
**CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

**VICTORIA
ROAD/ALBERT ROAD,
TAMWORTH**

On behalf of

**TAMWORTH BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

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1.0 Introduction and Planning Policy Context

- 1.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Such areas can then be designated as conservation areas.
- 1.2 The Act also states that local planning authorities should, from time to time, review their existing conservation areas and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas.
- 1.3 Essentially, the added planning controls that conservation area designation brings include controls over demolition, strengthened controls over minor development and the protection of trees. Within the Tamworth Local Plan (2001-2011, adopted July 2006), policies ENV22 and ENV23 concern conservation areas.
- 1.4 The appraisal defines the special interest of the Victoria Road/Albert Road Conservation Area and includes proposals for enhancement of its character and appearance. The more clearly the special interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for development plan policies, development control decisions and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character of an area. A detailed survey of the area was carried out by staff of CgMs Ltd in January 2007.
- 1.5 It is intended that this guidance will be useful for residents, developers and the general public in understanding the significance of the area and will help to ensure its special interest and character can be preserved and enhanced for future generations. This document follows English Heritage's 2006 guidance on the production of conservation area appraisals and is intended to:
- Assist in defining what is of 'special' architectural or historic importance
 - Give recommendations on features and characteristics that should be protected

- Identify possible areas for future enhancement within the designated area
- Provide guidance on the form, style and location of future change and development within the designated area.

2.0 Overview of the Conservation Area

- 2.1 The set of plans in Appendix 2 aim to identify the elements which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and also illustrate recommendations for alterations to the conservation area boundary and for additional designations.
- 2.2 Plan 1a shows the existing conservation area boundary, statutorily listed buildings (buildings identified by English Heritage as being of special architectural or historic interest), Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other buildings or structures of local note. Plan 1b shows proposed amendments to the conservation area boundary, buildings recommended for inclusion on the local list, significant views, important trees, important open spaces, walls or railings of note and 'enhancement' sites.
- 2.3 The local list consists of buildings that play a part in establishing the character of the area but fall short of meeting the current criteria for listing. However, as government guidance contained in *PPG 15- Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) makes clear, there is a presumption against the demolition of such buildings, particularly where they make a 'positive' contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.4 'Important' trees are also identified. These are usually highly visible from public places and/or they contribute to the setting of a listed building, the street scene or a building of local note. Important open spaces are also marked on Plan 1b, as these are a vital element in the character of an area. Character is defined not just by buildings, walls and trees, but also by the spaces between them. These contribute to the setting of buildings. Open spaces allow views around the area and they are often an important element in telling the story of the historical development of a community.

2.5 Important unlisted walls and other forms of boundary enclosure, such as railings or hedges, are recognised. These are usually built of local materials and help to define spaces and frame views. Significant views into, out of and around the proposed conservation area are also identified for it should be appreciated that a conservation area's character does not necessarily end with a line drawn on a map. Often the character is closely associated with attractive views and vistas out to other areas, sometimes via gaps between buildings, along streets or across open spaces. Views within an area such as that to a church, school or other landmark building can also be particularly valuable.

THE VICTORIA ROAD/ALBERT ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

3.0 Introduction and General Character Summary

- 3.1 This relatively small conservation area originally formed part of the Town Centre Conservation Area (designated in 1976). However, the fundamentally different character of this area northeast of the town in comparison to the town centre proper, led to a review, and the Council subsequently designated a separate conservation area for Victoria Road and Albert Road, which took effect on 11th October 1994. Its designation reflects its importance as an example of Tamworth's Victorian development. It directly adjoins the Town Centre Conservation Area where Albert Road meets the northern end of Lower Gungate.
- 3.2 The spur for the development of this part of Tamworth was the arrival of the Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway in the mid 19th century, and Victoria Road and Albert Road were laid out at the expense of the railway company to link the station with the medieval centre of the town. Both roads retain more-or-less continuous 19th-century streetscapes punctuated by occasional gaps and 20th-century infill. The streets were named in memory of the visit of Queen Victoria to the town in 1843.
- 3.3 The conservation area marks the expansion of medieval and early post-medieval Tamworth during the Victorian period and broadly retains the character of a Victorian residential suburb, although this has been compromised and diluted by modern development south of Albert Road and more obviously in its centre by the introduction of large car parking areas. The introduction of traffic management measures has also had significant impact upon the character of the two roads. Albert Road still serves as one of the main routes into the town centre, with all the signage, lighting schemes and traffic controls that this entails, while the blocking of the north end of Victoria Road to vehicular traffic has effectively served to make the road a quiet cul-de-sac.
- 3.4 The Victoria Road and Albert Road conservation area divides quite clearly into two broad 'character zones' (shown on Plan 2 in Appendix 2); Victoria Road, Albion Street and the southern end of Marmion Street, which retain a fairly strong residential

