High Street, in spite of the considerable pressures for change. This has been achieved largely because of the co-operation of the owners and tenants with the Council, and as a result there has been a marked improvement in the design of new buildings, shop fitting works and signs.

The Conservation Area was extended to include several of the remaining old town centre buildings of character on the Warwick Road. This resulted in a more logical boundary which allowed the Council to pursue a stricter control of development in this important area in accordance with existing Conservation Area policies. It also took account of legislation which increased the degree of control the Planning Authority could exercise within Conservation Areas. Since the designation of the Conservation Area the population of Solihull has increased rapidly and will continue to do so. Moreover, the importance of the area as a commercial centre of regional significance is intensifying. In consequence, the pressure for change in the







central area will inevitably continue over the next few years and it is thus of great importance that the emphasis given to conservation is maintained. The new Touchwood Court development in the Town Centre, while not within the boundaries of the Conservation Area, will have considerable impact on its character and appearance.

## *History*

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The village of Solihull did not begin to develop on its present site until the 12th Century, although the surrounding area had been settled much earlier. There is evidence of a settlement at Berry Mound, Shirley as early as the Celtic period (from 500 BC) and later settlements were established at 'Ulverlei' in Olton, and 'Langedone', which lies in the region of the present day Hampton Lane.

Solihull itself is thought to have been established between 1170 and 1180 and was probably founded as a trading centre to provide for the needs of a scattered forest population. The site was strategically situated at the junction of the Worcester to Coventry and Warwick to Birmingham routes, and the road to Henley, Oxford and London entered the village from the south. The geometrical building plots, particularly alongside the straight wide High Street, indicate that the village was planned, and did not develop in a piecemeal fashion.

Solihull was first mentioned in records during the reign of King John, the original spelling being Solyhull, meaning miry or muddy hill. This probably referred to the track running up the hill which is now Church Hill Road.

The Parish Church of St Alphege was founded in about 1220 and in 1242 a Royal Charter granted by Henry III gave the citizens of Solihull the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair 'on the vigil, the feast and the morrow of St Alphege' (18-20 April). This Charter was renewed in 1285 and 1320; however nothing further is recorded of the market or the fair for a further three centuries and although it appears that Solihull had become a market town it is most unlikely it ever became a particularly successful one. Nevertheless, the population of the area continued to grow slowly for the next five centuries.

The chief occupations in the medieval Borough seemed to have been farming and the manufacture of hunting weapons and agricultural implements. Local woodland provided fuel for iron smelting, and during the 14th Century Solihull must have had a number of blacksmiths as the High Street was known as La Smythestret. Later records indicate that the village also had thriving textile and leather industries and possessed several other tradesmen including carpenters, coopers, wheelwrights, masons, millers and butchers. It does appear that by the 17th Century at least the village had some influence as a centre and was developing as a country town.

Many distinguishing features of the area at this time would be recognisable today. The focus of the town was the Church of St Alphege and the main market place, now known as The Square. On part of the site of the present churchyard stood the Town Hall, situated at the end of the High Street. The Town Hall dated back at least to the 14th Century; it was rebuilt in 1779 and finally demolished in 1880 when a new Public Hall was erected in Poplar Road. Outside the Town Hall



were the stocks and in the centre of the Square on the site of the present war memorial was the market cross.

By the 18th Century Solihull was a seat of the Petty Sessions, it had its own County Court and there was a flourishing and well respected Grammar School.

An anonymous author in 1840 published impressions of Solihull in 'Sketch of Solihull and Its Environment':

*"Solihull is remarkably neat and rural in its appearance and justly excites the admiration of travellers. Though the houses of the poor are intermingled with those of their richer neighbours, yet no painful disparity offends the eye, or impels the beholder to invidious comparisons. An air of comfort and respectability marks all alike and renders Solihull indisputably a delightful looking town".*

The development of the canals had little impact on Solihull, but with the construction of the Paddington Railway Line in 1852 and improvements in road transport, a small expansion began around the Town Centre. The improvement in communications brought no significant movement of industry to Solihull, the Industrial Revolution did not directly affect the area, but Birmingham was growing rapidly and gradually filling the open country between it and Solihull. In the last decades of the 19th Century migration from Birmingham became important.

