

**CHARACTER APPRAISAL  
FOR  
CONSERVATION AREA No. 1,  
STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN  
SEPTEMBER 2001**

Based on an Appraisal  
Undertaken for  
Wyre Forest District Council  
by  
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*Enclosure 1: Character Appraisal for Conservation Area No. 1 (Map)*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This character appraisal relates to Conservation Area No. 1 in the town of Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire. The Conservation Area is 16.9 hectares in extent and comprises a group of canal basins, and associated environments and buildings that date primarily from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and together form the southern part of the historic core of the Town.

Some of the comments in this appraisal that relate to Enhancement Sites and Neutral Sites are intended as snapshots in time, whilst others relating to the overall character of the Area will have more enduring relevance.

*Enclosure 1* (back of document) shows the extent of the above Conservation Area, together with a number of features referred to in this document.

## **2.0 UNIFICATION OF CONSERVATION AREAS**

Four adjoining conservation areas have been designated within Stourport-on-Severn, as follows:

- a) Stourport-on-Severn No. 1 (1970, reviewed 1991).
- b) Stourport-on-Severn No. 2 (1970, reviewed 1991).
- c) Gilgal (1991).
- d) Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal (part) (1976).

The above areas follow the chronological pattern of the development of Stourport-on-Severn up to the turn of the twentieth century. Each displays its own character and appearance but at the same time they merge to form a coherent whole.

The Gilgal Conservation Area (in the east) covers Lower Mitton which, prior to the 1760's, was a small hamlet and the only settlement in the vicinity; being located at a historic crossing point of the River Stour. In the late 1760's the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal was constructed around the west of the hamlet in order to link the Rivers Trent (far to the north) and Severn (nearby to the south). Lower Mitton continued to be the favoured crossing point of the Stour, but the canal and its terminus with the River Severn provided a climate of trade and commerce that instigated the foundation, laying out and construction of the town of Stourport-on-Severn.

Conservation Area No.2 (in the north) continues from the south-west end of the Gilgal and covers the central part of the Town. The buildings in the Area are primarily in the Georgian style, which forms a visually powerful expression that reflects the timing of the Town's foundation and early growth.

Conservation Area No.1 extends immediately to the south of Area No. 2, to include a complex of Georgian canal basins, environments and buildings; together with part of the River Severn.

The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal is a Conservation Area for its entire north-south course throughout the District. At its southern end, it curves west around the northern edge of the Gilgal Conservation Area before turning south to connect with Conservation Area Nos.1 and 2, and its terminus with the River Severn.

### **3.0 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The legal definition of a Conservation Area is set out in *Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, as being:

*“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”*

In its White Paper on the Environment, entitled *“This Common Inheritance”*, published in September 1990, the government explained its strategy and policies for preserving the Nation's heritage. A primary element in which was to promote the enjoyment and understanding of the heritage so that we might be reminded of our past, of how our forebears lived and how our culture and society have developed. To further this objective, Parliament has approved legislation that is intended to create a framework of controls and pro-active measures to preserve or enhance.

The word *“enhance”*, in common parlance, has come to mean *“to make attractive”*. A reference to the legal definition of a conservation area shows that attractiveness is not the objective. While the judiciary has not been set the task of defining the word, English Heritage has done so. In their *document “Conservation Area Practice”* (July 1995, paragraph 8.1), they conclude that it means the *“reinforcement”* of the qualities that led to designation.

Government sees conservation as an important aspect of the planning function and looks towards local planning authorities to use the powers it has provided with diligence to achieve its national policy objectives. In 1995 it introduced wider powers for use by planning authorities because of its deepening concern over the extent of loss of our heritage features.

The Courts have added their weight to this function by clarifying procedures, duties and relationships with other planning functions, and by strengthening the effects of conservation area controls. Importantly the Courts have ruled that:

*“it is right that a much stricter control over development should be exercised in a conservation area than elsewhere” (Bath Society v Secretary of State, 1992).*

Under the same Act, local planning authorities have a statutory duty imposed upon them through Section 72, which requires:

*“special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area”.*

There are two fundamental principles arising from this duty. One is that "*special*" means the decision-maker must always take a positive attitude towards preserving or enhancing. The other is that the "*desire*" to preserve or enhance should flow automatically from the very time at which the conservation area is first designated. From then on, it cannot be used inconsistently with varying circumstances that may arise within the area. The duty will be foremost in the mind of the planning authority when it formulates policies and when it makes decisions on planning and other types of application.

The Courts have again assisted planning authorities by directing them how to apply the Section 72 duty. It has been held that:

*"...conservation should be the first consideration of the decision maker and that it is a consideration of considerable importance and weight..."* (Bath Society vs. Secretary of State, 1992).

*In another ruling (South Lakeland District Council vs. Secretary of State, 1991) the Courts have held that the character or appearance of a conservation area can be preserved by development which either:*

- a) Makes a positive contribution to the area; or
- b) Leaves the character or appearance of the area unharmed.

There has also been debate as to which of "*character*" or "*appearance*" should be the objective in making decisions on proposals within conservation areas. It has been held, for the purposes imposed by the Section 72 duty, that individual areas should be assessed each upon their own unique qualities (*Chorley and James vs. the Secretary of State, 1993*). From that assessment it could then be decided which of the two, if either, should take preference. However, even in cases where there is a clear preference for one, the other should not be disregarded but instead given due weight in the determination of specific proposals.

Policies and proposals for development should therefore begin by seeking to preserve the existing character or appearance of the area. Legally, they do not have to go on to enhance, but in any event they should conform to the established characteristic features which warranted designation so as to reinforce the area's special interest. Only applications for development that conform to all these requirements will receive the support of the planning authority.

Planning legislation defines conservation areas as being of "*special architectural or historic interest*". From time to time, the government issues Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) to guide the process of decision making. These are extremely important documents and carry considerable weight in the eyes of the Courts and the Planning Inspectorate. In PPG 15, "*Planning and the Historic Environment*", the thinking is reiterated that within a conservation area it is the character of the area and not individual buildings that is the primary concern. Therefore, this appraisal sets out to identify the principle features which give the conservation area its character and appearance.

The result will be that proposals for development within and immediately around the area can be guided and controlled, confident that they will preserve the town's existing qualities and attributes. From the analysis, other planning functions may be initiated such as a boundary review, Article 4 Directions, development briefs, enforcement action and new local plan policies.

## **4.0 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER**

### **4.1 Setting**

There are several components to the setting, as follows:

- a) A narrow strip of the Conservation Area extends south-west to include a section of the River Severn and the opposite bank. This area is within the River floodplain and but for a group of buildings at the north-west end, is largely free of built development. In addition, it is visually buffered from built suburban development further to the west and south-west, by playing fields and wooded rising land; giving the aspect a fairly open rural feel.
- b) To the north-west of the Area on the north-east bank (immediately adjoining the southern end of Bridge Street) extend a series of riverside meadows, with trees along the River bank. These meadows lie within the River floodplain and are largely free of built development, except for structures associated with outdoor recreation. They give this aspect of the setting an open green feel;
- c) To the north and north-east of the Area is the central area of the Town, characterised by built development of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries; albeit harmoniously linked. This contrasts strongly with the components of setting referred to in points a) and b) above;
- d) To the east, the setting comprises industrial development of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and vacant industrial land. Importantly, the south-east corner is bordered by the tree lined River Stour, which converges with the River Severn at the southern tip of the Conservation Area, and forms a green edge to this aspect of the setting.
- g) Rear garden plots survive around the edges of the Area in Bridge Street, Raven Street, New Street and Lichfield Street; creating a historically authentic and pleasant green edge and backdrop in those vicinities.

## **4.2 Topography**

The topography has exerted a number of influences in the Area, as follows:

- a) For the most part, the Area lies on land that rises from the bank of the River Severn in a north-easterly direction. At approximately 150 metres from the River, the western side of the Area begins to rise quite sharply into Bridge Street and the Town Centre. York Street, setting the northern boundary, is its highest point. The eastern side follows a more gradual gradient north into the Town.
- b) A natural shelf between York Street and the River Severn was re-fashioned by man during the late eighteenth century to form terraces. The purpose of this terracing was to bring the canal down to a junction with the Severn, and to allow for the construction of a complex of basins and associated docks at each level. These in turn allowed for goods to be transferred between narrow canal boats and river-going “trows”, together with other maintenance and boat building activities. The level of the terraces and basins specifically enabled canal operations to continue, even when the River was in flood. In this respect, the larger basins are designed to be about 30 feet (8.8 metres) above the River Severn.
- c) The construction of the basins required York Street and other areas to be supported by revetments, which are still in place.
- d) A new crossing point of the River Severn was created in association with the founding of Stourport-on-Severn. In this respect, the topography leading down from Bridge Street necessitated the construction of a substantial arched causeway linking the street to the new bridge, which is still in place.