character, and Albert Road (with the northern section of Marmion Street), now principally occupied by offices and serving as a main traffic route into the town.

3.5 For this reason, the appraisal of this conservation area has been carried out by 'character zone' rather than in the street-by-street format used for the smaller Hospital Street conservation area. However, a street-by-street audit was carried out as part of the process and each street is discussed within the text.

3.6 On the whole, the conservation area's character is varied, with the leafy, quiet residential air of Victoria Road contrasting with the busier through-route of Albert Road and the extensive car parking areas off Marmion Street. The area also combines a mix of different uses, with residential, office and institutional uses all represented.

4.0 Summary History of the Area

4.1 The conservation area illustrates the expansion of the town during the Victorian period, specifically as a result of the influence of the railway and the need to provide access between the station and the town. Victoria Road is clearly an extension of the early and important George Street, while Albert Road is a continuation of King's Ditch.

4.2 Extracts from historic Ordnance Survey (O.S.) maps are included in Appendix 1 of this document. The O.S. maps of 1884-5 show the extent of developed land in comparison to the earlier map of the town in 1810, which illustrates the then open nature of the surrounding countryside and the essentially medieval layout of the town. By 1884, Victoria Road, Albert Road, Albion Street and Marmion Street had been laid out, forming a triangle of long straight streets with terraced houses built along parts of them, and other parts remaining undeveloped.

4.3 In 1884, the southern section of Victoria Road remained undeveloped but for the large detached 'Victoria Villa' in landscaped gardens on the east side of the street, and the Smithfield Cattle Market tucked away behind it. The triangular area between Victoria Road, Marmion Street, Albion Street and Wesley Place was subdivided into enclosures, the only development being an Industrial School for Girls fronting Marmion Street. The western side of the northern section of the road was, however, fully developed with two distinct types of terraced housing. On the eastern side here the terraced Nos. 44-

50 had been built, as had the detached No. 42 (now the Victoria Court Hotel) and the adjoining No. 40. However, there were still vacant plots on this side of the street.

- 4.4 The northern side of Albert Road was developed with a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties, with a railway goods shed and sidings at the eastern end (just outside the conservation area). The south side of the western section of Albert Road, however, was of different character, comprising large open plots and a substantial timber yard. A large school stood on Spinning School Lane on the site of the existing police station. The northern part of the east side of Marmion Street was densely built-up with extremely small terraced houses, as was Wesley Place.
- 4.5 Significant further development of the area took place between 1884 and 1902 with the building of terraced houses on the south side of Albion Street, some piecemeal housing development on both sides of Victoria Road and Marmion Street, and the laying-out of Heath Street and Dent Street south of the cattle market. Further expansion of the land occupied by the railway company had also taken place, with new sidings behind Nos. 44-50 Victoria Road.
- 4.6 By 1923-4, terraced housing had been built on the south side of Albert Road, west of the timber yard and, by 1937-38, the remainder of the west side of Victoria Road was fully built-up with new semi-detached and detached properties. By this time, too, the east side of Victoria Road had seen significant development, including the erection of a Market Hall (presumably associated with the Smithfield Cattle Market to the south; the building is now occupied by a garage) and the redevelopment of part of the garden around Victoria Villa with the large snooker hall building that stands there today.
- 4.7 Interestingly, the railway lines contained the further spread of Tamworth well into the 20th century, allowing the land beyond the tracks to remain in agricultural use for many years. The late 19th- and early 20th-century maps show that it was the pull of the railway station which had a strong influence upon the direction of the town's expansion; elsewhere development remained limited.
- 4.8 The cartographic evidence also indicates that the common built form was the terrace, with pedestrian passages cutting through to the rear gardens and outhouses. Individual streets do, however, have other forms of residential development; for

