

Cannock Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal



April 2014

Conservation Area Appraisal Cannock Town Centre

1. Introduction

This document seeks to provide a clear definition of the special architectural or historic interest that warranted designation of Cannock town centre as a Conservation Area through a written appraisal of its character and appearance – what matters and why. It is intended as a guide upon which to manage the form and style of future development in the area as it continues to evolve.

Cannock is the largest centre in the District catering for a range of shopping and commercial needs and lies at the heart of a network of roads. The Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in November 1991 and covers the historic core of the town. Following consultation on the Draft Appraisal proposals to extend the Conservation Area boundary to coincide with some property boundaries and to include 2 further buildings with a positive impact has been agreed and the updated boundary is shown on Plan 1. The town has origins dating back to the medieval period with a market being established in the 13th Century, around the same time as the parish church. The historic medieval street layout based upon a broad market place remains intact, though it is probable that an earlier market place existed east of the church. The town is situated to the south and south-west of the forest, heathland and high ground of Cannock Chase, a remnant of the great Forest of Cannock, a royal hunting ground. The land drops further to the south of the town where the Roman Road of Watling Street (A5) crosses the District. 18th Century development in the town centre, including the Bowling Green, Conduit Head and former Council House is still evident, but Cannock's main expansion occurred from the mid-19th and into the 20th Century with the development of coal mining in the district and associated suburban expansion. Modern redevelopment around the edge of the town centre, such as Cannock Shopping Centre, is larger in scale, but careful design helps it fit within its historic context. The churchyard and bowling green continue to form prominent green focal points.

The Conservation Area comprises Market Place and High Green, extending north into Stafford Road and south and east into Wolverhampton Road and around the churchyard. Medieval burgage plots are reflected in the built up frontages around Market Place and remnants of timber framing are known in existing buildings, as well as some which have been demolished. A diversity of building types and heights, mainly 2 and 3 storey, frame the town centre streets, generally harmonised by their continuity, mass, scale and materials.

There are eleven listed buildings within the Conservation Area and two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Three of the listed buildings are grade II* - St Luke's Parish Church, the White House (former Council House) and its gates, railings and gate piers- the rest are grade II. The Ancient Monuments are the 18th Century Conduit Head building and the 14th Century wayside cross. Other buildings of local historic interest contribute to the setting of these nationally important buildings. Traffic was removed from the town centre by 1997. Shops form the predominant use at ground floor level, together with banks, estate agents and pubs, cafes and hot food shops. Upper floor uses include retail storage, offices, dental surgeries and flats.

Summary of special interest of Cannock Town Centre Conservation Area:

- Its long history still evident in its spacious layout and distinctive buildings
- Its mixed, generally small scale, retail/commercial uses and markets
- Its townscape of diverse building types and buildings/groups of individual interest, harmonised by continuity, mass, scale and materials around an open market place
- Its prominent green focal points of bowling green and churchyard enhanced by mature tree planting

The survey work for this Appraisal was carried out in 2011.



PLAN 1: CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY



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2. Planning Policy Context

Government policy recognises the importance of effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment through legislation and policy guidance. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (Sec 12) provides a full statement of Government policy for the protection of historic buildings, areas and other features and is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance 2014.

The Government is responsible for compiling a List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest of national significance. There are three grades of listed buildings to give an indication of relative importance – Grade I, II* and II; 94% of listed buildings are grade II.

The Local Authority is responsible for designation of conservation areas where appropriate and for formulating and publishing proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. 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 effect of designation is broadly to bring demolition of buildings and work to trees under planning control and to restrict ‘permitted development’ rights which permit certain building works to take place.

Restrictions are imposed on tree works by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO’s) and Conservation Area designation. Presence of a TPO makes it an offence to cut down, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage, or wilfully destroy a tree without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority, unless a suitable exemption can be demonstrated. TPO’s not only protect the aerial parts of the tree but also their root systems. Trees within Conservation Areas are also afforded protection through planning law and six weeks written notice of any work must be given. Fines imposed by the courts can be severe if a person is found guilty of infringing the law and trees removed in contravention must be replaced before the end of the following planting season.

Staffordshire County Council (SCC) supported by English Heritage have undertaken an Extensive Urban Survey of Cannock as one of a series of 23 medieval Staffordshire towns. The draft report completed in 2010 aims to characterise the historic development of the town through reference to historic sources, cartographic material and archaeological evidence. The town is sub-divided into a series of Historic Urban Character areas (HUCA’s) with a statement of archaeological, historic, aesthetic and communal value for each one, supported by more detailed descriptions and mapping. Developers are advised to consult this document and the SCC Historic Environment Team at an early stage when considering schemes within the Conservation Area.

Cannock Chase Local Plan (Part1) was adopted in 2014 and contains local planning policy including CP15 seeking to safeguard all aspects of the District’s historic environment. Policies CP12 and CP14 seek to enhance biodiversity and landscape character. Policy CP3 seeks high standards of design of buildings and spaces, conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment as a stimulus to high quality design, and successful integration with trees, hedges and landscape features to green the built environment. This Conservation Area Appraisal is a background document to the Local Plan. It has the status of a material planning consideration providing a basis for development management decisions.

3. Development History

Early history The name ‘Cannock’ is first recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 and is believed to derive from the Welsh or Old English for ‘hill or hillock’, probably relating to the high ground on which the town stands. Most of the Manor was held by the King and the royal forest existed by the late 11th Century, extending from Stafford to Wolverhampton and being an area where ‘Forest Law’ applied - a means of restricting hunting, timber and mineral

rights to the Crown. In 1189 the Manor, together with Rugeley, was granted to the Bishop of Lichfield and descended with the Bishop until the Dissolution in 1546. A manor house was recorded in Cannock in 1298 but its location is unknown. A market was established in 1259, and it is suggested that an earlier market place lay south-east of the Church, later infilled, with the current market place relating to a replanning of the town in the late 13th/early 14th Century. An annual fair was established as part of the market charter, held on 15-17th October each year. A degree of economic prosperity in the 14th Century is suggested by the rebuilding of St Luke's Church at this time.

Records in Domesday Book indicate a substantial amount of arable land around Cannock with open fields surrounding the town on all sides during the medieval period, including Callunghull, Hatherton Sich and Greystones Field. Two shepherds were recorded on a tax list of 1327. Two watermills are recorded in Domesday and one, known as the Lord's Mill, is likely to be a forerunner of the present Cannock Mill on Ridings Brook. The second mill may have been on the Wyrley/Saredon Brook. Medieval industries included tanning, cloth and commerce, and coal mining was recorded in the late 13th Century. There are records of a bridge being rebuilt in 1281, likely to be the one recorded again in 1427 as 'the bridge of Cannock near the Mill', on the route to Lichfield. In the town centre several long distance routes from other medieval towns met and it is likely that the junction provided the impetus for the large market place. A chapel was recorded in Cannock during the 12th Century and the earliest surviving masonry at St Luke's Church dates to the late 12th/early 13th Century. The Church was almost completely rebuilt during the 14th Century and in the churchyard are the remains of a 14th Century sandstone cross. Evidence suggests that a hospital existed in the town by 1220, but had probably ceased to exist by the end of the century. The development history of the Conservation Area is shown on Plan 2.

16th/17th Century There is little documentary evidence relating to the prosperity of the town in the 16th/17th Centuries. 79 High Green probably has 16th Century origins, three further timber framed buildings were demolished in the second half of the 20th Century and other town centre buildings may retain earlier cores behind later facades. Cannock Mill was named in documentary sources in the 17th Century, iron working and coal mining were probably being carried out in the Cannock area at this time, and a forge is known to have existed by the late 17th Century. The church tower was reconstructed in the 17th Century, and a bridge crossing the Ridings Brook near the Mill is recorded in 1697. The chantry priest kept a grammar school from the early 16th Century. In 1546 the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield surrendered to the king 6 manors in Staffordshire, including the mansion and manor of Beaudesert, a few miles east of Cannock. Sir William Paget bought Beaudesert, its land representing wealth and power and, to future generations, even greater wealth due to the coal which lay beneath it.

