

Sidbury and Fort Royal Conservation Area (CA5)

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals
Adopted by Planning Committee – 1 December 2011

First designated 1980; now 19.5 hectares

Summary of Special Interest

- Surviving layout of a medieval extra-mural suburb;
- The Commandery – listed at grade I and medieval in origins;
- The Fort Royal earthworks – a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- The architectural and historical interest of the buildings of the area, over a hundred of which are listed;
- Large gardens to houses off London Road, many reflecting 18th and 18th property lines;
- Green open spaces in Fort Royal Park, the Commandery gardens and Rose Hill;
- Mature trees in the park and in gardens;
- Compact development of 19th century terraced housing around Derby Road;
- Red brick boundary walls, and gate-piers;
- Views into the conservation area from the city centre and from Bath Road;

- Views out from the conservation area, especially from the ridge in the park;
- Local details that collectively give the conservation area its distinctive identity, such as raised pavements, the cast iron street name signs and other decorative ironwork.

Principal Conservation Issues

- Loss of original architectural details;
- Poor quality of pavement surfaces;
- Shop fronts, signs and banners;
- Tree management;
- Traffic signs and barriers;
- Traffic noise and air pollution;
- Sites of negative impact;
- Vacant upper floors over shops.

Heritage and Design Team

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Character Area 1: Sidbury, the medieval suburb

The semi-urban core area has a mix of commercial and residential buildings. Sidbury properties are grouped tightly together, straight on the street, reflecting its development in the early medieval period. The low scale of some houses reflects their origin in the 16th century or earlier. Roofs slope down to eaves on the street frontage, broken up by property lines and gabled dormers. The varied roofline with chimney stacks is lively. Shop fronts have been inserted in almost all houses over the last two centuries and many historic shop fronts survive.

Larger buildings occur at the east end, such as the Barley Mow and the former Loch Ryan Hotel. With their decoration they match by similarly scaled buildings across the street, indicating the change to a later period of development. Bath Road shows high aspirations of its developers, with three storied Georgian-styled houses, some accessed from a raised pavement.

Key assets and characteristics:

- Many listed buildings including the Commandery (grade I);
- Continuous Sidbury street frontage of shops with housing above;
- Survival of medieval plot boundaries;
- Shop fronts from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;
- Varied roof-line within small-scale character;
- Georgian character of Bath Road houses;
- Raised pavement in Bath Road;
- Mature trees in Commandery gardens;
- Listed telephone kiosk.

Vulnerable elements:

- The significance of the narrow plot widths is at risk from shop developers combining properties.

Negatives:

- Traffic noise and air pollution;
- Vacant upper stories in Sidbury;
- Garish modern shop signs and banners;
- Poor quality of pavings, with cracked slabs;
- Poor quality handrails and posts on raised pavement in Bath Road;
- Inappropriate pedestrian barriers in Sidbury;
- Commandery Road car park results in lack of street enclosure;
- Neglected concrete paved area by telephone kiosk at junction of Bath Road and Sidbury.



Character Area 2: London Road, mixed development

Based on London Road, with the slope of the hill it continues eastwards more or less on the flat. Suburban feel, being largely residential with considerable open space, it is a prosperous neighbourhood. The form of the housing is mixed, with terraces, semi-detached and some single houses. Their scale is substantial, usually two or three storeys, with large private gardens. Many of the houses are pulled back from the thoroughfare, with front garden planting and large trees overhang the wide pavement. particularly on the north side of London Road.

The majority of buildings are of the 18th and 19th centuries with later ones infilling gardens. Some modern development, which contributes little to the character of the area, is often set well back from the road and semi-concealed.

Key assets and characteristics:

- Many listed dwellings;
- Georgian terraces in London Road and both Green Hills;
- Brick boundary walls and railings;
- Mature trees and strong planting, including street trees in Battenhall Road;
- Consistent materials - red brick walls, timber sash windows, slate or clay-tiled roofs;
- Ironwork details in porches and handrails;
- Mixed uses: public house, convenience store and workshops;
- Cast iron 'historic lamp standards in Battenhall Place and Green Hill London Road.