## **4.3 Historic Evolution**

Stourport-on-Severn is by comparison with many other country towns, a relatively recent settlement. It owes its origin and development solely to the construction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal during the late eighteenth century, and in this respect claims to be unique, which adds to its importance. Prior to this event, the only settlement in the vicinity was the hamlet of Lower Mitton nearby to the north-east, which now forms the Gilgal Conservation Area. Lower Mitton was of importance in earlier times because it was the historic crossing place of the River Stour. Crossings of the River Severn historically took place at Redstone, about one kilometre further downstream.

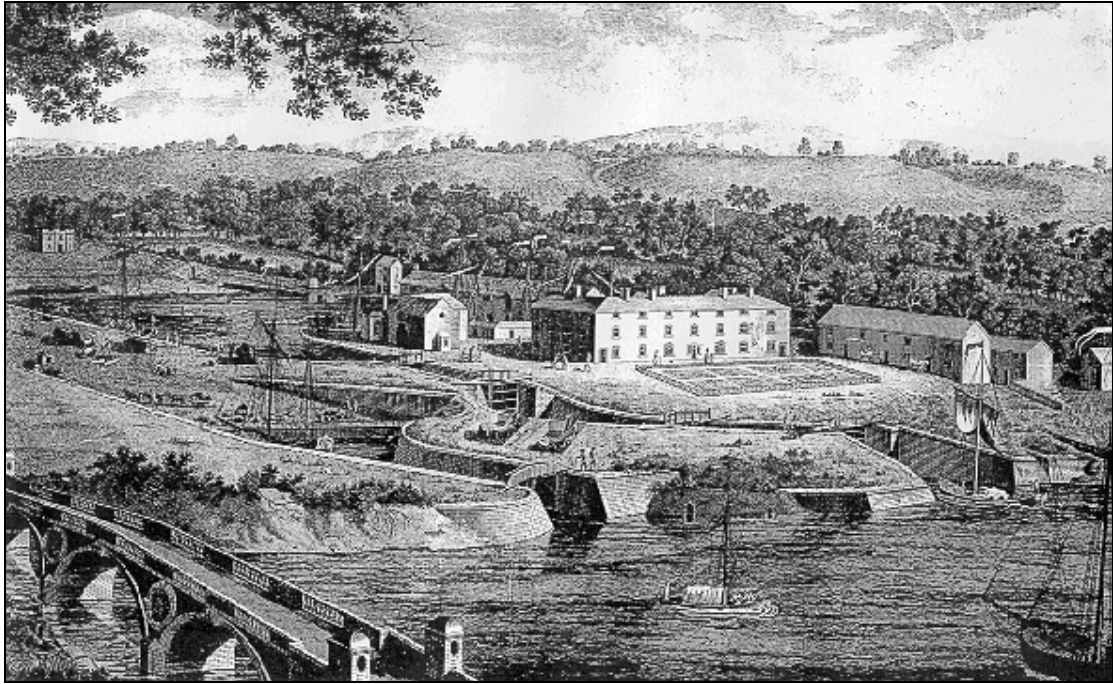


*Maps of Stourport-on-Severn dated 1802 (left) and 1849 (right)*

During the late 1760's, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal was constructed under the guidance of the engineer, James Brindley; to link the River Trent (far to the north) with the River Severn (immediately to the south). The canal itself became operational in 1770/1 and the town of Stourport-on-Severn was founded at the southern terminus of this route.

Much of the southern length of the Canal was constructed to follow the gentle valley contours of the River Stour, which runs south to converge with the River Severn at what is now the south-east tip of the Conservation Area. Immediately to the north of Lower Mitton, the Canal was routed west away from the Stour, and then south to take a direct course dropping to meet the Severn through a series of locks (manually operated) and basins; and these make up the predominant land feature in the Area. In addition to constructing the basins, the Canal Company constructed a quayside along the north bank of the River Severn, which still retains its sandstone block-work and steps. The Canal Company also constructed a number of buildings in the vicinity, including the Tontine (a former hotel), maintenance buildings to the north, most of the houses and former stabling in Mart Lane and Severn Side, and a number of warehouses.





*The Tontine, adjoining buildings and riverside locks,  
from a late eighteenth century engraving by James Sherriff*

The extent of the basins is testament to the degree of activity created by the traffic using the canal and the transfer of merchandise to vessels for onward trips on the Severn, and the town fared well from this intersection, being established immediately to the north and north west. The core streets of the town were laid out during the late eighteenth century and infilled with buildings, principally between then and the mid. nineteenth century.

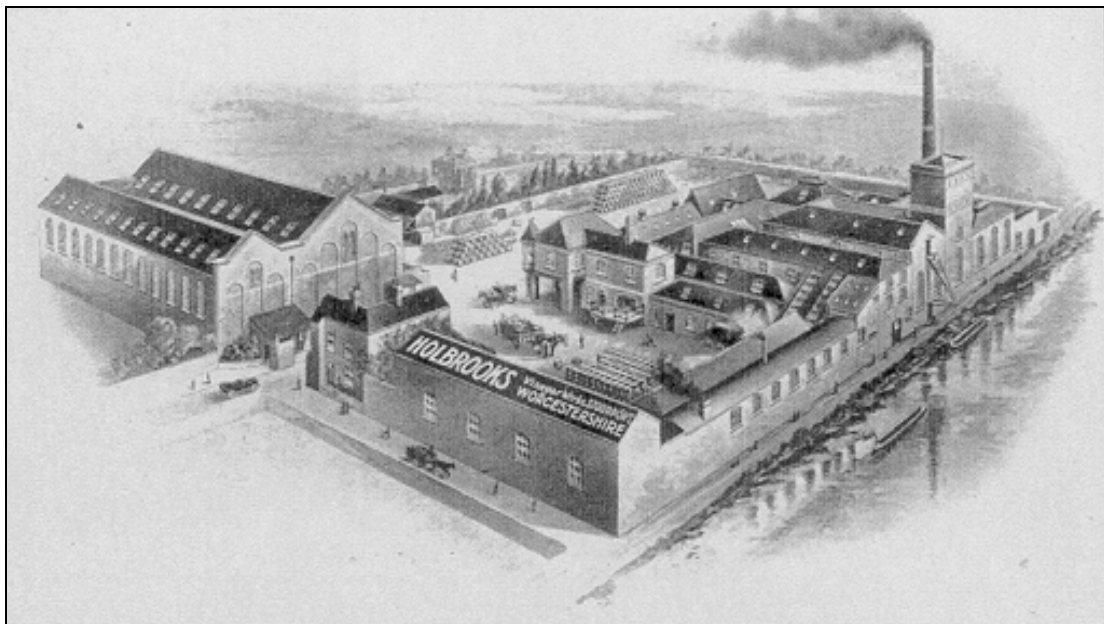
Many large houses associated with canal managers were constructed, and reflect the wealth of their occupants and the wealth brought by the Canal. Other buildings were necessary to handle the amount of trade undertaken.

In addition to those basins still surviving, two further basins once existed but have been infilled, as follows:

- a) The larger of the two dating from c.1805 and known as the “*Inner Basin*”, was located in the area bordered by Mart Lane, Lichfield Street and Severn Road; being infilled during the 1960's. The water connection was via a narrow channel from the Upper Basin to the west, that bisected Mart Lane. The position of this access is still visible, and the stone quaysides associated with this basin are buried *in situ* and comprise important architectural and historic features.
- b) The second smaller basin existed in the area bordered by Cheapside, the River Severn and the Angel Public House. This basin was infilled when a gas works was constructed on the site. The water connection was via a narrow channel from the Inner Basin to the north-east; beneath a path that still links Severn Side with Severn Road and Cheapside. This access point is still visible as an infilled bridge forming a hump in the footpath.

Importantly, the area occupied by the larger infilled basin above is currently redundant and an opportunity exists for a sensitive redevelopment scheme (refer Neutral Sites).

Interestingly, the oldest vinegar works in the Country (the Swan Brewery, later becoming Holbrook's, Sarson's and finally Nestle) was established in 1798 on a site in the south-east corner of the Area adjoining the Rivers Severn and Stour. This site had the advantage of a readily available water supply for brewing purposes, and close proximity to the River Severn and adjoining canal basins for transportation. In this respect, the southern end of the adjoining quayside to the River Severn may have been constructed by the owners of the vinegar works.



*Holbrooks vinegar works in Cheapside, from an artists impression dated 1915*

#### **4.4 Land Uses**

There are several land uses in the Area but the predominant uses are water related, as follows:

- a) Canal boat moorings;
- b) Boat repair;
- c) Boat hire;
- d) Marine retailing; and
- e) Canal and river heritage experience.

