

St. John's Conservation Area (CA2)

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals
Adopted by Planning Committee – 14 October 2010

First designated 1968; now 6.5 hectares

Summary of Special Interest

- Historic settlement built upon pre-existing Saxon roads;
- St John's Church which dates from the 12th century;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings including 29 grade II listed buildings and one grade II* listed building;
- Two good examples of restored timber framed 17th century buildings;
- Predominant 18th century appearance with 19th century, and later, infill;
- Prevalence of red brick;
- Historic shopfronts;
- The green churchyard of St John's Church;
- Trees especially in St John's churchyard;
- Interesting roof-scape;
- Views across the River Severn to Worcester Cathedral;
- Local details that collectively and individually give the conservation area a distinctive identity e.g. street name signs, historic lamp columns and iron bollards.

Principal Conservation Issues

- Changes to conservation area boundary;
- Loss of original architectural details;
- Tree management;
- Setting, views and gateways;
- Shopfront design;
- Historic shopfronts;
- Advertisement control;
- Building maintenance and repair;
- Design of new development;
- Buildings or sites of negative impact;
- Quality of pavement surface.

Heritage and Design

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Character Area 1 – St John’s and the Bull Ring

The street, running west from the Bull Ring and turning sharply south-west at its junction with Bromyard Road is the spine of the area, leading to the former ‘St John’s Green’ by Swanpool Walk. It retains a strong historic character and appearance, containing many listed buildings and a high proportion of ‘buildings of townscape merit’. There is also substantial modern infill and replacement. St John’s Church, the focus of the settlement stands on the west side of the street, its tower has a commanding presence over the approach from the river. The green open spaces of the churchyard, with its trees, contribute to the village-like feel of the conservation area.

The southern side of the street, at the Bull Ring end, has a varied roofline which alternates between two and three storeys. At the other (St John’s Green) end of the street the strong eaves line of the pitched-roof buildings is broken up by a series of gabled frontages of late 19th century infill.

The rear plots on the south side, adjacent to the car park have a different character, informal with an emphasis on the service role. Infill development should be subservient in scale to the street buildings, respect the plot boundaries and reinforce the long established edge with the car park.

key assets and characteristics

- Curving street of medieval origin;
- Survival of burgage plot boundaries often with brick walls;
- Three wide junctions: the Bull Ring; Bromyard Road junction; and St John’s Green (junction of St John’s, Bransford Road and Malvern Road);
- Arched ground floor openings to former rear courts;
- St John’s Church and churchyard;
- Two listed 17th century buildings with exposed external timber frames;
- Varied architectural character in which 18th century brick houses predominate;
- Good examples of 19th century building: eg. Cousens Bakery, the Bush public house.;
- Attractive ensemble of church, former vicarage and mature tree form a focal point to the southern approach;
- Historic, 19th century shopfronts or details, and high quality mid-20th century shopfronts.

Negatives:

- Traffic noise and air pollution;
- Visually overbearing 1970s tower blocks (outside the conservation area);
- Design of some 20th century development fails to preserve the area’s predominantly 18th and 19th century architectural character e.g. cinema (in its present altered and fire-damaged appearance), nos. 19-21 St John’s (dated 1956) and the electricity sub-station in Bull Ring;
- The car show-room on Bransford Road opposite the southern boundary of the conservation area is inappropriate to the setting.
- Row of vacant and poorly maintained properties at south end of St John’s (nos. 71 to 87 including the former cinema);
- Areas of poor quality concrete pavements;
- Poor state of repair of nos. 2 and 4 St John’s;
- Henwick Road side of Co-op car park is unscreened and unsightly;
- Visual clutter of road signs and traffic lights at west end of St John’s;
- Garish modern shopfront signage which spoil historic facades;
- Loss of architectural details such as original windows, chimneys and doors;
- Neglected appearance to the far rear of nos.1-5 Bull Ring.

For Character Area boundaries see the map on the back page



Character Area 2 – Bromyard Road and Church Close

Bromyard Road, no less old than St John's, has a much more modern appearance deriving from its later development, the deep set-back of the buildings in the vicinity (no.28 and nos.5-17 Bromyard Road) and the intrusion of two modern buildings (Telephone Exchange and Chantry House).

It has three notable historic buildings: nos.5-17 Bromyard Road, a row of seven red brick houses of c.1830; no.28 Bromyard Road (St John's House) and former brick stables, a late 18th century town house with Doric-style pilaster doorcase and open pediment; and, a former late 19th century infants' school, now the public library. The positive influence of St John's Church on the townscape is reduced, but not obscured, by the visual intrusion of parked cars and a modern brick extension to the church.