Vulnerable elements:

- Major rebuilds/repairs of boundary walls may result in a loss of traditional patina;
- Loss of historic detail through inappropriate window and door replacement.

Negatives:

- Traffic noise and poor air quality from London Road;
- Traffic direction signs;
- Wide areas of tarmac at entrance to Battenhall Place, where alternative paving treatments would be an enhancement.

For Character Area boundaries see the map on the back page



Character Area 3: Rose Hill, the late Georgian suburb

Away from London Road there is a secluded character. Some roads are narrow lanes. Most dwellings are detached and often set behind high garden walls or hedges. The trees are large and mature. As in Character Area 2, there are some modern buildings which, while they do not contribute positively to the area, have little negative impact by dint of being modest, newer examples of the organic development of the area. Rose Hill House and the school land to its north make almost no contribution to the public experience of the area.

Fort Royal Park provides amenity space and impressive views across the City and countryside. The superlative setting is not matched by the current state of the hard and soft landscaping. The Fort Royal civil war defensive structure is an understated asset. The entrances via steps from London Road and Wylde Lane appear quite threatening, and other entrances do little to attract visitors.

Key assets and characteristics:

- Setting of Fort Royal Park and archaeological evidence of the fort;
- Views from the park;
- Large early 19th century houses, many listed, and late Victorian houses;
- Unusual layouts of historic houses set at the rear of their plots;
- Consistent materials - red brick and render with slated, often hipped, roofs, timber sash windows;
- Trees in the park and in gardens including small orchard in South Hayes;
- Brick boundary walls to gardens;
- Blue brick edging and paving to raised pavements.

Vulnerable elements:

- Boundary retaining walls disturbed by earth movement and tree roots;
- Boundary walls threatened by the need to form new vehicular access ways;
- Loss of historic detail through inappropriate replacement of windows, doors and other features such as chimneys, gutters and downpipes;
- Changes to front gardens to allow for car parking in front of dwellings.

Negatives:

- Entrances to park are unwelcoming.
- Communal garage area in Rose Hill needs screening;
- Area of widened pavement in Upper Park Street is unsightly, and would benefit from property subdivisions, with some planting and dwarf fencing;
- Poor modern pavement surfaces.

Character Area 4: Wylde Lane, the late-Victorian suburb

The core of this area is the tightly planned housing around Derby Road which consists of three streets of terraced houses, developed in the 1880s, closely packed and of consistent form and appearance. The houses are of two storeys and with small front gardens. The character derives from the tightness of the layout, the small scale and the consistency of details. There are four culs-de-sac, including the garden entrance to the Commandery, but a sense of oppressive enclosure is avoided by the streets being very short, with views out at their ends.

In contrast, Wylde Lane was developed on a more generous scale at this point, with wider frontages. Though the details are similar to those in Derby Road etc, their increased size is more typical of the late Victorian housing in the vicinity.

Park Street has a longer history, with some houses dating from the early part of the 19th century, in Georgian style. It is unusual for this area in that it has three buildings that were developed with non-domestic uses – warehouses or workshops, in two cases, and Zion chapel, which once enjoyed a period of use as a cinema and is now in residential use.

Key assets and characteristics:

- Listed and other early nineteenth century terraced houses in Park Street;
- Consistent style, materials and details of houses on Derby Road, Hamilton Road and Prince Rupert Road;
- Terrace of late 19th century houses in Wylde Lane;
- 'Original' shop-front in Wylde Lane.