These uses are essentially confined to the south-east and central parts of the Area.

Along the northern boundary of the Area, shops and commercial premises back into the Area from York Street and New Street. This commercial activity extends southwards along Bridge Street towards the River Severn bridge, as far as the raised causeway. Public houses on both sides of the street at this point delineate the change to leisure uses at river level. These leisure uses are as follows:

- a) Children's play area in the Riverside Meadows to the north-west of the Bridge Street causeway;
- b) Shipley's Amusements, to the south-east of Bridge Street;
- c) River trips from landing stages to the north-west of Bridge Street; and
- d) Riverside walking on the north-east and south-west banks of the River Severn.

The commercial and leisure activities throughout this Area are well patronised and give considerable support to the viability of the town centre.

#### **4.5 Colours**

Colours within the Conservation Area are provided by ground surfaces, building materials, water and vegetation, as follows:

- a) Non-traditional black tarmacadam has been used on the roads, car parks, amusement area and footpaths. Extensive areas of more sympathetic red-blue brick paving have been laid in the vicinity of the basins;
- b) Building Materials are for the most part of late eighteenth century to early twentieth century origin. Most buildings are constructed in the rich red-orange brick associated with the region, which gives a feeling of uniformity and unity. Such buildings are generally unpainted and unrendered. Isolated contrasts capture the attention of the eye, occurring more noticeably in the vicinity of the water bodies. They consist of painted brick, stucco, timber or metal; for example, individual buildings painted white or cream; the black and white livery of the canal railings and lock gates; the blue of the footpath railings and the river bridge; and the red sandstone used in the terracing of the basins and the riverside quay.

Roofs are either grey slate or reddish-brown natural plain clay tiles, both sitting harmoniously upon the walls beneath.

Windows and other wooden joinery are, with but one exception, entirely painted white, producing visual fluency and historic authenticity;

- c) Water is the most important and noticeable feature giving variation to the ground surface colouring. This is constantly changing in response to weather conditions and viewing angles. It reflects the images of the moored boats and the buildings around the basins. It is a rich natural

resource that adds considerable interest. The colours of the moored boats introduce pockets of vibrant colour to the Area;

- d) Grass plays a visually important role near to the river and canal junction, where it continues its historic purpose of separating the surviving features of the former canal activities;
- e) Roadside trees are not a traditional characteristic of the street frontages. Limited tree cover to the fore of the Tontine, around the basin verges, in rear gardens to properties in Lichfield Street, Bridge Street and Raven Street, along the Riverside walks and meadows, and adjoining the River Stour. This provides colour variations and added interest throughout the seasonal cycles of the year; and
- f) Outside the Area the close proximity of the countryside across the river and to the east and west, blend with the grass surfaces along the north bank to produce an integrated image. The colours outside are subject to dramatic changes brought about by the seasonal variations of foliage from greens to browns and yellows. Nevertheless, the similar effects to unite the Area with its outer setting at all times of the year.

#### **4.6 Climate**

Climate exerts a number of influences, as follows:

- a) The man-made terracing of the basins is a particularly important indication of the effects of climate. The level at which the basins are set was determined consciously to be above flood level, particularly the upper basins, and thus capable of avoiding the results of this climatic inconvenience.
- b) A few buildings have been orientated or designed to take best advantage of sunlight from the south, particularly the Tontine and Angel Public House; which also look towards the River. Elsewhere, buildings face the long axis of the streets. Where such streets run broadly east-west (New Street, York Street and Lichfield Street), the front or rear elevations are able to face south in order to take advantage of the sunlight as relevant; some of the grander former houses in York Street incorporating large Palladian windows in their south elevations. Buildings in these streets tend to reflect the prosperity of the commerce generated by the canal, or the wealth and position of the town's higher social inhabitants. Where the streets run broadly north-south (Mart Lane and Severn Side) the principle elevations face west or east, and so receive less sunlight. Such buildings, particularly dwellings, tend to be smaller than their counterparts in those streets running broadly east-west, and were perhaps occupied by inhabitants of lower means.
- c) The sloping, rather than flat, roofs to buildings (typically about 40 degrees) shed rainwater; as does semicircular coping to free standing walls, which also reduces the potential impact of frost. Pediments, and

simple pointed or flat canopies, to some front doorways serve to deflect rainwater and as decoration.

- d) Window are of a reasonable size, reflecting a temperate climate; and generally with sashes, the lower component opening upwards for ventilation.

#### **4.7 Trees**

Roadside trees are not a traditional characteristic of the street frontages. Limited tree cover occurs elsewhere as follows:

- a) To the fore of the Tontine;
- b) Around the verges between the lower basins, and the basins and the River Severn;
- c) In rear gardens to properties in Lichfield Street, Bridge Street and Raven Street;
- d) In the area around the Angel Public house (Severn Side);
- e) Along the Riverside walks and meadows, particularly the south-west bank and the north east bank above the River Bridge, and adjoining the River Stour.

This tree cover provides colour variations and added interest throughout the seasonal cycles of the year. Varieties are generally native deciduous types. The trees within the Area are generally highly visible by virtue of either their height, the level upon which they grow, or the points from where they can be seen.

#### **4.8 Historic Street Pattern and Movement**

The core streets of the Area were laid out by the late eighteenth century and are still in use today following their historic routes, as the main vehicular and pedestrian corridors of the central part of the town. In this respect, the historic streets of Area Nos. 1 and 2, and Gilgal, interlock. They are currently named as follows:

- Bridge Street.
- Raven Street.
- New Street.
- York Street.
- High Street.
- Lombard Street.
- Lickhill Road.
- Foundry Street.
- Lion Hill.
- Bell Row.
- Lichfield Street.
- Mart Lane.
- Severn Side.

- Severn Road.
- Cheapside.

In addition, Mitton Street (relating to the former hamlet of Mitton) and possibly Gilgal, are older.

Important narrow routes laid out during the late eighteenth century, include the following:

- Footpaths that link Mart Lane with the southern end of Severn Road and the Angel Public House.
- Footpaths around the basins.
- Footpaths along the north and south banks (date unknown) of the River Severn, including along the former eighteenth century Riverside wharves on the north bank, and the bridge over the River Stour at its junction with the Severn.

Most of the streets (with the exception of the older Mitton Street and Gilgal) are roughly straight in course and intersect at crossroads or “T” junctions. Traffic islands and central divisions are not a characteristic of the area.

Within the town centre, High Street, Lion Hill and York Street form a triangle, with York Street running parallel to the River Severn and Lion Hill skirting the eastern bank of the canal cutting. New Street and Bridge Street extend to the west and south west respectively, the latter leading to the River crossing and bordering the western side of the basins; whilst Lichfield Street, and Mart Lane and Severn Road extend to the south east and south west, respectively; again also enclosing basins. Cheapside runs off Severn Road, connecting with former River-side quays and enclosing a former basin. Lombard Street (and in turn, Foundry Street) and Lickhill Road extend to the north and north west respectively, the former following the western bank of the canal. Mitton Street joins the northern end of Lion Hill from the old hamlet of lower Mitton to the east.

Movement is one of the most dominant visual features of the Conservation Area, and comprises three aspects:

a) Vehicular:

York Street, running along the northern boundary, and Bridge Street to the west, are busy through-routes for vehicles and subsequently carry high volumes of traffic. New Street, leading west from the junction of these two roads serves the District Council offices and the main car parks of the town. As a result, it too is a busy urban street. The volume of the vehicular traffic in these roads, particularly the first two, detracts from their character.

b) Pedestrian:

Pedestrians have extensive freedom to move within the Area. The principle pedestrian movements are as follows:

- From the car parks to and along the northern bank of the river.
- Around the basins at River and Mart Lane levels.
- From the riverside level into the town centre via the steel steps attached to the causeway and then Bridge Street.
- From the car parks into the town centre via New Street and from the town centre to the Council offices again along New Street.
- Along the north east bank of the River Severn.

Additional movements take place as follows:

- Over the River Severn bridge, as a route into Areley Kings and for viewing.
- Along historically important paths that link Mart Lane with the southern end of Severn Road and the Angel Public House; and the southern end of Cheapside with the old riverside quay.