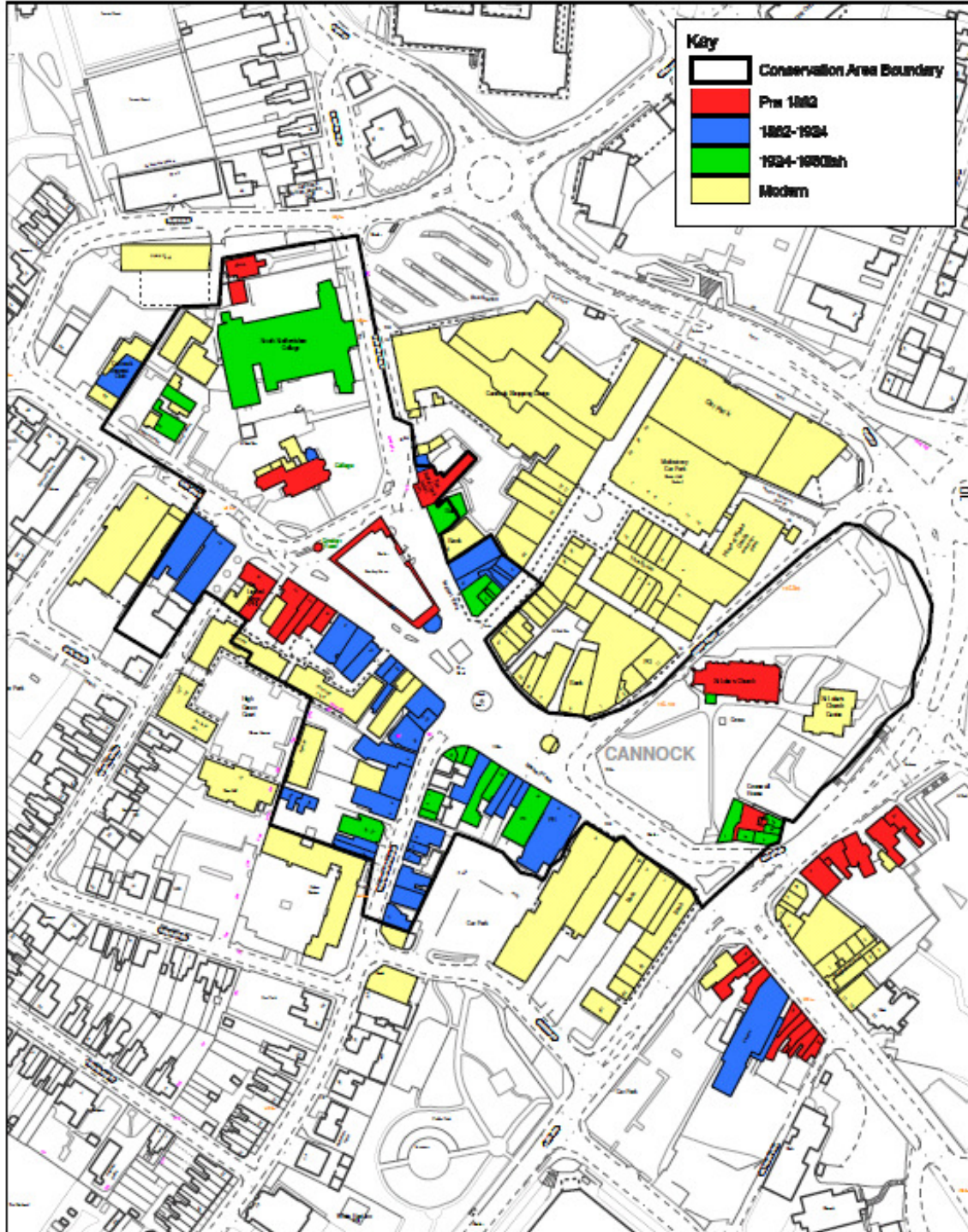
18th/ 19th Century 18th Century Cannock saw the bowling green in the town centre enclosed in 1753 and the White House constructed. A water supply was piped into the town centre in 1736 to the hexagonal stone Conduit Head tank building, from there supplying pumps around the town centre. It was built by public subscription and improved the health of residents. The quality of its water gave Cannock a reputation as a spa town, which attracted a number of wealthy families. It was the first house in Cannock to have its own supply of water. Surviving historic buildings date from 18th/19th Century, though some may have earlier origins. A new road, Market Hall Street, was laid out in the mid-late 19th Century as well as other new roads, which allowed suburban expansion with piecemeal development. As the town expanded, development concentrated along the main roads, some of which had become turnpike roads in the late 18th/early 19th Century, with the main period of town expansion being the last few decades of the 19th and into the 20th Century. The London-Liverpool coach service called in the town three times a week by 1818 and daily by 1834 and by 1851 there were four coaching inns. A school had been founded in Cannock in the late 17th Century which continued into the 19th Century, and a school with teacher's house was established on New Penkrige Road in 1828, which became a National School, the building still standing. Several more schools were built in the 1870's to serve the growing suburbs. The weekly market was re-established in 1868 when a market hall was built and fairs were held during the 18th and 19th Centuries, latterly mainly dealing in cattle and sheep. Around the town the landscape remained agricultural. Coal mining was carried out around the District by at least the early 19th Century expanding significantly into the late 20th Century. By the end of the 19th Century half of southern Staffordshire's coal was produced from the greater Cannock area, with surrounding villages developing as mining settlements. Other

larger scale industries in the area included brick and tile works around Bridgtown supplying the expansion of local house building.

Canals and railways were constructed in the 19th Century. Arrival of the canals revolutionised the transport of heavy goods. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal opened in 1772 along the western edge of the Chase, linking the Trent and Mersey Canal with the River Severn at Stourport. Investors such as Lord Hatherton saw the potential of local branches and spurs and the Hatherton (or Churchbridge) Branch built in 1839 was named after him. A flight



PLAN 2: DEVELOPMENT HISTORY



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of locks at Churchbridge allowed the Canal to rise to join the Cannock Extension Canal, one of the last canals to be built in 1863, and linking to the Wyrley and Essington Canal. National rail routes were constructed through Staffordshire in the 1840's and local lines laid into and across the Chase in the 1850's as the coal field was developed. Other mineral lines crisscrossed the area shunting coal to central collection points such as the East Cannock canal basin. Further improvements were carried out to St Luke's Church around this time. Methodism was strong in the area and chapels were constructed, the earliest surviving being the former congregational chapel and manse on Stafford Road, dating from 1824.

20th Century A County Mining College was established in 1928 in the town centre which continues in use as part of the South Staffordshire District College today.

In modern times alterations to the street layout east of St Luke's Church, in conjunction with pedestrianisation of the town centre and formation of the Ringway ring road, has taken place. Various buildings were redeveloped during the 1960's and 70's and suburban growth continued together with provision of parks and sports grounds. There were additions to St Luke's Church in the mid 20th century, Cannock Mill operated into the 1970's and markets continue in the town today. New industries developed in the post-war period and as coal mining declined towards the end of the century business and retail developments predominated. Canals went out of commercial use, lengths were filled in and the land redeveloped leaving only traces of their former routes although a stretch of the Extension Canal survives south of the A5 near Little Wyrley as a reminder of the past and a valuable amenity asset. Routes of former mineral railway lines have a better survival rate, providing the routes for numerous footpaths and cycleways through the District.