The very rapid growth since 1931 has been the story of spreading suburbia. However the Town Centre remained relatively unchanged, with only individual units either changing their use or being replaced, until in 1956 a new shopping parade was begun in Station Road to serve the enlarged community.

By 1960 plans for a new shopping area were proposed on land between the High Street and Warwick Road, and work began in 1964 to provide 103 shops (22,761m<sup>2</sup>), a department store (6,967m<sup>2</sup>), offices (2,229m<sup>2</sup>), 58 flats and a multi-storey car park (710 cars). The construction of the new precinct necessitated demolishing a considerable number of older properties including some buildings which were of architectural and historic interest. This loss was justified, however, by the pressing need for more shopping facilities and was to some extent offset by the fact that, at least for the time being, pressure for the redevelopment of the traditional buildings in the High Street was considerably lessened by meeting the demand for modern shop units on an adjacent site. In addition, further development took place south of the High Street in the early 1960's to provide the Civic Hall and later the new Council House, Library and Police Station. At the same time provision was made for a large car park and service access to the rear of the shops on the south side of the High Street.

Work began in 1976 on the third phase of the Town Centre redevelopment with the demolition of the old Police Station and the construction of a further 8,918m<sup>2</sup> of shopping floor space, 4,645m<sup>2</sup> of office floor space and a multi-storey car park for about 650 cars.

Solihull continues to develop as a shopping and commercial centre and its sphere of influence is now much wider than the immediate locality. Many of the large office developments, for instance, have been occupied by organisations serving regional or national, rather than local needs, and the highly successful Mell Square shopping precinct attracts shoppers from a wide area and has been a major

factor in increasing the popularity of the central area. Permission has been granted for the development of a new shopping area on the site of the existing surface car park, adjacent to the boundary of the Conservation Area, to provide 23,303 square metres of retail floor space. This will also involve the demolition of some of the buildings within the Conservation Area to allow for access into the new development (10-24 High Street, 94-110 High Street).

## ***Environmental Analysis***

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The Conservation Area includes the High Street, The Square, Poplar Road and parts of Park Road, New Road, Station Road and Warwick Road. Apart from the area adjacent to the church, it is predominantly a shopping and commercial area, although there are variations in the age, quality and function of the environment. Four main areas with differing but merging identities can be distinguished and are discussed below:-

### **The Square and Environs**

The Square, together with the south-east end of High Street, is the area of highest environmental quality. Here, 16th, 17th and 18th Century buildings have survived in much their original state, and commercial pressures for change have been accommodated without undue alteration to the basic structures.

The important buildings are the George Hotel and its annex, parts of which date back to the 17th Century and flanking this in the west, a partly 16th Century row of red brick buildings with attractive timber framing. Dominating the area is the extremely fine Church of St Alphege surrounded by its churchyard while to the south lies the residential development of Rectory Gardens, the Oliver Bird Hall, and The Rectory set in fairly spacious grounds.

The 'Square' is in fact a triangular enclosure created by the juxtaposition of these traditional buildings of the church and churchyard, the focus of the area being the War Memorial. Unfortunately, The Square is a main route for traffic travelling along Park Road and Church Hill Road and the constant traffic detracts from the otherwise high environmental quality of the area.

To the east along Park Road, a modern, three storey office block faces the churchyard and St Alphege's School while on the corner of New Road and Park Road stands Malvern House, the outstanding, mid-18th Century, red brick former grammar school which has been restored and converted into offices. Its restoration has contributed greatly to the improvement and the appearance of the area in general, although it does not lie within the Conservation Area itself.

### **High Street**

High Street is a wide, straight and now pedestrianised road, and has retained a similar form for about 400 or 500 years. Some of the buildings at the south-eastern end date back to that period, and although many have been rebuilt, it still largely retains the character of the country town shopping street. There is no clearly defined architectural style, the street being an attractive mixture of buildings, each having regard for its neighbour, and with one or two exceptions blending harmoniously together. The character arises from the low height of these buildings

in relation to the width of the street, the mixture of small domestic type buildings of varied architectural styles and heights and the mellowness of the traditional materials. Smallness and variety of the principle features of the buildings; smallness in width as well as in height, variety because each building was designed in the fashion of its day.