example, the western side of Victoria Road south of Albion Street was largely developed with semi-detached and detached villas, while opposite here sporadic development included large non-residential structures. Local businesses were also incorporated into predominantly residential areas - Smithfield Cattle Market was accessed from Victoria Road but its stalls and buildings were set well behind, and screened from the street by, the substantial 'Victoria Villa' and its garden. A large garage erected by 1923 (and which had been greatly extended by 1937) was sited at the corner of Albert Road and Lower Gungate. The school on Spinning School Lane would have been the dominant building in the locality until this was demolished to make way for the police station, which opened in 1975.

- 4.10 The most visible recent changes within the conservation area have taken place along Marmion Street and Albion Street. This area had developed as part of the Victorian expansion of the town and then remained relatively unaffected by change until the mid 20th century. The clearance of terraces during the 1970s created large open areas which are now primarily used as car parks. Elsewhere, vacant plots within the conservation area have been developed for housing, including the new flats development (Albion Court and Argyle Court) east of the car parks, as the supply of land for town centre accommodation becomes scarcer.

5.0 Appraisal

5.1 CHARACTER ZONE 1: VICTORIA ROAD

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.1.1 This character zone includes Victoria Road itself, Albion Street, which runs off the west side of Victoria Road, and the southern end of Marmion Street. The zone is defined in the north by the continuous property boundary separating the rear plots of buildings fronting Victoria Road and Albion Street from those fronting Albert Road, and in the west by the northwest end of Albert Street and the eastern and southern edges of the car parks on Marmion Street.
- 5.1.2 Victoria Road today is still for the most part the pleasant tree-lined residential road that it was in the late 19th century, lined with small, brick-built, stone-dressed terraced houses of varying design. The northern section of the street has retained its Victorian character to a higher degree. The southern section, which in 1884 comprised field enclosures on the west side and the large Victoria Villa set in landscaped gardens on the east side, was developed slightly later in more piecemeal fashion and has seen greater loss of historic character with the imposition of the massive 1960s Telephone Exchange building on the east side and the large snooker hall building adjoining it.
- 5.1.3 The late 19th-century Tweeddale Arms is an attractive 'landmark' building which stands on a wedge-shaped plot at the corner of Victoria Road and Albert Road and effectively announces the 'entrance' to the conservation area from the northeast. Victoria Road enjoys a relatively traffic-free existence at this end, being blocked to vehicular traffic from the large and busy traffic island adjoining the railway station. The southern end of the road is busier because of its proximity to George Street and the town centre.
- 5.1.4 The loss of many front yard boundary walls to facilitate off-street parking, particularly in front of Nos. 21-31, has affected the quality of the streetscape, making some parts of the street appear more open than they would have originally. The accompanying removal of railings obviously contributes to this, and even where in some cases an enclosure of some kind remains their substitution by modern steel replacements,

rather than traditionally detailed wrought iron ones, has also subtly diminished the street's historic character.