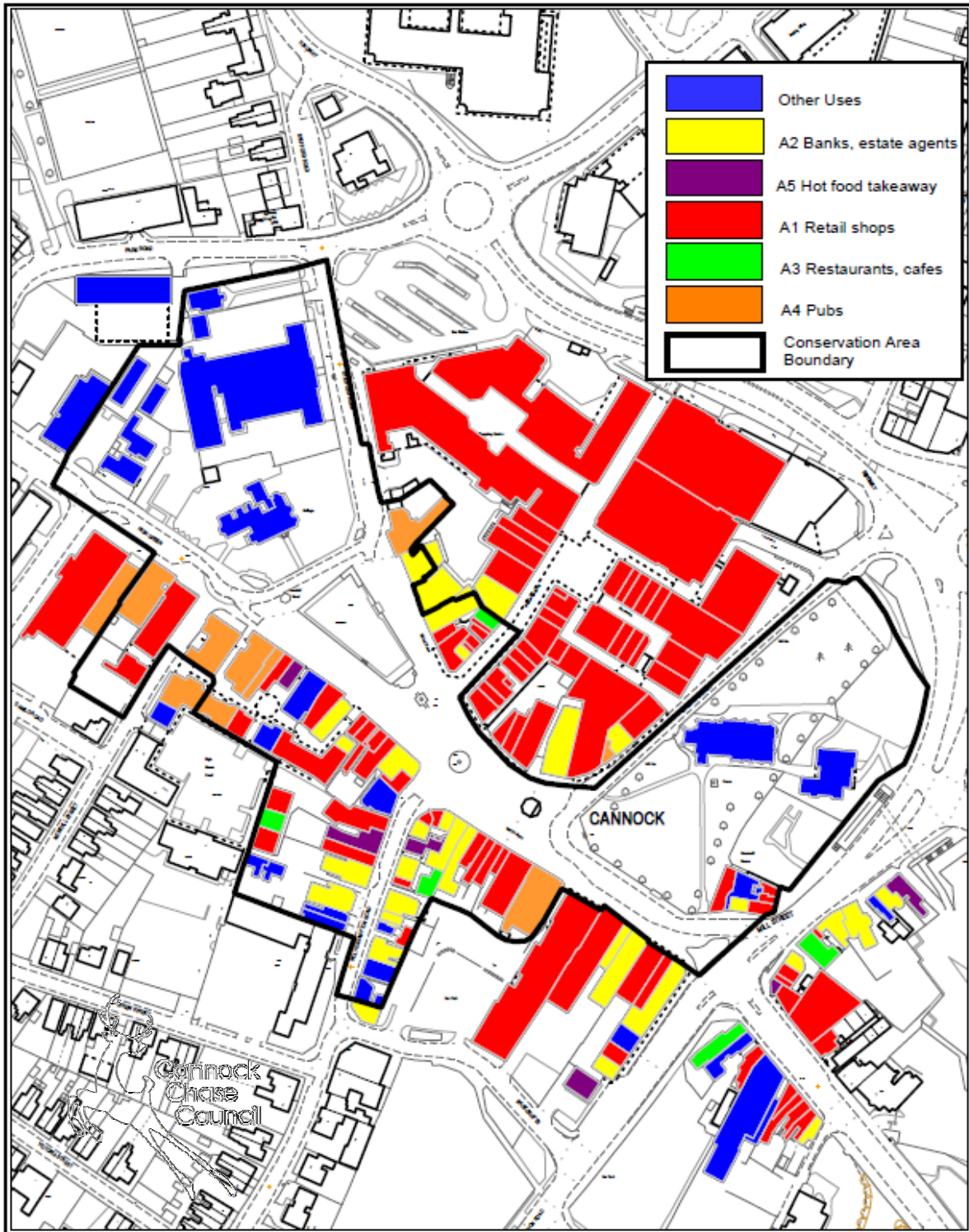
Historic Environment Record The County's Historic Environment Record indicates areas of potential importance in increasing knowledge of the history of the town. Archaeology may exist anywhere within historic towns and has the potential to help understand origins, development and growth, so sites of development proposals involving ground disturbance within the Conservation Area environs, including the possible early market place south-east of St Luke's Church and along Mill Street, would benefit from an archaeological assessment. A more detailed analysis of heritage significance and identification of archaeological potential is contained in the County's Extensive Urban Survey for Cannock.

Mention of Cannock's built history should also make reference to Linfords of Cannock who built or were involved with a number of high quality buildings around the town during the 20th Century, including the memorial Chapel at St Luke's Church. Some of these buildings are now listed for their national importance, and Linfords employed local craftsmen who still live in the town.

Through most of its history Cannock has been a relatively prosperous country town serving the needs of the local community, however the changes over the last 30 years, particularly the rapid loss of its main economic base, have had a significant impact in common with other coalfield communities. Some significant historic buildings have been lost to redevelopment over the years, yet its distinctive town centre street layout, green spaces and some fine buildings remain. New development in the surrounding area has provided housing and employment, albeit of a different character from the past. The Cannock Chase Heritage Trail runs through the town centre with information boards describing key aspects of the town's history.

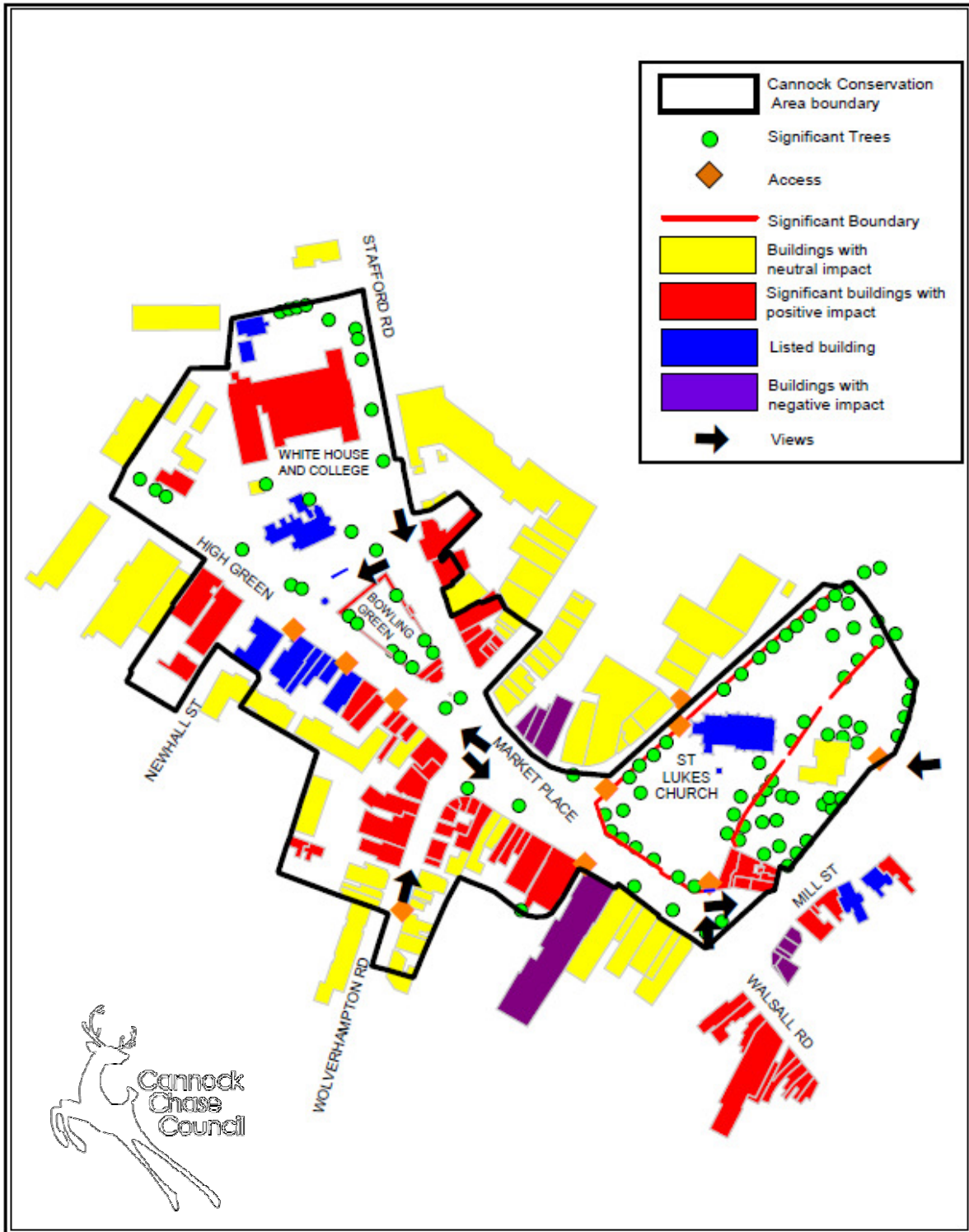


PLAN 3: GROUND FLOOR USES (SEPTEMBER 2011)