High Street is the most attractive commercial section of the Conservation Area and pressure for the renewal of its traditional buildings has been considerable in the past and will probably continue to be so. However, even though there have been many internal alterations or extensions to the rear of the properties, the impression of domestic scale has been kept by the retention of facades or by their rebuilding in traditional style. This is particularly so in the south-eastern end where it has always been the Council's policy to preserve the appearance of the buildings in their entirety. Most of the buildings in this area are on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and these include the 16th Century timber framed Manor House and the 16th to 19th Century group between The Square and Manor House. The High Street itself was pedestrianised in October 1994.

### **Station Road/Poplar Road**

In contrast to the High Street, this area comprises largely of three storey purpose-built shopping 'parades' fronted by wide pavements. The two most important of these 'parades' are early 20th Century structures built in mock Tudor style. It is this distinctive style, popular in many suburban developments of that era, which gives this section of the Conservation Area its character. The symmetry and detailing on the original designs are retained on the first and second floors; however, in general, modern shop fronts have been added to the ground floor, which pay little regard to the overall context. Northampton House, a modern three storey building, which replaced the previous shops on this site is very much out of character with the remainder of the Conservation Area.

### **Warwick Road**

The busy Warwick Road bisects this section of the Conservation Area, which on the north side comprises a row of pleasant 18th Century buildings, several of which have been extensively renovated and converted for offices and commercial purposes. The buildings form an integrated group which enhance the existing environment. More recent office blocks constructed immediately to the rear of these buildings are totally out of scale and keeping with these small, two storey traditional buildings. The Warwick Road is a dominating factor in the environment of this area. It is a major road into Birmingham although some of the problems associated with through traffic have been eased since the construction of the relief road.

## *Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*

The following buildings are included on the list of buildings and special architectural or historic interest compiled by the Department of the Environment. Special protection is afforded for these 'listed buildings', Listed Building Consent being required prior to demolition or alteration.

### **1 The Square, - George Hotel Annex (Grade II, Group Value with 165, 173, 181 and 183 to 189 High Street).**

An 18th Century, two storey, red brick building with attics and an old tiled roof. It has three hipped dormers and three sash windows with louvered window shutters, keystones and flat arches.



*The George Hotel*

### **3 The Square - George Hotel (Grade II)**

A two storey, refronted, 17th Century or earlier building with recently refurbished frontage and a gabled old tiled roof. Some internal timber framework is visible and there is a red brick chimney stack with three diagonally joined shafts.

### **2 and 4 The Square - Grade II, Group Value with 6 The Square and 158 High Street**

One building with 158 High Street. A 16th Century building with close set timber framework partly re-faced in the 18th Century in red brick. There are machine tiled and old tiled roofs and tall red brick chimney stacks with painted arched panels. It has two storeys, sash windows, with glazing bars, and doorways with panelled, Doric, pilasters and entablatures with cornice hoods. No. 2 has a 17th Century timber framed rear wing with red brick nogging while no. 4 has close studding to the first floor rear elevation.

### **Church of St Alphege, The Square - (Grade I)**

A 13th to 16th Century Church, originally built between 1207 and 1220, of this only the central tower remains. It was rebuilt and enlarged in the mid-13th Century by William De-Odingsell and in 1227 the Chancel was enlarged and two Chantry chapels were added. In 1331 the Lady Chapel was constructed in the south transept, followed by the chapels at St Catherine and St Nicholas in 1350, while the top section of the tower was added in grey stone and the original wooden spire was replaced by a stone spire between 1360 and 1370. Finally in 1535 the nave was lengthened and the south aisle was

*St. Alphege Parish Church*





added with a chapel at its eastern end. Since then major restoration work has been carried out periodically. This restoration has been constantly necessary as the site and foundations are unsuitable for a building of this size. The church possesses a 15th or early 16th Century stone reredos in the south aisle and there is a 16th Century brass, a 17th Century pulpit and alter rails, and 18th Century wall tablets. The wrought iron gates to the porch date from 1746.