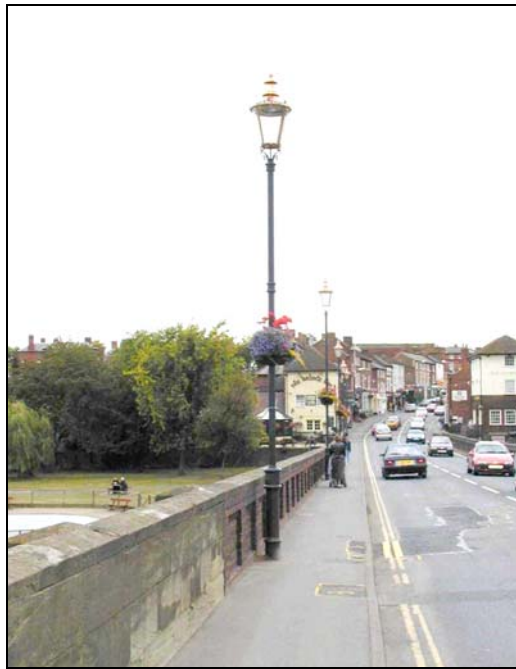
c) Water borne:

Water borne movements take place within the canal basins and along the River Severn, and are seasonal and mainly recreational. Within the upper basins there are boat building, repair and other related activities, but by far the most prominent use of the water is for pleasure purposes. This brings trade, activity, colour and sound to this part of the Area.

#### **4.9 Illumination and Night-time Appearance**

The Area has street lighting due to being within an urban area, and this creates a different component of character to the familiar daylight scenes.

Generally this difference is brought about by subtle rather than brash or garish means. A spine of traditional style street lamps illuminates the deck of the bridge over the River and the adjoining causeway. This spine (now in standard street lamp design) continues into Bridge Street and then branches into York Street and New Street, where the lamps are often attached to the buildings. The lamps are spaced at regular intervals on one side of the street only. They provide a somewhat surreal and traditionally uncharacteristic orange light, which gives an even spread of illumination at pavement level and illuminates the facades of the buildings on both sides of the street. This is an important factor because it means that fascia signs are legible without the need for individual illumination.



*Traditional style street lamps  
on the bridge over the River Severn*

The majority of the shops and premises in the Area do not have their own lighting and this leaves it in a subdued and relaxed manner where it feels comfortable and safe to walk without being oppressed by glare. The Bridge Inn has its own illumination which is not over-powering and acts more as a landmark on entry to the town from across the bridge. Premises that are closed after normal business hours often maintain a low level of illumination for security reasons and this causes minor spillage of light out onto the pavements; however, this is again subtle and is not powerful enough to disrupt or compete with the wider spread of light from the street lamps. Where individual lighting occurs, it is on the premises that are operating after normal business hours and whose trading activities attract sufficient attention to themselves (by movements of customers and spillage from their shop windows) that ironically, individual illumination is unnecessary.

Away from this spinal tract, street lamps are more sporadic and are placed at strategic points, such as the junctions of footpaths. A solitary lamp casts light over the lower basin area, but its visual effect on the water surface is, from certain vantage points, quite dramatic. The amusement park offers a small but concentrated pocket of intense illumination. With the park being of a fairly small size and situated in the lowest part of the Area, the impact of its lighting does not overpower the Area's overall night-time appearance. In the south east corner of the Area the streets again are less well served by street lamps. The effect of the spread of illumination is therefore far from even.

The upper basin area is devoid of any overhead illumination and as such represents a dark, vacuous area which belies its day-time appearance and interest. This is a regrettable situation as much of the character of the entire Area stems from the canal's presence and history.

On the river's south bank, there is no illumination, that part of the Area relying solely upon the distant effect of illumination spreading across from the lamps



on the north side. Attached lamps below deck level light the portal of the bridge which highlight the steel structure, adding to its night-time landmark quality.

#### 4.10 Views

Important views into, out of and within the Area, are as follows:

a) Into the Area:

The topography of the Area's setting does not allow views into it from distant vantage points, but there are several places from its edge where views into the Area are both interesting and appealing. The most noticeable of these are from the following:

- Bridge over the River Severn,
- Along the south bank riverside walk.



*View of the former Vinegar Works in Cheapside  
from the south bank of the River Severn*

- Footpath leading from the car parks.
- Junctions of Lion Hill and York Street, Bridge Street and New Street, and Mart Lane and Lion Hill.
- Western end of New Street.
- Along York Street.

b) Out of the Area:

The topography works for and against the outward views. The rise from south to north limits them mostly to views towards the south. These are obtained from the following:

- Junction of Lion Hill and York Street (looking south, south-west, and east).
- Along York Street (looking east) and New Street (looking west and south).
- Riverside walks (both banks, looking south, west, and east).
- River Severn bridge (all directions).



*Views looking north-west from the bridge over the River Severn towards open countryside (left), and south-east towards the former Vinegar Works (right)*

- To the east from Mart Lane.
- East along York Street towards a terrace of flat roofed town houses in Lion Hill, that comprise a particularly unsympathetic feature. These buildings are located in Conservation Area No. 2, and identified as a Neutral Site in the associated Character Appraisal.



*View looking east along York Street towards unsympathetic flat roofed houses in Lion Hill*

c) Within the Area:

Almost all of the pedestrian routes within the Area have viewing points from which other parts of the Area create interest. From the bridge, the riverside walks, the upper basin level, York Street and the junction of Bridge Street and High Street, there are views filled with boats, buildings and water features; and occasionally these have distant backdrops of the countryside beyond the Town.

#### 4.11 Pattern and Density of Building

The pattern and density of building within the Area responds to different influences, as follows:

- a) Across the north end of the Area (i.e. York Street, New Street, Lichfield Street and into Bridge Street and Mart Lane) the non-canal side buildings (generally dwellings and retail premises) respond to face the street, and are positioned adjoining the back of the pavement in straight terraces;



*Terraced houses in Mart Lane*

- b) The few buildings around the basins show their allegiance to their historic waterside activities. They do not crowd the edges of the waterside and are detached in juxtaposition. They often have a rectangular plan orientated parallel to the long axis of the dry docks or channels to which they relate.



*Former warehouse at the centre of the basins,  
now occupied by Stourport Yacht Club*

- c) In the south of the Area, there is once again a tendency to respond to the face the street but there is not a unanimous arrangement. Nos. 1 & 2, Cheapside are all that remains of a once longer group of houses arranged at the back of the pavement in a straight terrace. The

buildings of the former vinegar works form a self-contained inward looking group.

- d) Many of the residential and retail buildings in the area were constructed with rear garden plots or at least, rear yards. Important rear garden plots and boundary walls survive in Bridge Street, Raven Street, New Street, York Street, Lichfield Street and Mart Lane.

#### 4.12 Types of Buildings

The type of buildings in the Area reflect the prevailing or former land uses, as follows:

- a) New Street; York Street; Lichfield Street Nos. 1-6, Mart Lane; and Nos. 2-9, Severn Side:

Many of these buildings were probably constructed as dwellings but with the exception of those in Lichfield Street, Mart Lane and Lichfield Street, are now in retail and commercial uses. Importantly, the houses on the south side of York Street (Nos. 19 to 21, and York House) are the largest and finest of the dwellings in the old town, reflecting the wealth and status of the original owners. The largely residential nature of Lichfield Street, and the dwellings referred to in Mart Lane and Severn Side, is an important component of the character of the area, and efforts should be made to retain this use.



*Former house, now offices, in York Street*

- b) It is likely the buildings in Bridge Street (western side) were constructed as dwellings or as shops with dwellings over, and all are currently in retail or commercial uses.
- c) Around the basins, buildings are linked historically with the construction, repair and handling of water vessels and traffic. Surviving

old maintenance and warehouse buildings include the Clock Warehouse (now Stourport Yacht Club), the maintenance buildings and attached cottage immediately north west of the Tontine (Stourport Wharf) and the former warehouse (now a chandlers) adjoining the north-west end of Mart Lane. Immediately to the south of the latter is the only surviving canal side crane in the Area, complete with arm. A large and imposing building looking south towards the River, called the Tontine, dates from the 1770's and is thought to have provided lodgings for canal workers and other visitors. Its former stabling is located immediately to the south-east, and is now in commercial use.



*Former warehouse and adjoining crane in Mart Lane*

c) Importantly, a number of buildings and structures in the Area were early properties of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Company, including the following:

- Tontine and former stabling at the southern end of Mart Lane.
- Canal Maintenance building and attached cottage to north west of the Tontine.
- Most of the terraced houses in Mart Lane an Severn Side.
- The complex of basins.

The basins are currently in the charge of British Waterways.

d) In the south-east corner of the area (Cheapside) the buildings are dominated by nineteenth century industrial or warehouse types, including the oldest former vinegar works in the Country established on the site in 1798. Some smaller scale domestic buildings fall within this group and make a significant contribution to the visual qualities of the Area.

e) Many of the buildings retain old outbuildings and wings of interest. These include privies and wash houses in Bridge Street, Raven Street, New Street, Lichfield Street and Mart Lane. Some surviving buildings and wings may have contained workshops.