PLAN 4: TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL



4. Townscape Character Appraisal

Location and Landscape Setting

Cannock stands on ground rising from the low lying areas to the south-west and south-east to the higher plateaux of the forest and heath of Cannock Chase to the north and north-east. The Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1958 and covers an area of approximately 6,900 hectares. Its primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area and together with agricultural land to the west and south gives a semi-rural landscape character to the setting of the town with small settlements and scattered farmsteads and houses. The Ridings Brook runs south-west from the Chase, south of the town centre towards the Wash Brook and ultimately the River Penk. Cannock lies at the centre of routes from Wolverhampton, Walsall, Lichfield, Stafford and Penkridge. The A5/M6 Toll corridor runs east-west to the south of the town, linking to the M6 a few miles to the west.

Spatial Analysis

The town centre is spacious with a broad Market Place extending into High Green and Stafford Road bounding the bowling green to the north-west and adjoining the extensive green churchyard to the south-east. Building frontages on the south-west and north sides of the Market Place and High Green largely retain their traditional form of 2 and 3 storey height and a variety of plot width, design, period and materials. On the north-east side of Stafford Road and Market Place modern redevelopment has largely replaced historic buildings, with building lines maintained but with a more homogenous height and materials and the larger plot sizes of retail units in Cannock Shopping Centre. The significant lengths of modern frontage are excluded from the Conservation Area. The few side roads – Wolverhampton Road, Market Hall Street and Newhall Street– are narrower, directing views between the buildings. The spacious nature of the centre allows seating areas along the bowling green and churchyard walls and in the centre of the Market Place around the clock, as well as within the churchyard itself, encouraging pedestrians to pause and stay. Market stalls occupy the area sporadically but the outdoor market at present is not extensive.

The town's war memorial stands near the southern end of the bowling green and there are two bandstands. The memorial clock tower stands in the centre of the open area with amenity planting around it and other brick built planters and street furniture including stone balls furnish the streetscape. The green focal points of the bowling green with its enclosing trees, and further mature trees around the gardens of the White House and College beyond, together with the trees within the churchyard contribute substantially to the amenity of the centre, and the street trees at intervals make a further contribution. These mature deciduous trees create variations in colour, light and shade in summer and visual interest from their dark branch structure in winter. Although formation of the Ringway ring road around the north side of the town centre opened up this area, the development of the Shopping Centre and multi storey car park was designed to avoiding exposure of back plots and to create a new built frontage to surrounding roads.

Character Analysis

Townscape is the feature which distinguishes the special interest of a Conservation Area from the merits of individual buildings within it, including the interrelationship of buildings and spaces. It derives from appearance, history and historical association, and its nature and quality may vary within the area, providing a drama of shapes, colours, textures, design and detail. Examples are noted to illustrate features and are not intended to be comprehensive.

The townscape of Cannock town centre is defined by its spacious street pattern and green spaces and its distinctive buildings. Red brick walling encloses the bowling green and churchyard, helping to contain the open areas and define the frontages. Figs. 1-4 show the diversity of building types within the Conservation Area.

At ground floor level the predominant use throughout the town centre is shopping, with a range of complementary uses including banks and building societies, estate agents, restaurants, café's and pubs. The area covered by the Conservation Area designation currently has a greater proportion of the secondary uses complementary to the main retail function, which may be a result of the smaller footprints of some of these historic buildings and their location slightly away from the modern shopping centre. Such buildings also lend themselves to uses such as licensed premises, either because of their historic use as such or due to their attractive character. The College occupies a complex of historic buildings at High Green within the Conservation Area, buildings with a large floor area appropriate to such use. The town's Library and Police Station, both modern buildings with a large floor area, stand just outside the Conservation Area. Ground Floor uses (as at September 2011) are shown on Plan 3. The historic buildings appear well used above ground floor level with diverse uses including solicitors, insurance offices, professional services, dentists and café's/restaurants evident. This traditional first and second floor accommodation, well lit with large windows, lends itself to such uses. The modern buildings by contrast tend to have upper floors in storage use with few windows. The historic buildings therefore make a significant contribution to accommodation for small businesses and encourage economic vitality in the town centre. Important features of the Conservation Area are shown on Plan 4.

Some of the oldest buildings in the Conservation Area are around the north end of High Green/Stafford Road and offer some of the most attractive aspects in the area. The elegant mid 18th Century White House in the Georgian style, in stucco with a parapet roof, now standing behind its high 19th Century wrought iron gates, the red sandstone Conduit Head building and the (modern) brick walled bowling green form a historic nucleus at this end of the Conservation Area. They give Cannock town centre original character and a distinctive visual experience and sense of heritage. 79 High Green nearby is a building of vernacular form with painted brick filling an earlier timber frame, its massive chimney and gabled elevation punctuating the streetscene, set back behind its low front wall. An old road sign for Newhall Street remains on its side elevation. This is one of Cannock's oldest buildings and was used until recent years as Linford's ironmongers shop and living accommodation before becoming 'The Linford Arms'. To its south at 71-77 High Green stand a range of substantial buildings dating from the early 19th Century, with elegant details including a moulded doorcase and projecting timber shopfront, moulded plaster eaves and attractive chimneys, and with roof slopes facing the street. A further pair of early 19th Century buildings stand further north of the College on Stafford Road – the former congregational chapel and manse dating from 1824, both in red brick under Welsh slate roofs. Apart from the bowling green all these buildings are listed as being of national interest. The bowling green offers an unusual and locally distinctive feature to the Conservation Area and is very well maintained and used. Built into its wall is an open brick, timber and clay tiled shelter over a seat. The three and four storey red brick College building offers a substantial façade on Stafford Road between mature street trees, designed in the neo-Georgian style with symmetrical sash windows, stone cornice and other detailing and elaborate front door with fanlight above. The southern end of the High Green frontage comprises three buildings of diverse design, height and period including a pitched roof with gables, sash windows with decorative hood moulds, first floor bay windows and decorative quoins and stringcourse. The southernmost building turns the corner into Wolverhampton Road to accommodate a classical door surround with cornice, consoles and architrave to enhance its importance. Either side of the door within the surround are boot scrapers, a reminder of the days of unmade roads.

On the opposite side of the bowling green stands the Royal Oak public house and its ranges of traditional 2 storey outbuildings. It has been extended and refronted, appears to be of 19th Century origins and is a local landmark, though is not listed as of national interest. It is a vernacular building which contrasts with the more formal ordered (Nat West) bank frontage adjacent. Banks have traditionally been designed with substantial facades which give an impression to customers of solidity and security for their money. The gable detail of the Royal Oak is picked up in the modern design of the shopping centre complex to the north. The remainder of this Market Place frontage is notable for its diversity of design, height and period of construction, including the former bank premises at 18 Market Place which retains its substantial stone plinth and door/window detailing, the three storey 16 Market Place, with its first floor bay windows and ornate façade, and the atypical mansard roofed building turning the corner into Market Hall

Street which creates a further landmark in the streetscene. As a group these buildings sit well together and complement each other.