**116-120 High Street -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 124, 126, 130, 134, 138, 140, 142 and 144 High Street)**

A two-storey, close set timber framed building, with diagonal bracing, dated 1571. It has a machine tiled roof and two triple light and one round headed single light, lattice casement windows on the first floor.

**124 High Street -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 116 to 120, 126, 130, 134, 138, 140, 142 and 144 High Street)**

An early 19th Century, two storey building with a low pitched machine tiled roof and a painted brick front. The first floor has three sash windows with glazing bars, and there is a modern shop front.



*The Manor House*

**126 High Street -  
The Manor House  
(Grade II\*, Group Value with 116 to 120, 124, 130, 134, 138, 140, 142 and 144 High Street)**

A two storey, 15th Century building with close set timber framing and an old tiled roof, with two large and two central small gables, all overhanging. The ground floor was underbuilt in the 18th Century in red brick and has sash windows and a two panelled door, while the first floor has lattice casement windows.

**130 and 134 High Street -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 116-120, 124, 126, 138, 140, 142 and 144 High Street)**

A two storey building with an 18th Century colour washed facade. It has a machine tiled roof with a tall central ridge and a lower end ridge at right angles. The first floor has five arched sashed windows with glazing bars, and a small gable under the central one. There is an altered 19th Century shop front.

**144 High Street - Rosie O'Brien's  
(Grade II, Group Value with 116 to 120, 124, 126, 130, 134, 138, 140 and 142 High Street)**

A 19th Century re-facing of an earlier building, with a plaster front, false timber framing and barge boards to the gable. It has two storeys with attics, a tiled roof and two lattice casement windows to the first floor with a modern ground floor shop front.

**158 High Street -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 2-6 The Square)**

One building with 2-4 The Square. A 16th Century, two storey with attics, timber framed building, with red brick nogging, partly re-faced in the 18th Century. It has an old tiled roof with an overhanging gable on the left, sash windows with glazing bars, and a canted oriel bay window on the right. There is a central canted bay and a half glazed door with Ionic pilasters, frieze and cornice.

**165 High Street -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 173, 181-189 High Street, and  
I The Square)**

A two storey, red brick building with an early 18th Century facade, a well weathered machine tiled roof with three brick coped gables, and casement windows under segmental arches.

**173 High Street - The Masons Arms  
(Group Value with 165, 181, 183-189 High Street and I The Square)**

A two storey, early 19th Century building of whitewashed brick, with a Welsh slate roof and four sash windows.

**181 High Street -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 165, 173, 183-189 High Street and  
I The Square)**

A two storey 18th Century building with a whitewashed brick front and a Welsh slate roof. It has square timber framing to an early back wing.



*'The Masons Arms', High Street*

**183-189 High Street -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 165, 173, 181 High  
Street and I The Square)**

A two storey, early 19th Century, red brick building with a stone cornice and parapet. It has three sash windows with stucco 'key blocks and lintels.

**681 and 683 Warwick Road -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 685 and 685a  
Warwick Road)**

A two storey, 18th Century building altered in the 19th Century with colour washed rough cast ashlar quoins and a corbelled brick cornice. It has a hipped old and a machine tiled roof with four hipped sash dormers, and sash windows with glazing bars. No. 681 has a pair of two storey canted bay

windows, a central door and an oblong fanlight with glazing bars in panelled reveals, architrave surround, frieze and cornice on consoles. No. 683 has a similar doorway and gables to the rear elevation.

**685 and 685a Warwick Road -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 681, 683 Warwick Road)**

A two storey, with attics, 18th Century whitewashed brick building with a hipped old tiled roof, two hipped dormers and two flush casement windows. It has a projecting 19th Century shop front on the right.

**691 - 697 Warwick Road -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 699-707 Warwick Road)**

An altered, 18th Century two storey plus attics, red brick building with an old and machine tiled roof, corbelled cornice and six gabled casement dormers with glazing bars. There is a first floor band and seven nearly flush sash windows with glazing bars and cambered arches, together with two dummy windows. 693 has a more recent, projecting shop front, while 695 has a 19th Century ground floor bay window and 697 has a bracketed door head, flanked on the right by a shop window with glazing bars.