#### 4.13 Style of Buildings

There are two principle architectural styles in the area as follows:

- a) Throughout most of the Area, the buildings are in a polite Georgian style; due to the fact that it was during this period the building of the canal, basins and simultaneously, the town was started. Henceforth, much new building took place in sympathetic style, made possible as a result of the wealth the canal brought to the town; and



*Variations of the Georgian style exhibited by houses in Lichfield Street*

- b) The prosperity brought by the canal continued well into the nineteenth century, when industry expanded extensively into the south east corner of the Area as far as the junction of the Severn and Stour. In this respect, Cheapside especially exhibits the architectural style of the Victorian period through its industrial buildings such as the old vinegar works, which includes restrained polychrome brickwork. Elsewhere, Victorian and later buildings tend to echo the polite style of the Georgian period.



*Building facing the inner courtyard of the former Vinegar Works in Cheapside*

#### 4.14 Size of Buildings

The size of buildings has been dictated by their historic uses and plot divisions, and are as follows:

- a) The northern extremes of the Area are of a domestic scale with a harmonious link to the townscape in the centre of the town itself;
- b) Buildings fronting streets (generally dwellings or retail premises) are predominantly of three storeys with only a small number being of two storeys. The largest are dwellings built for better off residents, in York Street; and to a lesser extent in Lichfield Street and New Road.
- c) Former maintenance buildings located at the side of the basins, such as the current chandlers in Mart Lane, the Clock Warehouse (Stourport Yacht Club), and the maintenance building to the north-west of the Tontine; are no more than two storeys in height. They are not overbearing in relation to the extent of water to which they relate; and
- d) Industrial buildings in the south-east of the Area (Cheapside) including buildings once associated with the brewing of vinegar, and are on a large scale to suit their production processes.



*Large building associated with the former Vinegar Works in Cheapside*

## 4.15 Morphology

The morphology of buildings strongly reflect the Georgian and Victorian phases of development; the Georgian phase dominating the Area, with the exception of a few Victorian industrial buildings in the south-east, as follows:

a) Georgian phase:

- Plot frontages are of roughly regular widths. Occasionally adjoining buildings have been united unsympathetically into wider shop fronts.
- Buildings fronting streets (generally dwellings or retail premises) are predominantly of three storeys with only a small number being of two storeys. Maintenance buildings fronting the basins tend to be, at most, of two storeys.
- Streets in which the above buildings stand are generally equal in width to the height of the buildings, making the cross section of the street appear square.
- There are variations in the massing of individual buildings along the streets but for the most part these are only subtle. As a result, the streets present an image of roofline uniformity; with the exception of Bridge Street. Here the buildings climb the gradient, still in predominantly three storey heights, but with a roofline stepping plot by plot to accommodate the rise. This feature produces considerable visual interest and reveals other architectural and historic information.



*Stepped roofline in Bridge Street*

(The foregoing features make this phase compatible and comfortable to the human scale).



- Facades are in continuous alignment, and even though there are occasional breaks between some of the buildings, they flow around the curves in the streets rather than being staggered. This produces a strong continuity and rhythm.
- Facades of buildings with three bays are symmetrical.



*Symmetrical facade in Mart Lane*

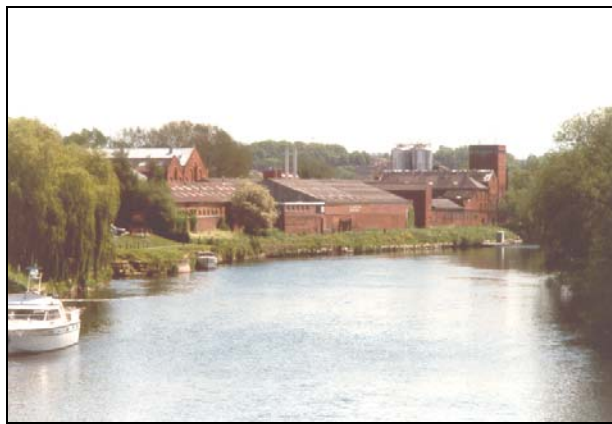
- Profiles of buildings are visible at roof level by virtue of the subtle changes in massing along the streets. From these can be seen the plan depth of the buildings which, like the plot widths, take on a similar regularity.
- Windows and doors are distributed regularly within elevations, creating a strong sense of rhythm in the street scene and adding to that already created by the alignment of the buildings.
- The relationship between buildings, topography and viewing points provide a range of interesting silhouettes, especially of those buildings nearer the riverside and in Bridge Street.

b) Victorian Phase (Cheapside):

- These buildings range in the numbers of storeys, but being industrial, their storey heights are greater than those of domestic buildings.
- Street widths between buildings are narrow by comparison with building heights.
- Massing, one to another, is irregular, as is their alignment in relationship to the road.

(The combination of the above factors gives the buildings in this phase a presence that is consciously dominant to the human scale).

- Window openings have a strong vertical emphasis and they are distributed within the elevations in such a way as to create an equally strong sense of rhythm.
- The profiles reveal the deep, square floor plans of the buildings.
- The roofs of some buildings are hidden behind parapets while those visible are medium to steep, double-pitched.
- The buildings of the former vinegar brewery are mostly seen against one another, as a group and in so doing, create powerful silhouettes. This effect is particularly striking both within Cheapside, from the River Severn, and from the riverside walk on the south-west bank of the River Severn.



*Buildings in Cheapside  
seen from the bridge over the River Severn*

#### **4.16 Materials and Construction**

The majority of building materials and construction in the area dates from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as follows:

a) Georgian Phase:

- Plan:

Ground plans to buildings are essentially a medium depth rectangle with additional floor area being accommodated in rear wings. A few very small terraced dwellings have near square plans.

- Roofs:

Roofing materials are either locally made small plain clay tiles, or imported natural grey Welsh slate. These materials hold historic value in the evolutionary progress of the Area and both sit upon their buildings with comfortable harmony.

The principal rectangle of the building floor plan is covered by a simple single or double pitched roof, having a ridge line running parallel with

the street. Rear wings have pitched roofs with ridges at right angles to the principal roof. The roof pitches follow a roughly consistent angle of approximately 40 degrees. A few of the more high quality buildings have hipped ends. Where there is a gradient to the ground (for example, in Bridge Street) roofs of adjoining buildings are stepped with the gradient.

Chimneys are ridge-mounted into the wall thickness rather than being externally exposed. They are multi-flued, rectangular in plan, of well balanced vertical proportions, and in brick; giving a strong, stout appearance. There is little in the way of detailing to the stacks but this does not diminish the significant level of interest they add to the roofscape of the Area (particularly Bridge Street) especially when seen in the few available distant viewpoints.

At eaves level, there is often brick dentilling and in any event, no timber fascia. Occasionally, parapets have been used along the eaves, but not at gables.

Water goods are traditionally metal and guttering is fixed directly to the brickwork.

At gable ends, the roof covering is terminated flush or close to the wall face, and sealed to it with a mortar fillet. There are no barge boards or overhangs, other than one set added during the Victorian period to the north west elevation of a former managers house in Severn Road.

Flashings at abutments are lead and stepped into the brick courses where they need to rise; and as yet, have not been subjected to the inappropriate modern trend of cutting it into the wall parallel with the pitch by the use of a disc-cutter.

- Walls:

Buildings and free-standing walls are almost entirely built in soft, locally made brick that has a rich and warm reddish-orange to reddish-brown colour. Bricks are laid in Flemish bond with narrow joints and lime mortar. The better buildings and elevations have tuck pointing in white lime putty mortar, to a flush finish. The bricks have an open texture which although giving individuality and relief to each one, combine when in larger surfaces to give an image of subtle irregularity while maintaining uniformity.



*Brick-work with a traditional Flemish bond*

A small number of buildings have had their brick walls painted in pastel colours, but this is unlikely to be an original characteristic of the area and does not do justice to the quality of the material.

The corners to some of the walls to the grander buildings incorporate embellishment in the form of quoins painted white.



*Quoins to the corner of a building in York Street*

Free-standing brick walls are traditionally capped with semi-circular shaped blue bricks or semi-circular shaped sandstone.



*Walls with traditional semi-circular blue brick coping (left) and sandstone coping (right)*

- Doors and Windows:

Door and window openings are rectangular with a strong vertical emphasis.

Doors are panelled; surrounded with a wooden door case (painted white); topped with a broken pediment or flat canopy, and a fanlight or box light; and some have classical columns to either side. There is generally a stone front door step.



*A selection of Georgian doorways found within the Area*

Most windows are slightly recessed into the face of the wall to give a shallow reveal. The rectangular shape of upper floor window openings tends to be slightly more compressed or squared than window openings to the ground or first floors (although they maintain the same widths).

Window headers are either flat or cambered. Flat heads have rubbed brickwork voussoirs or embellished stone (e.g. with rustication and keystones), the latter painted white. Cambered heads are either formed with two courses of brickwork arranged alternately two cross jointed headers and one stretcher, or embellished with stone painted white.