At the north end of the Conservation Area there is some traffic noise from the bus station and surrounding roads, from the taxi rank beside the College and from limited vehicle movement around the road which divides the White House from the bowling green, plus deliveries in the Shopping Centre service area at the rear of the Royal Oak. Moving further south around the bowling green it becomes quieter, and sounds mainly consist of footsteps and voices. Here are grouped some of the town's secondary town centre uses - banks, pubs, opticians, gas showroom etc - so the daytime footfall around them is correspondingly less than in the primary retail areas further south within the Conservation Area and east beyond its boundary in the modern shopping centre. On fine days the bowling green is in regular use and, being laid out at a higher level than the street, players and the green grass are visible over walls and through railings, giving a welcome sense of relaxed leisure activity. This green focal point enhances views through the Conservation Area, across and alongside the bowling green to the buildings and further trees beyond. There are a few side streets, such as Newhall Street offering a break between the buildings and a view out to the open green countryside beyond the town, and Market Hall Street, leading the pedestrian into the urban heart of the modern shopping centre.

The central part of the Conservation Area is where Market Place is at its widest, interrupted only by the war memorial, clock tower and the two band stands. The north side is bounded by the modern shopping frontage on the edge of Cannock Shopping Centre which is excluded from the Conservation Area boundary, although it has a significant visual impact upon it. The south side is bounded by a frontage of traditional pre-war buildings, again of diverse design, height and materials. At the junction of Wolverhampton Road, frontages follow the curve of the road with 2 storey, mainly 19th Century, buildings, a roofscape with chimneys and facades with light coloured render. No 49 has a traditional retractable shop canopy. Nos 14-16 would have originally been houses, having a stone plaque with the name 'Gladstone Villas 1895'. The 3 storey modern Police Station just beyond the Conservation Area boundary stands back from the road which reduces the visual impact of its height on the streetscene and allows space to soften the frontage with small trees. Views out of the Conservation Area down Wolverhampton Road are stopped visually by the white painted gable elevation of no. 26, at the junction with Queen Street. On the opposite side of Wolverhampton Road a typical 1930's building turns the corner from Market Place with its strong gabled dormer window features and still retains some of its leaded lights and coloured window glass. Beyond, along Wolverhampton Road, a series of traditional 19th Century 2 storey red brick buildings maintain the frontage with plenty of decorative/dentilled eaves detail, clay tiles and chimneys to enliven roofscape. Bay windows project from the first floor of nos. 1-3 and there is a gated carriage entrance and a doorway providing rear access.

This central part of the Conservation Area contains the highest concentration and flow of pedestrians both because it is a focus of routes through the town centre with links to surrounding residential areas and due to the building uses accommodating everyday needs such as banks, cafes and newsagents.

As this frontage extends along Market Place the diversity of building continues with heights between one and three storeys, pitched roofs and parapets, casement windows, sashes and dormers, red brick and light coloured render and the concrete Art Deco inspired facade of 13 Market Place. The remainder of this frontage from 5 Market Place as far as Avon Road is occupied by larger scale modern buildings which are outside the Conservation Area boundary. However a wattle and daub wall and several wells were discovered when the Lloyds Bank area was redeveloped in the 1970's, the wall thought to be four hundred years old, possibly part of a farmhouse, and it is often in such circumstances that traces of history are revealed. Most of the modern development in the town centre has attempted to compensate for its bigger footprint, mass and height through a vertical emphasis of design using tall brick panels and a similar colour of materials to the traditional local orange-red brick, irregular rooflines and steps back and forth along frontages. However the 3 storey concrete building 5 Market Place in modern 'Brutalist' style is particularly uncompromising and does not fit its context as well as it might.



Fig. 1: The Bowling Green and White House



Fig. 2: 71-77 High Green



Fig. 3: 16-22 Market Place



Fig. 4: 7-25 Market Place

The modern frontage of Cannock Shopping Centre continues along the north side of Market Place from Market Hall Street and turns the corner into Church Street. Most of these buildings use red brick and a vertical design emphasis to help fit in with their context although the block at 4/4A/4B, being in concrete and having a more horizontal design, does little to contribute to this. The dominance of modern frontages give this part of the Conservation Area a very different feel to the northern end.

Beyond Church Street St Luke's Church and churchyard occupy a significant position creating an extensive green space with grass and mature trees around the red sandstone church with its tower, bounded by the old churchyard wall. This ensemble makes a major contribution to the historic interest of the Conservation Area as well as to its visual interest, its elevated position ensure its wide visibility and paths through the churchyard assist public access and permeability through the town centre. An Ordnance Survey bench mark exists low on the west face of the tower, recording the height above Ordnance Datum. Most commonly benchmarks are found on buildings and other semi-permanent features. If the height of one benchmark is known then the exact height of the next can be found by measuring the difference in heights through a process of spirit levelling. East of the Church stands the modern single storey church centre which is unobtrusive amongst mature trees and grass banking. An old brick wall with sandstone coping bounds the churchyard along Church Street and Market Place, and built into the Market Place wall is an open brick and timber clay tiled shelter over a seat. The splendid late 18th/early 19th Century railings and gate provide a decorative entrance to the churchyard at the corner of Market place and Mill Street. A modern brick wall completes the boundary along Mill Street and The Ringway main roads.

On the southern tip of the churchyard a block of interesting historic buildings create a final focal point on the edge of the Conservation Area. Cromwell House was once one of Cannock's principal residences, occupied by Mr Birch who built the Conduit Head and later by Dr Blackford as his home and surgery. It was purchased by the Ancient Order of Foresters in 1923 and the buildings were opened as their headquarters in 1924. The building was subsequently developed further to provide a public hall (1926), assembly room (1932), shops and offices. These majestic and well detailed 1920's and 30's buildings occupy this triangular site encompassing the previous large 19th Century house of which remnants of the roof and internal features are still visible. The largely purple-red brick 3 storey elevations adjoin the churchyard and face out onto Mill Street at a point where ground levels fall away to the south, enhancing its visual impact and presence at one of the main entrances to the town centre. On the elevation facing the churchyard four memorial plaques provide local historical links and distinctiveness. Two of the plaques commemorate lives lost in the Great War. On the elevation facing Mill Street there is a first floor semi circular 'Diocletian' window, commonly found in neo-classical architecture, a style which enjoyed a 20th Century revival in simplified form, and which may have emphasized the position of an original entrance door below. A dentilled cornice projects around the western end of the building. The Foresters no longer occupy the building which retains small shop units at ground floor level with offices above.

The evening economy in Cannock is served by a number of public houses, restaurants and takeaways, plus the Electric Palace multi screen cinema on Walsall Road. The main group of such uses is concentrated at the north end of High Green, creating a focus of activity, with one or two others scattered in the centre and others just outside the Conservation Area to the south in Mill Street and Walsall Road.

The townscape of the Conservation Area appears in reasonably good condition with its buildings and public realm well maintained.