**699 Warwick Road -  
(Grade II, Group Value with 691-697 and 701-707 Warwick Road)**

A much altered, two storey plus attics 18th Century red brick building, partly colour washed and cement rendered with a tiled roof and four dormers. It has four sash windows on the first floor (three were altered in the 19th Century, the remaining ones having 18th Century glazing bars under a flat arch).

## *Other Buildings of Individual Value*

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**5 - 9 Park Road**

A late 19th Century addition to the George Hotel, and forming a group with it. It has two storeys, a tiled roof with gables and false shuttered casement windows. Walls are washed stucco.

**146-154 High Street**

A 19th Century, two storey, whitewashed brick group of shops with tiled roofs and modern shop fronts. 146 and 148 have attractive round arched sash windows. 152 and 154 have gabled casement windows.

**48- 52 High Street**

An 18th Century, two storey domestic building with attics, converted for retail purposes. It has a tiled roof and a first floor washed stucco facade.

**16-20 High Street**

A two storey, mid 19th Century building of red brick with a slate roof. It has two tall chimney stacks and sash windows with modern shop fronts on the ground floor.

**Lloyds Bank, Poplar Road**

A late 19th Century (1876), two storey building with attics, built of red brick with some imitation timber framing, and a tiled roof. Large gable end on right.

**Old Council House, Poplar Road**

A late 19th Century (1876), two storey red brick building with small dormer windows set within a tiled roof and pointed arched windows on the ground and first floors. A distinctive building in Gothic style.

**677 Warwick Road**

An early 19th Century, two storey domestic building of red brick, now converted for office purposes. It has a tiled roof and a projecting gable on the right.



## *Buildings of Group Value*

### **116 - 158 High Street and 2-6 The Square**

A very fine group of predominantly listed buildings dating from the 16th Century onwards. As a group and as individual buildings they are essential to the character of the Conservation Area (see individual descriptions).

### **163-189 High Street and 1-9 Park Road**

An important group of 17th, 18th and 19th Century two storey buildings which form a tight enclosure to the north of The Square and are essential to its character (see individual descriptions).

### **123-133 High Street**

Two separate buildings from different eras of varied heights, but both with two storeys and attics.

### **73-93 High Street**

Two late 19th Century groups of shops built in red brick. Both buildings have first floor bays and modern shop fronts. Nos. 73-79 have dormers together with intricate brick, stone and wrought iron detailing.

### **76-90 High Street**

A group of buildings, largely reconstructed in traditional style, with first floor sash windows and modern shop fronts. No. 76-86 has steeply pitched tiled roofs and whitewashed stucco facades on the first floor.

### **5-47 High Street**

A mixed group of 19th and early 20th Century two storey buildings some with attics. The earlier buildings were originally simple domestic structures, later converted for retail purposes. Roofs are of varied heights and pitched at different angles. Further interest is created by dormer windows, gable ends and chimney stacks. In general shop fronts are modern.



*Pedestrianised High Street*



*2- 6 The Square and 158 High Street*

### **1-15 Station Road**

A three storey shopping 'parade' built of partly patterned red brick with imitation timber framing. There are two central gables and modern ground floor shop fronts.

### **2-16 Station Road/26-72 Poplar Road**

A purpose built shopping 'parade' dated 1928, constructed on this corner site in mock Tudor style. It is built of brick, with some white stucco, and has imitation timber framing. The roof line, gables, dormer windows and chimney stacks



follow round symmetrically, coving on a large central gable at the corner. Shop fronts are modern.



*The Old Council House, Poplar Road*

**650-644 Warwick Road and Lloyds Bank and The Old Council House, Poplar Road**

A group of two individually distinctive buildings (The Old Council House and Lloyds Bank) and an early 20th Century purpose built corner group of shops of traditional design constructed of red brick and with dormers in the roof.

**681-707 Warwick Road**

A fine row of largely 18th Century domestic buildings converted for office purposes. All are listed buildings, but they form an important group (see individual descriptions).