- 5.1.5 Travelling south along Victoria Road, the intimate character of the northern section of the street becomes more open beyond the junction with Albion Street and Alexandra Mews (which provides access into the modern housing development outside the conservation area, to the rear of the Telephone Exchange), with residential buildings of varying style and size on the west side and the much larger scale 20th-century intrusions on the east side.
- 5.1.6 From the north end of Victoria Road there is a long view towards the former Wesleyan chapel while from the Marmion Road end there is a pleasant view of a leafy residential road, albeit with some architecturally regrettable intrusions.
- 5.1.7 Albion Street is part of the same Victorian development, although its houses are smaller and more modest, being of more uniform, plainer design than those on Victoria Road. Unlike Victoria Road, there are no trees on the street and the demolition of the terraces which once stood on Wesley Place, and which formed a visual terminus to the northwest end of Albion Street, and their replacement with a large surface car park, gives the street a truncated feel, and has clearly diminished its historic character. The demolished terrace would originally have given the street a sense of formality and enclosure, which has now been lost. The view southeast looks towards the modern housing development to the rear of the Telephone Exchange but this view still gives the impression that the street is part of a network of residential streets, an impression no longer gained from the view northwest.
- 5.1.8 The street has unfortunately become a cut-through for vehicles from Victoria Road to Marmion Street. Towards the southern end of the latter are two residential terraces facing each other and a number of other late 19th-century buildings, including an old Sunday School on the corner of Marmion Street and George Street, now converted to residential use. This and its neighbouring (later 20th-century) properties are not included within the conservation area. This end of the street (narrow and lined with terraced houses) is of very different character to the northern part of the street (included in Character Zone 2), where two Victorian schools and a terrace of houses have been demolished and replaced with surface car parks and the unsympathetic

1970s police station. There is a good view south along the southern part of Marmion Street, enclosed by the terraces to either side and ending with the façade of Victoria Mews (the former Wesleyan chapel) which stands at an angle to the end of Marmion Street, and the two-storey projecting bay windows of Nos. 18-20 Victoria Road.

Architectural Quality of Buildings and Building Materials/Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

- 5.1.9 There are no listed buildings on Victoria Road or Albion Street, but there is a number of locally listed buildings on the former. The western side of the northern section of Victoria Road is the most intact in terms of historic and architectural character, comprising three distinct styles of 19th-century terraced brick properties. At the northern end of the road, the Tweeddale Arms Hotel occupies the corner with Albert Road, and is an important part of the planned Victorian development, clearly located to attract railway travellers, and retaining a single-storey accommodation range to the rear. It acts as a 'landmark' building, effectively 'announcing' the beginning of the conservation area, albeit unfortunately it now faces a large traffic island. It is more 'Georgian' in character than Victorian, having glazing bar sashes and a projecting porch supported by Tuscan columns. The only surviving area of traditional paving is in front of the Tweeddale Arms, where there are stone cobbles and two cast-iron rings set into stone by the entrance to the beer cellar. The building should be considered for inclusion on the local list.
- 5.1.10 Nos. 21-31 Victoria Road (on the local list) form an unbroken row of six attractive 'double-fronted' small terraced houses with prominent large chimney-stacks. The origin of this plan form is the detached classical house, and these also have a slight air of the 'Georgian' style about them, with their timber pilastered doorcases with cornice, and painted splayed stone lintels over glazing bar sashes. All have retained their original doorcases but only Nos. 21 and 25 still have original unhorned sashes. However, they make a highly attractive and unified group, only let down by the loss of the front yards to Nos. 25-31 to create car-parking areas.
- 5.1.11 The apparently slightly later Nos. 19-19A are very different in style, having a bracketed gable over bay windows on both storeys, with applied timber framing. This gives some visual variety to the street scene, as do Nos. 33-43, a row of six houses,

split into two terraces of four and two. These have canted bay windows with stone surrounds, stone-dressed door surrounds, splayed stone lintels, and splayed reveals to the first-floor windows. They also retain original features such as stone gate piers with fleur-de-lys heads and decorative cast-iron grille risers to the front steps, presumably ventilating coal cellars. Facing these on the east side of the road are Nos. 44-50 (Cliff Villas), an attractive terrace built as one, comprising two pairs of symmetrical houses, each pair sharing a gated entry to a small front yard between attractive original stone gate posts, and also sharing a round-arched passage, a distinctive characteristic of these and Nos. 33-43, which allow pedestrian access to the rear gardens and outbuildings. Although some original stone gate piers (and a single decorative wrought iron gate between Nos. 44-46) survive, few original stone-built front boundary walls, such as that to the Tweeddale Arms, have been retained.