Trees within the Conservation Area

Trees serve to soften the appearance of urban areas by providing a leafy green back drop to the buildings and hard surfaces. They are also used to define boundaries, frame views and act as focal points in open areas. Additional to

these direct visual benefits, trees also encourage a variety of wildlife into the area, reduce wind speeds, solar glare and storm water flooding, and also reduce atmospheric and noise pollution, all of which will have an effect on the appearance of the Conservation Area. Trees have also been shown to have a positive effect on property values by giving areas a more affluent appearance and these types of property are always marketed at a premium. All these issues therefore make a strong case for the inclusion of trees within Conservation Areas. The contribution made to the special interest of Cannock Town Centre Conservation Area by trees is in evidence right across the designated area. The trees are divided into three distinct groups as follows:-

North West Zone:The north west zone of the Conservation Area is based around the South Staffordshire District College and surrounding areas. To the north of the College building is the former United Reform Church which has a variety of trees which serve to soften the visual appearance when travelling west along Park Road. There is an early mature Sycamore located within the grounds of the church which is positioned on the left when entering the front gate. This is the highest quality tree within the church grounds. Other trees within the Church grounds form avenues along either side of the Churchyard to provide a leafy back drop to the listed building. The trees growing along the boundaries are self set and multi-stem in nature and also growing in close proximity to the wall. The long term plan would be to replace these trees, and remove them when new specimens are established.

There are a number of very high quality trees located on and around the grounds of the College, with the higher value trees being located near the White House building. There is a large mature Beech tree located on the south east corner of the White House. Another two mature Beech trees growing in a raised highway planter on the south west corner but outside of the College grounds have had to be replaced recently due to disease. There is a large mature Cedar located at the rear of the White House which also has high aesthetic appeal. These are arguably the highest quality trees within the Conservation Area and are protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Other high quality trees located around this area include an avenue of Beech and Ash growing along on the south west boundary of the College. These trees are also covered by the above TPO as are the majority of the other large trees within the College grounds. There are a number of smaller and newly planted trees within the grounds which will serve as the next generation in years to come. The newly planted trees are mainly replacements for specimens which have been removed over the last few years due to age, condition and competition for space.

The final group of trees within this section is a short avenue of Lime and Oak which runs along the public highway between the front elevation of the College and the bus station.

The Central Zone: The group of trees growing within the central zone are scattered between the northern boundary of the bowling green and the south west corner of St Luke's Churchyard. The trees growing in this location are a mix of broadleaved species, the majority of which are Lime. The trees within this group have an age range of early mature to young (newly planted). The trees with the highest level of aesthetic appeal within this area are the group of trees which enclose the bowling green, the majority of which are Lime. The one exception to this is an early mature Norway Maple growing near the north east corner of the green. These trees not only serve to define the boundary of the bowling green area and therefore have value as a landscape feature, but also provide valuable shade for bowling club members on hot summer's days.

The majority of the remaining trees are scattered throughout the pedestrian zone and have an age class of young (newly planted), the one exception is an early mature Lime growing approximately 30 metres south east of the clock tower. Although these trees at present do not have a significant impact on the visual appearance of the town, they do have value which will only increase over time. As the trees grow to maturity they will provide the next generation of tree cover within the town centre, increase shade cover and therefore vary the appearance of the town, and provide a green corridor which will link the trees of the north west and south east zones.

The South East zone: The trees within this zone are located around St Luke's Churchyard and adjacent areas. The majority of the trees are mature Lime which are planted in formal linear groups around the boundaries of the green

areas to the north and south of the Church. The grassed area to the north of the Church also has a small group of Yew trees growing in the middle, and ranging in age from mature to young. These trees are of particular importance as Yew as a species is highly synonymous and characteristic of traditional churchyard planting. Yew trees also have the ability to live for a very long time, in some cases for millennia. This makes these trees highly valuable for commemorative purposes.

There is a avenue of mature trees which run along the boundary of Mill Street and link up with the enclosed garden area which is positioned to the south west of St Luke's Church Centre. The trees within the avenue are of a mixed broadleaf species and form an intermittent screen between the highway and the Conservation Area.

The enclosed garden area mentioned above has a mixture of broadleaved and evergreen species of varying age and size. One of the trees within this group is a mature Yew which again has high conservation value due to its potential longevity and its association with traditional church yard planting. Other trees within this group are also highly visible from several aspects and serve to provide a screen between the busy highway and the Conservation Area.

Building Materials

The building materials which characterise the Conservation Area are dark orange/red brick and cream/white render, 'Stucco' and painted brick, with red sandstone used for St Luke's Church and the Conduit Head building and some use of concrete for more modern buildings. The historic brick buildings are predominantly built in Flemish bond – alternate 'headers' and 'stretchers' on each course. This is a decorative bond introduced in the 17th Century for more important buildings and by the 18th Century was used increasingly for smaller buildings. Its greater economy in the use of brick (the proportion of stretchers is greater than in some bonds) make this bond popular. There are one or two examples of buildings using English Bond – alternate courses of all 'headers' or all 'stretchers'. This was regularly used until the 17th Century and is considered to be the strongest of all the bonds because no continuous vertical joints are formed. It came back into use in the 19th Century for constructing warehouses, factories and civil engineering works where strength was considered important and here has been used for the large College building. The modern buildings are built in 'stretcher' bond, widely used today for the construction of buildings with cavity walls, where all the bricks are 'stretchers' except for a 'header' in alternate courses at the quoin.

Staffordshire is well endowed with clay for brick and tile making, and local brickyards operated into the 20th Century. 'Stucco' is a plastered finish, used historically instead of stone, and was considered more fashionable than brickwork, hence its use for the White House occupying a prominent position at the head of the town. Stone detailing to door and window heads and plaster mouldings add to the range of building materials. There are a few examples of applied timberwork, such as on the Royal Oak and 16 Market Place but nothing apparent of traditional timber framing, though it is known to exist. There are very few buildings which retain their cast iron rainwater goods, two which do are the Royal Oak and 18 Market Place.

Traditional roof coverings include red and blue clay tiles with some Welsh blue slate. Such materials give a texture and liveliness not found in artificial materials and are to be valued. There is variety of roofscape throughout the area with varied rooflines, gables, chimneys and dormer windows. There is also a variety of traditional window design including examples of first floor bay windows. Some shop units display traditional-style retractable awnings/canopies, such as 49 Wolverhampton Road and 3 Mill Street. Eaves decoration is quite diverse – dentilled and dog-toothed brickwork (projecting header bricks as blocks and points), decorative and coloured brick, timber/plaster features and moulded bricks.

The Public Realm

Pedestrianisation of the town centre was completed in 1997 with repaving of the central areas mainly in red brick pavers. The scheme sought to maintain a traditional indication of former footway and carriageway layout through the

use of different materials or delineation of kerb positions, which avoids a 'wall to wall' carpet effect of brick pavers. Remaining roads at the north and south ends of the Conservation Area are paved in traditional tarmac. The ground surface is important as it links and joins the buildings. Ideally it should make its own contribution to the townscape rather than being a neutral ribbon. The north end of Stafford Road and High Green has limited one-way vehicular access, including the taxi rank beside the College, as has the link between Wolverhampton Road and High Green giving access to the disabled parking spaces on the west side of the bowling green. One way traffic along Church Street accesses the short term parking spaces there and at the south end of Market Place. On Stafford Road in front of the College are remnant granite kerbs and an area of traditional blue brick paving. Heritage Trail stone floor plaques point out the route through the town centre, adding interest for pedestrians.

There are frequent informal pedestrian access points through and between the historic buildings in the Conservation Area providing high permeability. The modern blocks of shops and shopping centre have more formally planned limited access points as blocks seek to be outward facing with service areas contained within from which pedestrians are excluded.