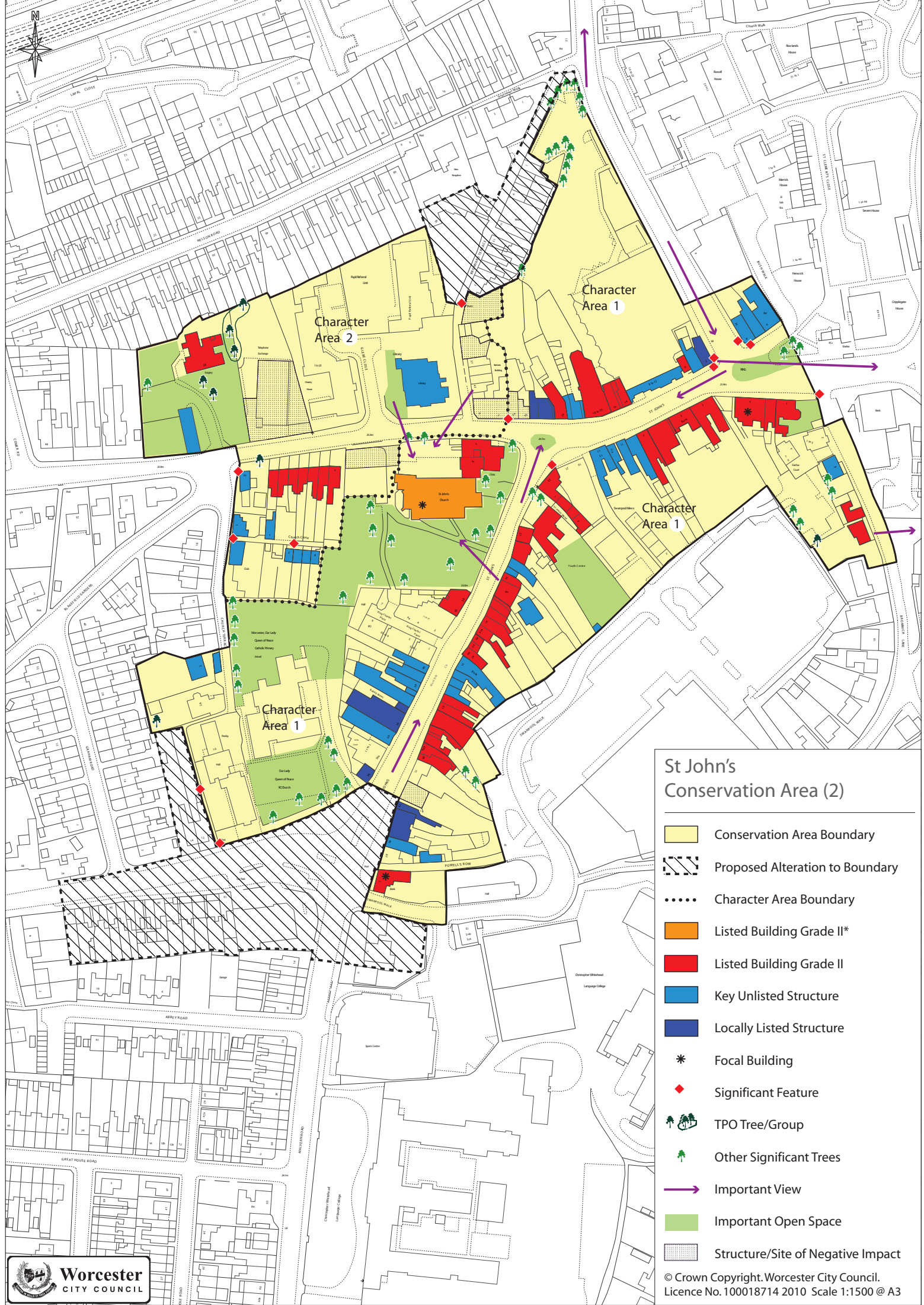
key assets and characteristics

- Historic route from Wales and the west;
- Good views of St John's Church;
- Key historic buildings: St John's House, Nos.5-17 Bromyard Road and the public library;
- Church of St John's;
- Notable set-back of roadside buildings;
- Open space and cedar trees in front of St John's House;
- Paved open area to west of the library planted with young trees;
- Narrowing of road immediately before junction with St John's;
- Variety of boundary walls and railings.















Negatives:

- Design of some 20th century development fails to preserve the area's historic architectural character and appearance, notably the BT building, nos.2-6 Bromyard Road) and the 1970's tower blocks (outside the conservation area);
- An area, currently used for parking, on the south side of Bromyard Road between St John's Church and nos. 5-17 Bromyard Road is an indeterminate space that has a negative visual impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Loss of architectural details such as original windows, chimneys and doors (especially Church Terrace and Church Close);
- Concrete block paving and parked cars spoil the setting of St John's House;
- Neglected areas in open spaces on the east side of Bromyard Terrace;
- Noise of traffic.

This leaflet summarises the Character Appraisal and Management Proposals document for Britannia Square 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.



St John's Conservation Area (2)

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Proposed Alteration to Boundary
-  Character Area Boundary
-  Listed Building Grade II*
-  Listed Building Grade II
-  Key Unlisted Structure
-  Locally Listed Structure
-  Focal Building
-  Significant Feature
-  TPO Tree/Group
-  Other Significant Trees
-  Important View
-  Important Open Space
-  Structure/Site of Negative Impact