- 5.1.12 Adjoining Cliff Villas is No. 42a, a probably early 1930s house (of smaller scale than its Victorian neighbours) and its contemporary, the former market hall, now in use as a garage. This latter has a distinctive shaped parapet and curved roof covered in corrugated asbestos. Although it is a later development in the street, this building has its own historical associations and does not particularly detract from the conservation area.
- 5.1.13 Beyond the garage is the locally listed Victoria Court Hotel (No. 42), a three-bay, three-storey detached house of symmetrical composition, with a hipped roof. It is rather like a larger-scale version of the terraces north of it, in a somewhat Georgian style, with stone-dressed bay windows to the ground floor, a pilastered doorcase (unfortunately obscured by a modern free-standing entrance canopy), and splayed stone lintels with keystones to the upper floors. The building is suffering from a rather run-down appearance, with unattractive stained render and original timber sashes in poor repair. Its front railings have been replaced with utilitarian steel examples, and there is an unattractive steel gate beneath the late 20th-century brick arch over the driveway to the side.
- 5.1.14 In the southern section of the street, the west side is visually rewarding, with both detached and semi-detached primarily Edwardian houses, with some slightly later and smaller properties, all pulled together in visual terms by their gabled bays with applied timber framing. Some of the Edwardian properties retain original features such as

timber sash windows, stained glass, doors and roofing materials, which help to consolidate the character of this side of the street. Nos. 13-17 are potential candidates for the local list, being architecturally intact and not suffering from over-zealous 'renovation' or 'improvement'.

5.1.15 However, on the eastern side of the road, there has been far greater alteration to the streetscape. While there are attractive semi-detached Edwardian houses at the southern end of the street, the former garden of the 19th-century Victoria Villa was redeveloped between 1924 and 1938 with the unappealing snooker club building that stands there today, and this was followed by the demolition of the villa itself and the erection of the vast and unattractive bulk of the Telephone Exchange building on its site in the 1960s. The snooker club presents a fortress-like red-brown brick façade to the street, with a high, shaped parapet. Behind the façade a long rectangular wing with pitched roof extends away from the street. To its right there is an unfortunate gap in the streetscape created by a wide expanse of tarmac-surfaced car park, which exposes to view from Victoria Road the rears of the terraced properties on Dent Street and Heath Street.

5.1.16 At the extreme southern end of the street, on the corner with Mill Lane, is the attractive former Wesleyan chapel, built in 1877 of red brick with stone dressings, and now converted to flats (Victoria Mews). This is a 'landmark' building and is included on the local list. Its front elevation has a pedimented central projecting bay and its design shows Ruskinian influences in its arched windows with rounded intrados and pointed extrados. The window frames and fanlights are also of highly distinctive design. Its long return elevation along Mill Lane, with its many tall and narrow round-arched windows, is an important element of the streetscape.

5.1.17 The terraced housing on Albion Street is modest in scale and detailing, but there are some attractive features, such as the stone-dressed round-arched passageways leading to the rear through the Alma Place houses on the south side, and stone string-coursing. These houses (dated 1889), stand hard on the pavement and are staggered to follow the slight slope of the road. They are constructed in red brick laid in Flemish bond and have stone lintels and sills. The terrace at Nos. 1-9 is set back from the road behind small front yards and, although similar to Alma Place, the unpainted stone of its lintels and other dressings give it a slightly different character.

- 5.1.18 The former rear gardens to Nos. 19A-21 have been given over to car parking and the terraces beyond that, on the north side (Nos. 2-26), have generally seen more alteration in the form of replacement windows and added porches, than those on the south side. The north-side terraces have very small yards to the front.
- 5.1.19 On the east side of Marmion Street Nos. 19-27 stand directly on the pavement, Nos. 19-25 distinguished by their Flemish bond construction and blue brick sill banding and string course. The majority have replacement uPVC windows and the original openings have also been altered on Nos. 19-20. Nos. 28-35 (Marmion Terrace, dated 1883, west side) are of similar character and incorporate round-arched passage entries through to the rear. There are many replacement windows on this side, too, including the addition of a number of shallow bow windows. No. 28, set back further from the street frontage than Nos. 29-35, stands out for its fishscale-tiled gable to the street and canted bay window.
- 5.1.20 It is considered that the effect of the conservation area could be tightened by reducing the boundary next to the Veterinary Practice (No. 28) to exclude the access lane to the vehicle service yard adjoining it.