Street furniture comprises a co-ordinated series of main elements painted in a dark blue colour scheme: tall modern lamp standards at the northern end with smaller traditional 'lantern' type lamp standards in the centre and south, and some modern lighting on building facades, cast iron bollards, fingerposts, metal and wooden seats, noticeboards and bins. Stone balls around High Green add visual interest and a form of barrier, and the recently introduced attractive timber Chase Heritage Trail information boards in High Green and Market Place and the reintroduced water pump features near the Conduit Head and at the Mill Street junction provide links with Cannock's history. There are low red brick built planters around the pedestrian area with shrub planting and bedding schemes to soften the views and introduce colour, and recent new street tree planting to help green the environment into the future. There is also an assortment of modern utility cabinets, telephone kiosks, cylindrical advertisement displays and recycling bins, creating a certain amount of 'clutter'. Seating is focussed around the central area but extends along the walls of the churchyard and bowling green, and provides a convenient location for people to meet and linger. Some of the street furniture appears in need of repair and maintenance, though being of robust design and materials is in a generally good condition. Hanging baskets decorate the canopy edge around the junction of Market Hall Street and along that street, enhancing views and adding to its bustling attractiveness. Figs 5-8 show locally distinctive features of the Conservation Area.

Traffic restrictions are handled well for the most part with limited signage in the pedestrian area with road markings and additional signage creating some visual intrusion at the north and south ends of the Conservation Area. Some of the signs are attached to individual posts coloured dark blue to match the town colour scheme, but some are on galvanised posts which would benefit from being coloured too.

There is a clock tower and two bandstands in Market Place. The clock has a plaque and was erected in memory of Henry Benton 1864-1923. For many years he carried on business as a butcher in Cannock and left a legacy to the town to provide a four-faced electric clock with a granite base, a drinking fountain or trough for cattle and dogs and a public lavatory. The clock was unveiled in 1935, originally standing upon a traffic island. For many years the church clock had served the town well however the time could only be seen when standing in front of the clock, as with all clocks on buildings. The new clock could be read from all angles and directions within the town centre.

The stone platform of the northern bandstand has a plaque indicating that it was erected by public subscription to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902. Its bandstand superstructure is a recent addition, dating from the early 21st Century. Within the bandstand is a memorial anchor marking the 25th anniversary of the twinning of Cannock with Datteln, a small coal mining town at the heart of Germany's canal network. Town twinning began in 1971 to promote international understanding and social and cultural contacts following the Second World War and its 25th anniversary in 1996 was commemorated by presentation of this anchor. The southern bandstand further down the Market Place is also modern, and both are of lightweight design allowing views through. Cannock's war

memorial, erected in 1923, occupies a central position in Market Place and depicts a soldier and sailor from the First World War.

Intermittent market stalls set up within the central Market Place, providing further variety of food and other goods shopping and adding to the vitality and visual interest of the town centre. A farmer's market took place regularly until a few years ago though has now ceased.

Shopfronts and Signs

Shopfronts have an important role to play in the appearance of the town centre because they are designed to display goods for sale and attract attention. Shopfront design is variable in Cannock, partly because of the extent of modern frontages with modern style fronts facing into the central streets. A few of the historic buildings have more traditional style shopfronts but most if not all are modern reproductions. The main issue is to achieve a satisfactory relationship between the shopfront and building as a whole, and some examples are more successful in this than others. Timber shopfronts are usually more appropriate for properties built prior to 1914.

Fascia and projecting signs also have a major effect on the quality of the streetscene and their size, scale, materials, colour and method of illumination should complement the building on which they are set, as well as their surroundings. Good examples of sympathetic signage are the contemporary signage at 77 High Green, lettering at 79 High Green and the traditional hanging signs at 67-75 High Green and the Royal Oak (see Figs 9-12).

An old cast iron highway sign still exists on the churchyard wall in Mill Street, pointing out the way to the railway station, Leacroft and Heath Hayes.

The setting of the Conservation Area

Cannock town centre core is still well enclosed by development with limited opening up of rear plots to create service areas visible from surrounding roads. The modern Cannock Shopping Centre was designed to have an outward face to Church Street and the Ringway, and these larger buildings are well related in scale and materials to their surroundings, both in terms of the adjacent Conservation Area and of surrounding roads. The surrounding busy roads with limited pedestrian crossing points do create a physical barrier around the town centre, however tree planting on the highway verges and public art on the Queens Square roundabout help to add visual interest to this busy vehicle-dominated corridor and create some visual transition between both sides of the road.

Mill Street is one of the main historic routes leading out of the town centre towards Cannock Mill and beyond to Lichfield and has been significantly affected by the layout of The Ringway resulting in its physical separation from the rest of the town centre. It originally led from the possible old Market Place north-east a little in front of a range of buildings, including two listed late 18th Century double-fronted buildings, then turned sharply south-eastwards in the direction of Cannock Bridge and Mill. Historically Mill Street was gradually built up with cottages, pubs, a corner shop, a primitive Methodist church and Sunday School. A few groups of these buildings survive, giving an indication of the former character of the street, but most of the smaller cottages have been demolished - the last of Cannock's thatched cottages was demolished in 1949 - and partly replaced by modern infill, but also rather isolated from their historic context by highway and car parks. Most of these remaining historic buildings are well decorated and detailed, some with very flamboyant ornamental work including carved stone window and door surrounds, elaborate projecting gable features, polychrome brickwork patterns, a timber shopfront and decorative finials and eaves. Name plaques include Bath Villas 1894 and Hill Brow Villas 1909, with the corner shop dated 1899. Cannock Mill, with the adjacent Mill farmhouse, dates from the late 18th Century standing close to the Ridings Brook and may have had earlier origins as the Lord of the Manor's mill. The mill pond, now filled in, lay to the east of the Mill. The Mill and house are substantial 3 storey buildings and the Mill was still in use as a corn mill into the 1970's. Lichfield Road drops as it passes the Mill then rises again on its way to Lichfield.



Fig.5 : Conduit building and water pump



Fig.6 : St Lukes Church



Fig.7 : Seat shelter by bowling green



Fig.8 : Cannock War Memorial



Fig.9 : Signage and traditional shop front at 77 High Green



Fig.10 : Signage at 79 High Green



Fig.11 : Hanging sign at 71 High Green



Fig.12 : Hanging sign at Royal Oak

The possible former Market Place existed as a triangular shaped island of development until the 20th Century, perhaps developing an area of former market stalls, and lies under the Avon Road/Walsall Road junction. OS maps from around 1920 show this area accommodated a smithy and one of the town centre water pumps. Surrounding building lines are still evident in the blocks at 1-3 Mill Street, 4-12 Mill Street and 6-22 Walsall Road.

Consideration has been given to extending the Conservation Area to include these two areas, as they are visually linked to the churchyard edge of the Conservation Area, however today they are so physically separated from the historic town centre by the dual carriageway and from each other by modern infill and the open expanse of Morrison's supermarket car park that it is considered difficult to create a coherent Conservation Area boundary and link. Their historic interest contributes to the setting of the Conservation Area, nevertheless, and has archaeological potential to reveal more about the town's historic development.

North of the Conservation Area boundary is Cannock Library with its modern sculpture, 'the Sower' by AJ Poole FRBS, standing in front. Along the High Green frontage between the Library and the main town centre and just outside the Conservation Area, is a pair of buildings with some history though much altered. On the corner of Newhall Street stands the much altered New Hall, built in 1890 and the venue of the social, religious, political and entertainment life of Cannock for a large part of its life. It was originally built primarily as a Sunday School for St Luke's Church, with woodwork and joinery by Linfords, and was converted to an early supermarket in 1963 and finally became Dunelm's shop, having undergone various alterations to its appearance. Adjacent stood the old Post Office, now The Park public house. This frontage therefore formed a historic part of the town and could usefully be included in the Conservation Area boundary. Beyond this once stood the Manor House, thought to date to c. 1600 and demolished in 1936. Manor Avenue, laid out in 1938, retains the historic name.

Views through the Conservation Area are dominated by the trees around the bowling green/Technical College and churchyard, framed by good building groups/frontages on the north side of Market Place from the Royal Oak to Market Hall Street and on the south side of Market Place and High Green from 7 Market Place to 79 High Green, including the Wolverhampton Road frontages. Views out of the Conservation Area down adjacent roads and over rooftops lead the eye to greenery again – either the distant countryside to the west of the town or the re-vegetated mound of the Poplars tip to the east. Views into the Conservation Area from Mill Street in the south-east focus on the church tower amongst its trees.