## Appendix

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### **General Policies to be Applied within Conservation Areas**

The designation of Conservation Area is only the first step. It enables the Local Planning Authority and the Department of the Environment to acknowledge the value to the community of a particular area where the local planning authority should exercise special care when carrying out their planning functions. In doing this the emphasis will be on careful control rather than wholly on preservation, in order to encourage the area to remain prosperous and alive, while ensuring that any new development accords with the special characteristics of the area. Within the Conservation Area, all existing buildings and major land uses should be safeguarded and retained, while unsuitable uses should be removed and undesirable ones contained.

The local planning authority will ensure that any new development accords with the special visual and architectural characteristics of the area and when determining planning applications for new buildings in the Conservation Area, an 'outline' planning application will not normally be sufficient for the Council. Fully detailed drawings will be required, including outline drawings of adjacent buildings, which show the development in its setting, and it is suggested that the early consultations with officers of the Council on preliminary schemes would be most helpful. The local planning authority will look for a very high standard of design which must have regard to the site, the surroundings and the neighbouring buildings, both in colour and texture of materials.

Any developments must be unobtrusive and must fit into the existing environment, whilst retaining a well defined character of its own. The scale of new buildings, the materials and colour scheme used, shall be sympathetic and in keeping with the existing environment and harmonious materials should be incorporated, avoiding concrete and glass in large expanses, while a careful balance should be established between the horizontal and vertical orientation of buildings. Proposals for new developments are likely to be of great concern, and this is recognised in the legislation by requiring the local planning authority to advertise such applications and to consider any representations they may receive when determining them, and where a building in a Conservation Area is also contained within the statutory lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, additional procedures have to be followed. In most cases, even for minor alterations, listed building consent will need to be obtained before any work is carried out to those buildings.

Solihull also has a Conservation Area Advisory Committee and retains architectural consultants to comment on development applications, and any design which does not reach an acceptable standard for its particular site is unlikely to be given planning permission.

Changes should be carried out by adapting existing buildings (with possible extensions) in a manner which will be in keeping with the scale, materials and character of the area. Replacement buildings should, for the most part, be on the

site of the original buildings, although the relationship to open space, lay of the land and adjoining buildings should also be taken into account. Careful consideration will be given to changes in the elevation of existing buildings and the skyline should remain of interest. Generally, pitched roofs and gables are more appropriate than flat roofs. It may be expedient to impose a height restriction on buildings, to prevent any building from creating disharmony in the sky line and so breaking the character of the area, a low roof line in many cases being preferable. Special consideration will also be given to development adjacent or visually related to a Conservation Area where similar controls on design, materials, situation and scale will be applied.

There are many other ways of 'preserving or enhancing' the character of Conservation Areas, including appropriate paving and lighting, suitable choice of street furniture and bus shelters, discreet use of cables and aerials and stricter control of advertisements and signs. Derelict land should be cleared and abandoned vehicles and refuse removed. The ground surface is also important; suitable textures and colours should be selected and large expanses of tarmac should be avoided. Where suitable, setts, bricks, cobbles, crazy paving, slabs, tree bases and planned designed pavings should be utilised.

There must be careful control of the use of street furniture which should preferably be of traditional design and where possible streetlighting should be unobtrusive. In rural areas, traditional Windsor lanterns are favourite but in urban areas, the lighting should, where possible, be fixed to buildings, concealing the wiring, cables and equipment. The number of overhead wires and television aerials should also be reduced to a minimum and where possible, telecommunication providers should be encouraged to place their cables underground. Temporary buildings are also not generally acceptable but where necessary they should be located out of sight behind existing buildings. The control of advertisements is strict; any advertisement should contain good lettering, and appropriate colours and materials, while illuminated signs are undesirable. Unwanted direction signs should be removed and all signs should be carefully sited and restricted to a height limit. One of the most obtrusive factors in a Conservation Area is motor vehicles and where possible measures should be taken to reduce traffic congestion, by, for example, discouraging through traffic, the prohibition of on-street parking and encouraging pedestrian ways and pedestrianisation schemes. Finally, special attention will be paid to the retention and planting of trees, which are recognised to be major contributors to the environment. They provide an essential visual balance to a building or complex of buildings and may enhance the whole appearance of a given setting.