Negative Features

- 5.1.21 The overriding negative feature of this area is the intrusion of the overshadowing box-like mass of the dark-brown brick and concrete Telephone Exchange, which dominates the road in a manner that none of the Victorian and Edwardian properties can hope to counteract. To an extent this also applies to the Snooker Hall, although its impact is marginally less than that of the Telephone Exchange. It is proposed to amend the conservation area boundary to exclude these two buildings, as both actively detract from the area's character and appearance.
- 5.1.22 The utilitarian steel railings at the junction with Marmion Street are not an attractive feature of the streetscene, and the quality of the street-lighting is also low. Indeed, the view north along Marmion Street towards the car parks in Character Zone 2 encompasses a 'sea' of poor-quality street-lighting poles, giving the street a cluttered appearance, and the steel barriers preclude easy/uninterrupted pedestrian access along the historic route into the town centre via George Street.

5.1.23 The builders' yard currently occupied by Jewson on the northeast corner of Victoria Road (outside the conservation area) is highly visible in views into the conservation area from the large traffic island on the ring road, and obstructs the view of the attractive terraces on the west side of the street.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

5.1.24 There is plenty of scope in this part of the conservation area for general improvements to street furniture, railings and surfacing. The trees along Victoria Road are particularly important and every effort should be made to maintain them and replace any that are removed. The junction with Marmion Street could be improved by the replacement of poor-quality street furniture with something more appropriate.

5.1.25 Clearly, the Telephone Exchange may present a significant redevelopment opportunity. Even though it is proposed here to amend the conservation area boundary to exclude this building, it will obviously still have a direct negative impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area, and any replacement building on this site would need to be sensitively designed with regard to 'preserving' or 'enhancing' its character and appearance. Sensitive redevelopment of the snooker hall and its site could also be beneficial to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

5.1.26 Significant enhancement to the area may also be achieved through reinstatement of iron railings to front yard boundaries on Victoria Road where these have been removed; replacement of these and possible rebuilding of later front yard boundary walls to a common design using traditional materials would help to give the street a more unified appearance, as it would originally have had when first laid out.

5.1.27 More minor improvements could be made through the restoration and maintenance of individual buildings. For instance, the Victoria Court Hotel has a rather neglected appearance, with joinery in poor repair and unappealing-looking render. This building is on the local list and, as a detached three-storey property, is highly visible in the streetscape. General repair and redecoration would have a relatively significant beneficial effect on the appearance of the building and on the street as a whole.

Planning permission for extension and conversion of the building to flats was granted in 2004, but this work had not yet taken place in early 2007.

- 5.1.28 Sadly, the inscribed foundation stones set into the façade of the former Wesleyan chapel (Victoria Mews) are so badly eroded they are illegible, presumably due to damage from traffic fumes. These could be restored to the benefit of the building and the conservation area.
- 5.1.29 Despite the seemingly irreversible loss of the terraced houses on the former Wesley Place to car parking at the northwest end of Albion Street, smaller changes could be carried out to the general environs, which would have a beneficial impact upon the streetscape. This could include the introduction of more sympathetic lighting and screening of the car park.