5. Loss/Intrusion/Negative features

The character and appearance of a Conservation Area can easily be eroded as a result of unsympathetic alterations and development and the decay or removal of characteristic features. Most of the existing modern development in and adjacent to the Conservation Area was built prior to designation. Modern development, though 'of its time' is not always sympathetic to character and appearance, but conversely copying 'historic' architecture may not be the best solution. Through careful design new buildings can respect, complement and enhance the architectural character of an area. Fine buildings of any type, style and age can enhance the visual environment and contribute to a sense of community. Examples of less sympathetic modern buildings in terms of their bland facades and non-traditional materials tend to detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as noted in the Appraisal. Although modern infill development occupies significant lengths of main frontages this has generally sought to reflect the character of the town centre through its design and materials, although it offers limited architectural interest. The addition of large buildings do make a contribution economically to the functioning of the town centre, but their appearance and siting need careful design to retain the human scale of their surroundings and frontage alignments.

The cumulative effect of many minor alterations to individual properties can also have a negative effect. Special architectural interest is very vulnerable to the process of modernisation. Examples are replacement shopfronts and upper floor windows in artificial materials and non-traditional designs. Such details tend to be bland and lacking in the rich textures and colours of natural materials, and the result can be loss of diversity and subtlety, affecting

character and appearance. Some of the shop signage in Cannock town centre could be better designed in terms of its size/depth and colour in sympathy with its host building, as could some of the shopfronts. Unsympathetic signage erected under 'deemed' advertisement consent has in some cases also had a negative visual impact. Well designed signage, of a modest size, illuminated if required using external illumination, can significantly enhance the townscape.

The recovering of roofs, removal of chimney stacks and other architectural details such as decorative ridge tiles can have a similar impact. The loss or decay of distinctive local features, such as those noted in this Character Analysis, can also detract from special architectural and historic interest. Remaining features tend to be the remnants of what once existed in the area. Bearing in mind that these are the very features which helped to create the distinctive character and appearance of the town centre in the first place, their vulnerability is evident. The upgrading of property does not have to be at the expense of historic fabric and character, and retention of appropriate detailing reinforces special interest. The Conservation Area is fortunate in retaining a good proportion of detailing on its historic buildings above ground floor level and maintenance of these features is important to slow the process of decay. Conservation and repair of elements such as window frames and architectural details using traditional materials and methods rather than wholesale replacement in modern materials and designs is important in maintaining character and appearance of the Conservation Area over time. Keeping historic buildings in use is the key to keeping them in a good state of repair.

The incremental addition of modern 'clutter' of utility cabinets, signs and other street furniture scattered on an ad hoc basis around the public realm is also having a detrimental visual impact.

6. Community Involvement

A report was taken to the Council's Cabinet seeking approval for consultation on the Draft Appraisal Document. Occupiers of all properties in the Conservation Area, local ward councillors, and technical consultees received publicity about the document, inviting comments. A copy was published on the Council's website www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk. At the end of the consultation period representations received and proposed changes to the draft in the light of those representations were reported back to the Council's Cabinet. The Council then adopted this amended Appraisal.

7. Boundaries

The original boundary of the Conservation Area followed the rear boundaries of some of the historic properties fronting streets within the town centre core though differed from these where modern changes in the road layout did not reflect historic boundaries. It excluded the long frontages of modern development, such as the edge of Cannock Shopping Centre and the modern frontage at the southern end of Market Place and ran in front of these buildings. This treatment is still considered appropriate in general. It was considered that the boundary could sensibly be realigned in several places: to encompass the whole of the historic Royal Oak building rather than excluding its northern end; a realignment following development to encompass the whole of 79 High Green and one of the units on High Green Court (whereas it presently follows an old boundary line and bisects these two properties); also to include 81-83 High Green and their rear plots as additional properties within the Conservation Area, as these are traditional buildings forming a group with adjacent listed buildings, contributing visually to the street scene at the north end of the Conservation Area and designation would give them more protection into the future and may enable their enhancement to be secured. Through the Appraisal consultation and adoption process these boundary extensions have been agreed.

8. Enhancement Opportunities/Recommendations for Management/Planning Policy Guidance

A specific responsibility is placed upon Local Planning Authorities to take account of the character of a Conservation Area when exercising their duties. The local distinctiveness of particular areas is greatly to be valued and needs to be reinforced in order to maintain diversity, attractiveness and historic continuity. Unless or until financial support is available as grants for building works or environmental enhancements the main opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Areas are through the development control process. This Appraisal makes recommendations on what it is desirable to preserve, and how, and sets out broad principles for enhancement which may be further developed within a Management Plan for the Conservation Area:

Recommendation 1: Consideration of planning applications will be informed by the detailed descriptions of character contained in this Appraisal, particularly the features of interest and the areas which would benefit from improvement. There will be a general presumption in favour of preserving buildings and features identified in this Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Recommendation 2: Proposals affecting the Conservation Area must be advertised and account taken of representations of determining each case.

Recommendation 3: Future development should take account of the special interest of the Area as set out in this Appraisal. New development will need to acknowledge the relationship of buildings to spaces, maintain historic street patterns and urban grain, respect historic plot boundaries and reflect existing architectural detailing, including colour, texture and range of materials. It should acknowledge the value of diversity in facades and roof lines and respect existing trees and green spaces. Any opportunities for enhancement of areas highlighted as having a negative visual impact or via refurbishment of the exterior of buildings would be welcomed.

Recommendation 4: The role traditional/historic buildings can play in accommodating diverse town centre uses on multiple floors assisting vitality, regeneration and small businesses will be recognised as a key economic asset.

Recommendation 5: Traditional materials should be used in building repair works and both hard and soft landscape elements treated sensitively.

- Where repair works fall within planning control the use of traditional materials for routine repairs will be required, and elsewhere encouraged.
- The repair/retention of original chimney stacks and pots, ridge tiles and other architectural details will be encouraged.
- Re-roofing should use traditional tiles or slates rather than artificial substitutes. Where necessary, window replacement should match the original design and glazing pattern. Timber doorcases should be retailed and repaired. Repair and maintenance of upper floors should be included in any scheme of alteration or improvement of the ground floor shopfront.

Recommendation 6: New shopfronts and signs should take account of the special interest of the Area as set out in the Appraisal:

- New shopfronts or advertisements should not remove or cover existing architectural features or details such as decorative string courses. Where there are traditional shopfronts which complement a building and contribute to the character of the Conservation Area there will be a general presumption against their removal.
- New shopfronts or advertisements should complement the style, scale and proportion of the building in order to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and design guidance on shopfronts and signage will be prepared to manage change.

Recommendation 7: Public realm improvements should include a consistent approach to street furniture and reduction of clutter. The inclusion of appropriate and suitably sited trees will be important into the future to take over from the older trees as well as enhancing the remainder of the town centre, particularly in maintaining the key green focal points around the central zone of the bowling green and churchyard. Environmental improvements in key locations will be sought and open markets encouraged in Market Place to enhance vitality.

Recommendation 8: Opportunities to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area, views in and out and pedestrian links between the town centre and surrounding areas will be pursued.

Recommendation 9: The Council will undertake to work with property owners to seek satisfactory solution of issues adversely affecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

9. Useful Information

Further advice on the content of this Appraisal is available from the Planning Services Team, Cannock Chase Council, Civic Centre, PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffs WS11 1BG.

Further information on carrying out works to protected trees can be obtained from the Council's website at <http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk> or by contacting the Council's Tree and Landscape Protection Officer.

The principal sources of historic and local information referred to are the Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Record and Draft Extensive Urban Survey of Cannock (2009).