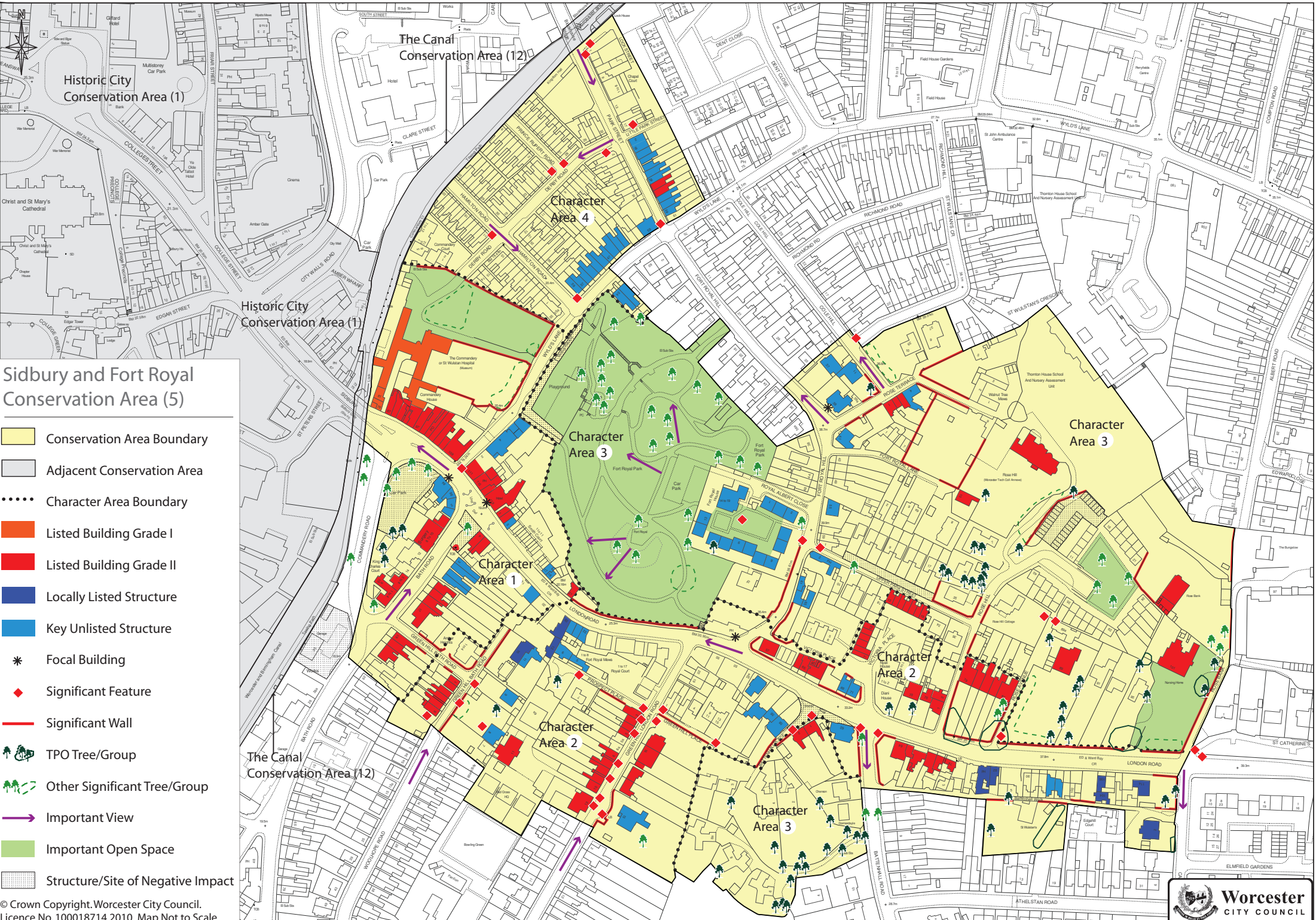
Vulnerable elements:

- Historic details of houses at risk of being lost through inappropriate replacement of windows and doors, and other features such as chimneys, gutters and downpipes;
- Changes to front gardens to allow for car parking in front of dwellings.

Negatives:

- Intensive car parking in streets;
- Poor upkeep of street-scape features such as planters.

This leaflet summarises the Character Appraisal and Management Proposals document for Sidbury and Fort Royal Conservation Area. The full text is available on the Council's website and a hard copy may be ordered for purchase from the Customer Service Centre, Orchard House.



Sidbury and Fort Royal Conservation Area (5)

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Adjacent Conservation Area
- Character Area Boundary
- Listed Building Grade I
- Listed Building Grade II
- Locally Listed Structure
- Key Unlisted Structure
- Focal Building
- Significant Feature
- Significant Wall
- TPO Tree/Group
- Other Significant Tree/Group
- Important View
- Important Open Space
- Structure/Site of Negative Impact