## *Legislation*

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The main statutory provisions relating to Conservation Areas are:-

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1990;

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990;

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995;

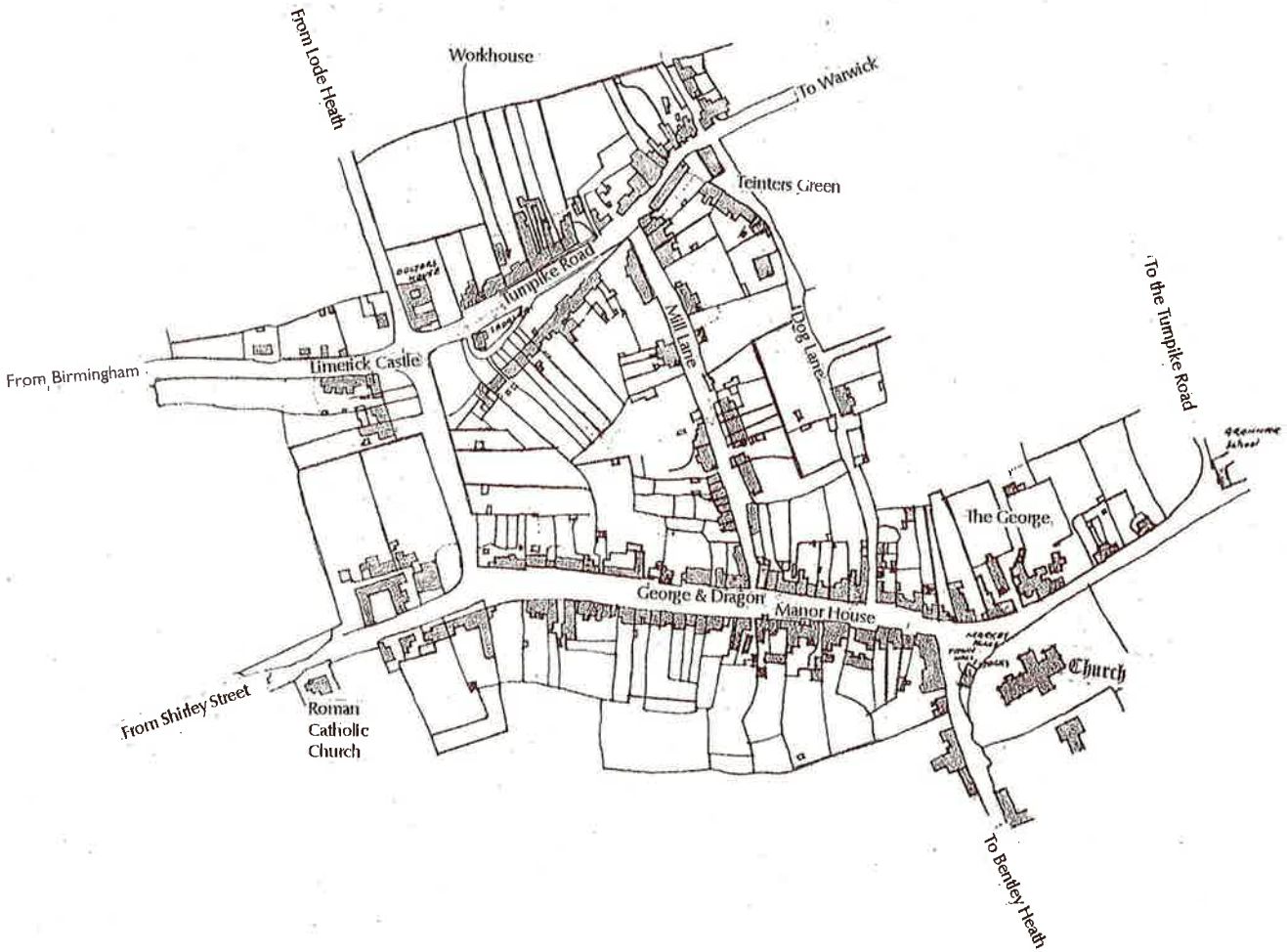
Directions given from time to time by the Secretary of State.



**Plan of Solihull**

This map first published circa 1820

CIRCA 1820



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