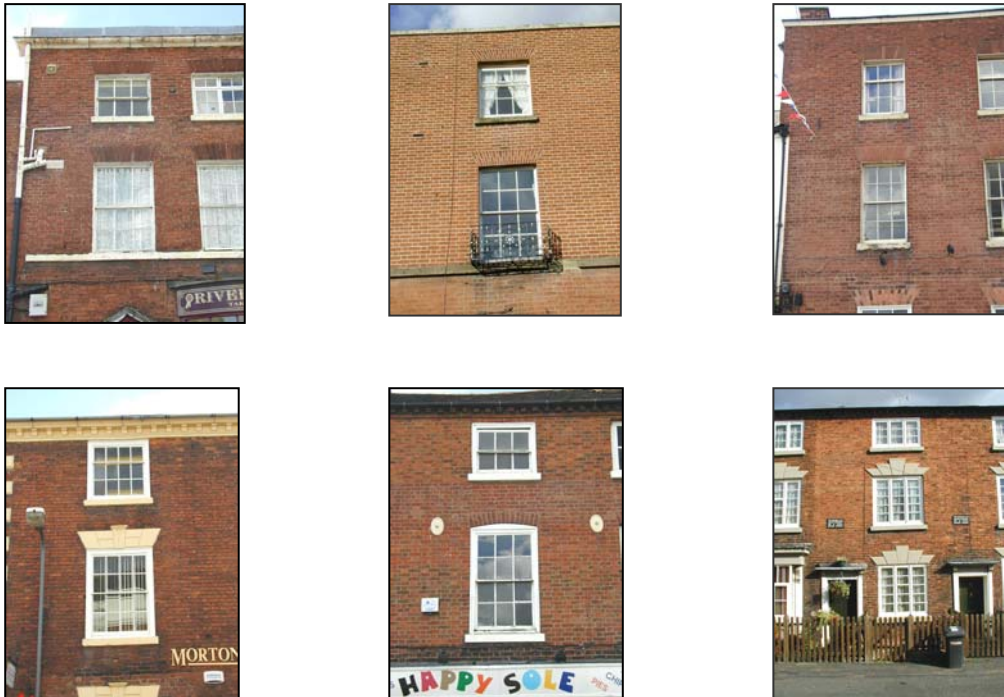
The window mechanism is generally the vertically sliding sash, divided into several vertically arranged panes held with narrow glazing bars, and being without horns.



A traditional exception to the sash in the Area, is the side hung casement window; each subdivided with two or three mullions (depending upon the width of the window) and fitted with horizontal glazing bars and horizontally aligned panes. Casement windows are almost always set into window openings having embellished flat heads, or cambered heads.

Some first floor window openings in Lichfield Street have elaborate wrought iron grilles to the first floor windows.

Window cills are almost entirely in protecting stone (painted white) and some incorporate embellishment.



*A selection of Georgian windows found within the Area.  
Note the casement windows (bottom right) have horizontal glazing bars.*

The traditional material for door and window joinery is wood, painted white rather than being stained.

Dormers and rooflights are rare, and the few instances of recently inserted rooflights detract from the uniformity of the overall roofscape and deny the authentic historical account.

b) Victorian Phase (Industrial buildings in Cheapside):

- Plan:

Floor plans are most commonly large rectangular or square.

- Roofs:

Roofs are in natural grey slate. A few have been unsympathetically replaced using corrugated asbestos sheeting.

Rainwater goods are cast iron.

At eaves or parapet level buildings have some degree of embellishment, either by way of corbelling, dog-toothing or other brick patterning, including laying on end.

- Walls:

A red-orange brick is the predominant walling material for buildings, laid in Flemish bond. Blue brick has occasionally been used to accentuate window heads and cills. The former vinegar brewery has decorative band coursing and semi-circular window heads in buff coloured brick, although this is not more widely characteristic.

Free-standing brick walls are traditionally capped with semi-circular bricks.

- Doors and windows:

Doors are panelled and made of wood.

Window openings have a mix of cambered or semi-circular heads, formed in two or three courses of brickwork.

Window frames are recessed within the openings.

Window frames and glazing bars are almost entirely cast iron. Panes are rectangular and have a vertical emphasis; and often have small centrally positioned, side-hung opening lights.



*Nineteenth century windows  
associated with industrial buildings in Cheapside*

There are no dormers but the large former Vinegar brewery building incorporates a row of rooflights.

The traditional material for door and joinery is wood, painted rather than being stained; and for windows, wood and metal, the former painted rather than being stained.

N.B.

The appearance of a Flemish bond on the outside of a modern cavity wall may be easily replicated by using stretchers and half/third “*snap*” bricks, the latter in place of a fully cross jointed brick arranged header outwards.

#### 4.17 Survival of Architectural Features

Many architectural features have survived within the Area, including the following:

- a) Traditional roof coverings, uninterrupted with rooflights;
- b) Brickwork that has not been rendered or painted to a dominant degree;
- c) Original timber windows (non-industrial buildings);
- d) Original pointing;
- e) Cast iron guttering;
- f) White painted woodwork, with almost no use of stains; and
- g) Semi-circular coping to walls.
- h) Sandstone quaysides to the River and sandstone revetments to the basin terracing.

The survival of these features adds considerably to the architectural and historic interest of the Area, and their loss would cause significant harm to the purpose of its designation.

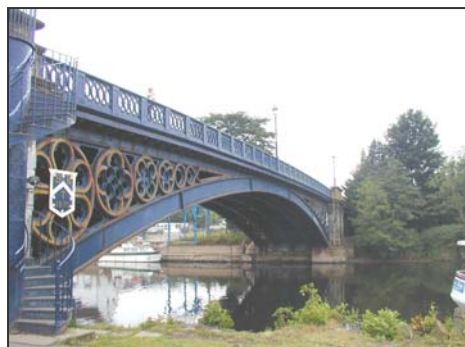
#### 4.18 Landmarks, Focal Points and Special Features

- a) Landmarks:

Landmarks are buildings, structures or other features, that are important because their size, design or position makes them particularly noticeable. Special care is needed in the treatment of landmarks.

The River Severn forms a natural landmark in the area. Man-made landmarks include the following:

- The Bridge over the River Severn and its causeway to the north-east, which are landmarks from the river and riverside walks.



*Bridge over the River Severn (left) and linking causeway to the north-west (right), viewed from the riverside walk*

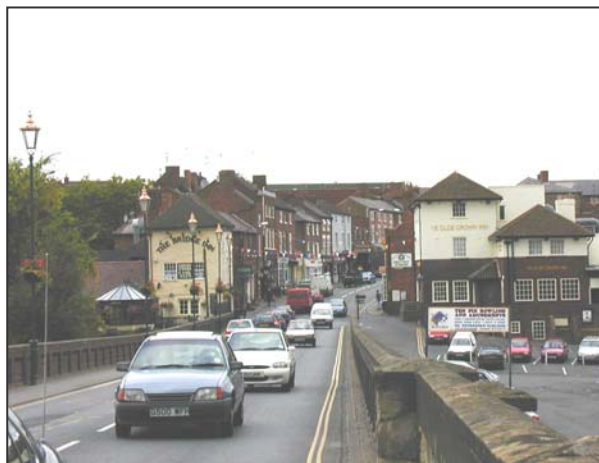


- Around the basins: the Tontine; Clock Warehouse (Stourport Yacht Clubhouse); Canal maintenance building and lock cottage; and Nos. 19, 20 & 21, & York House, York Street. These are quite large buildings, which dominate their settings.



*The Tontine viewed from the adjoining riverside walk*

- Three entrances to the basins, constructed into the east bank of the River Severn, which are landmarks from the River and riverside walks; and the riverside quay itself.
- No. 10 (Bridge Inn) Bridge Street and the Old Crown Inn opposite; which comprise a period and twentieth century building in period style respectively, located beside the road at the southern gateway into the main part of Bridge Street.



*The Bridge Inn (left) and Olde Crown Inn (right)  
at the gateway to the southern entrance of Bridge Street*

- The Angel public house, which is a landmark from the River Severn and riverside walks.



*The Angel Public House,  
viewed from the adjoining riverside walk*

- Group of buildings associated with the former vinegar brewery (Cheapside) which are landmarks from the River, riverside walks and in Cheapside itself.

b) Focal Points:

Focal points are buildings, structures or areas, that are important because of their position in view lines; or because they are the centre of well-frequented public activity. Special care is needed in the treatment of focal points because they are particularly noticeable to the public.

Almost the entire Area to the west of Mart Lane could be described as a focal point. The uses within this vicinity are inter-promotional but even in themselves, are of individual interest and appeal. Individual focal points are as follows:

- The Tontine and Clock Warehouse (Stourport Yacht Clubhouse).
- Former manager's house to the adjoining carpet works in Severn Road, which terminates the view looking south-east along Lichfield Street.



*Former Manager's house (centre) closing the view  
looking south-east along Lichfield Street*

- Bridge over the River Severn.
- No. 1, Cheapside; which is a period house closing the view looking east from the end of the narrow footpath opposite.
- The large building located on the north-east side of Cheapside and associated with the former vinegar brewery. The south elevation to this building closes the view looking north-east along the southern end of Cheapside from the riverside walks.
- The busy junction of York Street, Bridge Street, New Road and High Street; and the buildings located on the four corners of this junction.

c) Special Features:

The Area contains forty-two Statutory List Entries which relate to approximately seventy five statutorily listed buildings and structures (excluding the numerous listed structures relating to the basins); together with several other buildings and structures of interest, primarily dating from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. Some of the latter have been subject to unsympathetic alterations (such as replacement of windows) but none are beyond restoration, which should be considered in preference to redevelopment. Generally, every effort should be made to retain built fabric in the Area dating from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in particular.

Particularly special features are as follows:

- Bridge over the River Severn and its arched causeway.
- Buildings in Bridge Street, Raven Street and Lichfield Street.
- Buildings and structures which were properties of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Company, including the Canal basins, locks, foot bridges, railings and walls; the Tontine and former stabling at the southern end of Mart Lane; the Canal Maintenance building and attached cottage to north west of the Tontine; terraces of houses in Mart Lane.
- Basin retaining and enclosing walls, terrace revetments and riverside quays, in red sandstone and brick.
- Clock Warehouse.
- Inscribed culvert markings on the Tontine.
- Nos. 19, 20 & 21, & York House, York Street.
- Red brick walls laid in Flemish bond and poly-chrome brickwork in Cheapside.
- Sets of railings.
- Canal-side crane and former warehouse (now a chandlers) in Mart Lane.
- Narrowly enclosed, twisting footpath leading from Severn Side to Severn Road/Cheapside and the Angel Public House, and its entrance from Severn Side.
- Narrow road leading from Cheapside to the river, including a retaining wall in blue brick and some original brick paving.
- Former vinegar works (Cheapside).

#### 4.19 Open Spaces

For the purposes of this appraisal, an open space is defined as a parcel of land upon which there are no buildings or only small buildings. There are a number of important open spaces within the area as follows:

- a) Area to the front and rear of the Tontine and adjoining maintenance building;
- b) South and north banks of the River Severn;
- c) Play area to the north-west of the causeway in Bridge Street;
- d) Car park to the east of the causeway in Bridge Street;
- e) The entire complex of Canal basins , dry docks and channels; and
- f) Former canal basins and vacant site east of Mart Lane;

All but the vacant Mart Lane area are open spaces in active use throughout the year. They all make a contribution to the function and/or viability of the town, as well as to its appearance and historic evolution.

#### 4.20 Ground Surfaces

The principal ground surfaces in the Area are as follows:

- a) Grass in the vicinity of the Riverside, where it performs a historic function of separating the smaller basins;
- b) Modern but sympathetic brick paving setts on the footpaths around the basins and the immediate surroundings, installed by British Waterways;



*Modern but sympathetic paving setts  
in the vicinity of the basins*

- c) Traditional setts surviving in Cheapside, in the narrow road between the former vinegar brewery and the River Severn footpath;



*Traditional paving setts in Cheapside.  
Note the diagonal criss-cross grooving*

- d) Non-traditional tarmacadam on road surfaces, roadside footpaths and car-parking areas; and
- e) Water, comprising the canal basins and River.
- f) Modern but sympathetic railings have been installed by British Waterways in the vicinity of the basins. They comprise metal posts with two horizontal rails. They are painted black, with detailing picked out in white.



*Modern but sympathetic railings in the vicinity of the basins*

#### **4.21 Tranquil and Active Areas**

Tranquil and active areas are as follows:

- a) Tranquil areas:
  - The area around the basins and the basins themselves are largely tranquil but there are pockets of activity associated with adjoining workshops, the movements of boats, and occasional vehicles in Mart Lane.



- To the east of Mart Lane, industry has been an established use in recent years but is no longer active, leaving an extensive area of open stillness.
- The enclosed footpaths linking Mart Lane with Severn Side and Cheapside and the Angel Public House, are secluded, intimate and largely quiet.
- A more accurate form of tranquillity can be found along the south bank of the river. Although noise reaches here from the traffic on the river bridge, and from the amusement park; this part is accessible only to pedestrians. The freedom from conflict with vehicles alone makes the riverbank a relaxed and peaceful place.

b) Active areas:

- Bridge Street and York Street are extremely active areas, where shopping, residential use, leisure and recreation, all take place.
- The riverside meadows to the north of the causeway are active during the summer months, for leisure but become more tranquil at other times of the year.

#### 4.22 Noise

The Area is host to a range of noises, as follows:

a) Mechanical noise:

- Boat yards in the upper canal basins, which are a traditional activity but have limited impact by way of noise levels and operating times.
- The clock in the Clock Warehouse, which strikes the hour.
- Vehicular traffic, particularly in Bridge Street, York Street and New Street, which detracts from the area during almost the entire length of daylight hours (and in winter months well after dark).
- Amusement arcades in Bridge Street, which detract from the area.
- Shipley's amusements adjoining the river basin, which detracts from the area.

b) Human noise:

- Pleasure gardens of Riverside Meadows to the west of the Bridge Street causeway.
- Amusement area adjoining the river basin, which detracts from the area.
- Sitting areas to the fore of the Angel Public House.

c) Other noise:

- Along the south bank of the river, it is possible to appreciate the natural chorus of birds. The more distant from the River bridge, the greater one becomes aware of the diversity and dominance of this feature. Throughout the summer months, the basin and riverside

parts are given extra interest by the sounds of swifts making their annual migration.

#### 4.23 Smells

Smells in the Area emanate from the following:

- a) Traffic fumes, particularly in Bridge Street and York Street, which detract from the area; and
- b) Food take-away premises in Bridge Street, particularly during the Summer, which detract from the area; and

#### 4.24 Alien Features

Alien features in the area include the following:

- a) Lampposts of unsympathetic style and materials;
- b) Traffic signage clutter at the junction of Bridge Street and York Street;
- c) Pedestrian crossing lights of unsympathetic style in Bridge Street;
- d) Tarmacadam pavements and road surfacing, and yellow road markings;
- e) Gantry signage at the entrance to the car park between the causeway and river basin, Bridge Street;
- f) Replacement shopfronts, and windows, particularly in Bridge Street and York Street;
- g) Temporary "A" board pavement signage in Bridge Street and York Street, particularly whilst the associated premises are open;



*Replacement shop fronts and windows,  
and temporary "A" board advertisements,  
in Bridge Street*

- h) Extractor flues and fans, particularly to the rear of buildings in Bridge Street and Raven Street;
- i) Various buildings and structures associated with the amusements (adjoining the River basin); and various other buildings, particularly on

the eastern side of Bridge Street and the Social Day Centre in New Street.

#### 4.25 Areas that would benefit from Enhancement

In conservation terms, the word "*enhance*" means to reinforce the existing characteristics of an area and not (necessarily) to make attractive. There are three undeveloped sites within the Conservation Area that would benefit from enhancement, as follows:

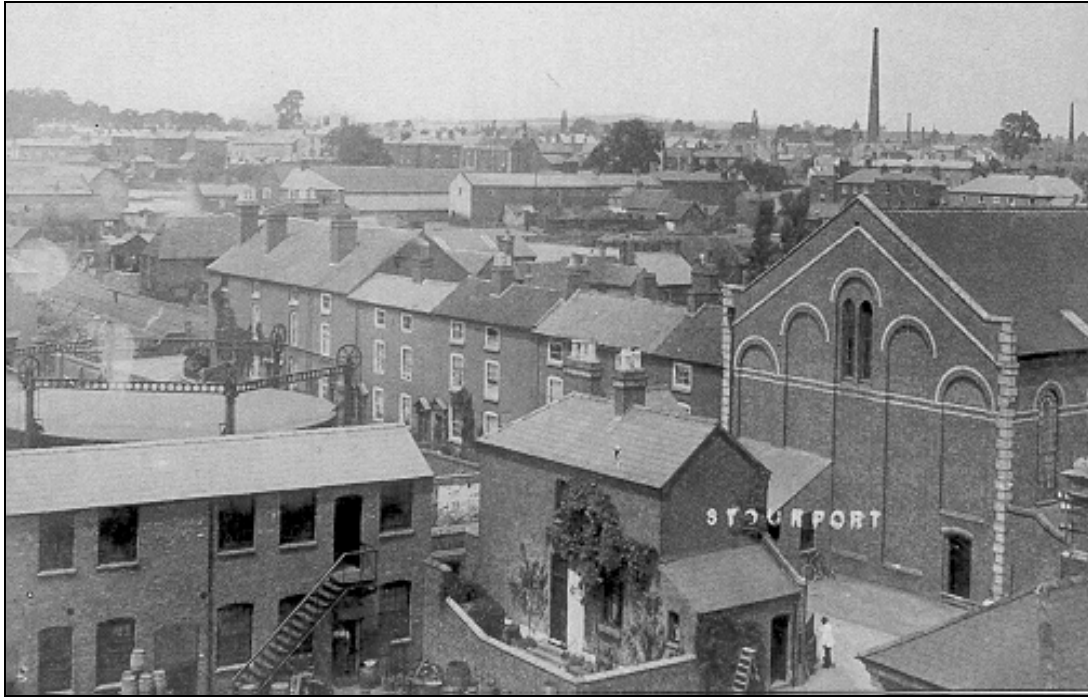
- a) Site bordered by Mart Lane, Lichfield Street and Severn Road, which is currently vacant. This is the site of a former canal basin dating from *circa*1805, which was entered via a narrow channel leading from the Upper Basin to the west and bisecting Mart Lane. The position of this access is still visible. The basin was infilled during the 1960's and until recently was the site of a timber fence manufacturing business. The opportunity now exists to open-up the original basin and to undertake a sensitive redevelopment with traditional canal side style buildings that draw upon the established character of detached warehouses, maintenance buildings and lock cottages in the area. Importantly, the original sandstone retaining embankments to the basin are still in place, as are the free-standing sandstone enclosing walls (Statutorily Listed structures) to the north in Lichfield Street and to the east in Severn Road; which constitute important architectural and historic features.



*Site of former canal basin,  
looking towards Lichfield Street*

- b) Car park between Nos. 1 & 2, Cheapside; and the former vinegar works, Cheapside. This is the site of a former group of early nineteenth century three storey terraced houses that were arranged continuous with Nos. 1 & 2 in a straight line, at the back of the pavement and facing the street. With the recent closure of the adjoining vinegar works, the opportunity exists to reinstate this terrace.





*Former terraced houses in Cheapside (middle of picture)  
seen from the Vinegar Works, date unknown*

In addition to the enhancement of specific locations referred to above, the character of the Area would benefit from having various tarmacadam surfaces and concrete kerbs replaced with more sympathetic materials; together with the installation of more sympathetic lampposts. A number of buildings would benefit from the instatement of more sympathetic shop fronts, and first and second floor windows; particularly in Bridge Street.

#### **4.26 Neutral Areas**

A neutral area is defined as a small part of an area whose character does not conform with that of its immediate surroundings. The remedy for such incongruous sites is usually to ensure that if the use on it is to continue, then any proposals for its further development should be either:

- a) Confined to parts within the site which are not visible to the public gaze;  
or
- b) Designed to sensitively introduce discreet and subtle elements of the surrounding and predominant characteristic features.

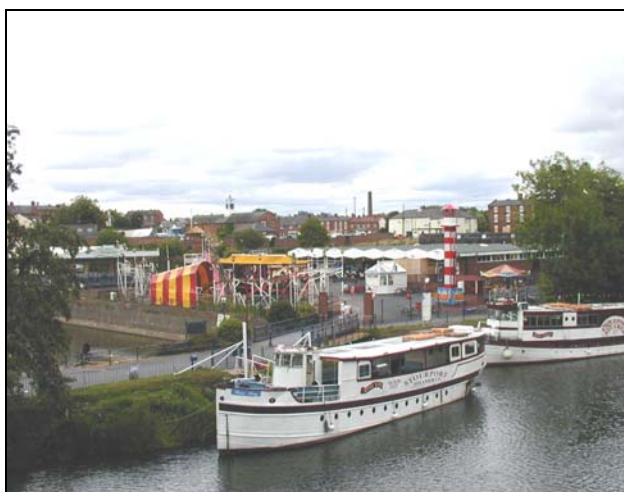
Ideally in neutral areas it would be the more appropriate course of action to remove the offending feature or features altogether and replace them with structures of appropriate scale, design and appearance consistent with the character of the Conservation Area. Neutral sites include the following:

- a) Nos. 4, 5 & 7, and garage to the south, Bridge Street (east side);
- b) Modern extension, including the Social Club, to the rear of Nos. 9 & 10, Lichfield Street;



*Extension to the rear of Nos. 9 & 10, Lichfield Street*

- c) Social Day Centre, Sion Gardens (north side);
- d) Shipley's Amusements to the east of the Bridge Street;



*Shipley's Amusements (centre)  
viewed from the bridge over the River Severn*

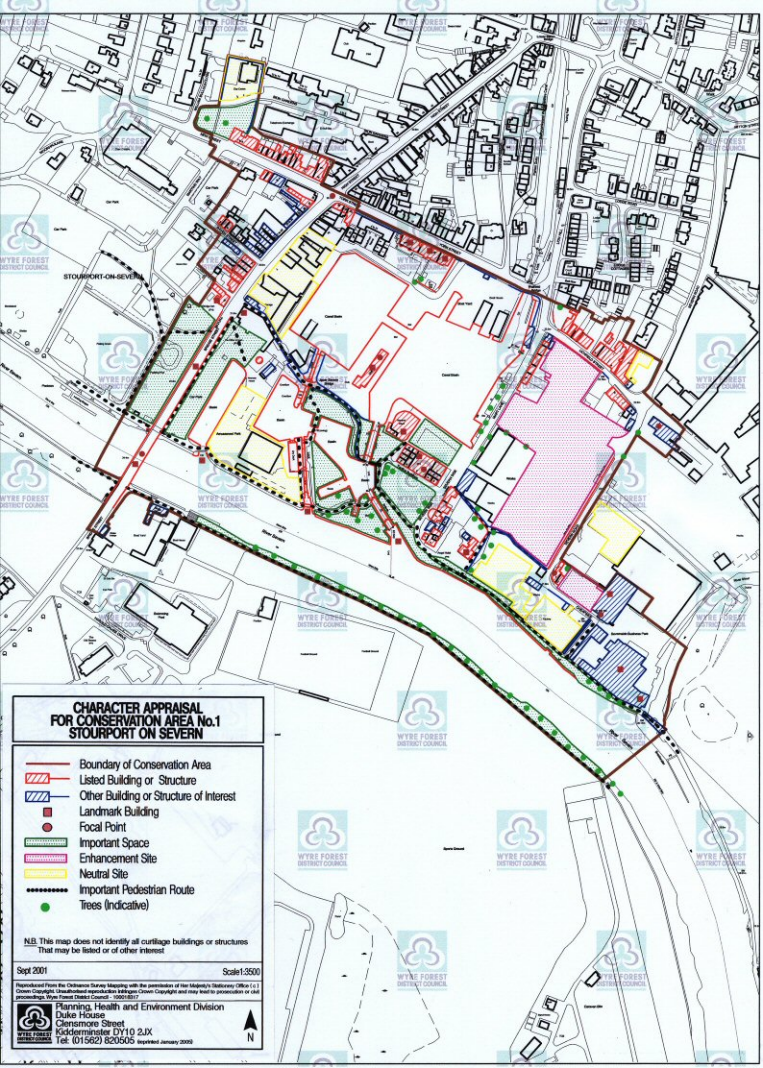
- e) T.P. Toys, Cheapside (south side);
- g) Modern industrial or warehouse buildings in Severn Road (east side). Although outside the Area, they have an impact on its aspect and that of Severn Road.

The above features cause disruption to the wider street scene by way of their siting to the street, architectural style and/or materials.

## **5.0 CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

Stourport-on-Severn Conservation Area No. 1 covers part a town that was established and developed as a result of the construction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, and is the only town in England to hold this distinction. This part of the town thus has immense historic value and because of the relationship between town and canal, the character of the Conservation Area is of particularly high importance.

The laying out and construction of the town during the Georgian period has stamped an unmistakable character and appearance on the urban fabric, which provides a clear lead for the design and layout of further development.



**CHARACTER APPRAISAL  
FOR CONSERVATION AREA No.1  
STOURPORT ON SEVERN**

- Boundary of Conservation Area
- ▨ Listed Building or Structure
- ▨ Other Building or Structure of Interest
- Landmark Building
- Focal Point
- ▨ Important Space
- ▨ Enhancement Site
- ▨ Neutral Site
- - - - - Important Pedestrian Route
- Trees (Indicative)

N.B. This map does not identify all curtilage buildings or structures  
That may be listed or of other interest

Sept 2001

Scale 1:2500

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