Looking southwest along the tree-lined Victoria Road



The Tweeddale Arms at the north end of Victoria Road, recommended for addition to the local list



View northwest along Albion Street to the large car park



View southeast along Albion Street



View south along Marmion Street towards Victoria Mews



Attractive locally listed row, Nos. 21-31 Victoria Road



Detail of terrace on west side of Victoria Road, showing original decorative features



Cliff Villas, east side of Victoria Road



The Victoria Court Hotel, No. 42 Victoria Road



Nos. 13 -15 Victoria Road, recommended for local listing



The unattractive Telephone Exchange building dominates the centre of Victoria Road



Snooker club building on right with Telephone Exchange beyond, showing the difference in scale between these structures and the Edwardian properties opposite



Victoria Mews, the former Wesleyan Chapel, a landmark building at the southwest end of Victoria Road



Looking north along Marmion Street towards car parks



View towards Victoria Road and Albert Road from the north, showing builders' yard to left and new housing development to right

5.2 CHARACTER ZONE 2: ALBERT ROAD

General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.2.1 This zone is defined by the busy Albert Road which runs across the northern edge of the town in an east-west direction, linking the major traffic junction with the ring road at the Tweeddale Arms to the major junction with Upper Gungate. It also includes the east side of the northern section of Marmion Street, now occupied by surface car parks. Albert Road now serves as a main through-route, which gives it a very different character to Victoria Road, despite the two streets' origins as part of the same planned residential development. The constant flow of traffic means that the road no longer retains a particularly residential feel, and many of its Victorian buildings, particularly those in the western section of the road, have in fact been given over to office/commercial use.
- 5.2.2 The boundary of the conservation area follows the rear plot boundaries of the properties on the northern side of Albert Road and includes the terraces known as Rosy Cross to the north. The western boundary returns along the rear boundaries of the properties on the south side of Albert Road, west of Marmion Street, and then turns south to follow the western edge of Marmion Street until it reaches No. 35.
- 5.2.3 The section of Albert Road east of Marmion Street is the more intact architecturally, with both sides retaining a built-up frontage of Victorian properties (with only a couple of modern intrusions). The properties that front the north side of Albert Road are set back slightly from a fairly wide pavement behind small front yards, and this gives the impression that the street is relatively wide. Otherwise architecturally rewarding long views along the street are disrupted by prominent traffic signage and the traffic island at the junction with Marmion Street; the location of the large surface car park adjoining this wide junction creates a large and unfortunate gap in the street frontage. However, there are good views towards the built-up frontages, for instance looking towards the two- and three-storey properties on the north side of the street west of the junction with Marmion Street.

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- 5.2.4 There are several mature trees along the north side of Albert Road, which are probably contemporary with the original construction of the street. These add character and should be retained (and replanted if removed).
- 5.2.5 The built form along the southern side of the road to the west of the Marmion Street junction is punctuated by a large gap. Historically, this side of the street was not built up with a continuous frontage, part of it being in use as a timber yard and the other part possibly a school playground, but the later 20th-century redevelopment of the site with a Youth Centre and Youth Employment Bureau cannot be said to have enhanced the conservation area. The sporadic views and lack of cohesion is most noticeable in this part of Albert Road and in views from it across the Marmion Street car parks.
- 5.2.6 The northern part of Marmion Street has been stripped of its historic character by the demolition of virtually all its former street-frontage buildings, and the redevelopment of part of the west side of the street with the large 1970s police station that fronts Spinning School Lane. South of it and along the east side of the street the land is occupied by large surface car parks. The single remaining terrace of buildings at the northern end has been blighted by late 20th-century alterations. The overall appearance of the street is one of a busy vehicular through-route with little defining historic or architectural character. A proliferation of street-lighting poles and signage dominates views along it.
- 5.2.7 Rosy Cross is a small development of Victorian terraced cottages located north of Albert Road facing the high brick boundary wall which runs along the ends of the latter's back plots. They may have originated as railway workers' cottages, as they were built adjoining a former railway sidings and goods yard. They were rather isolated originally and are now hemmed in by early 21st-century apartment developments and the ring road, giving them a somewhat neglected air.

Architectural Quality of Buildings and Building Materials/Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

Albert Road

- 5.2.8 There are no listed buildings on Albert Road, but there are five locally listed buildings on the street and recommendations are made here for the inclusion of others on the local list, including the Tweeddale Arms and its associated outbuildings, the pharmacy shop at Nos. 54-54A, the essentially unaltered terrace comprising Nos. 57-62 at the western end of the street and No. 64 to the corner with Lower Gungate. These buildings retain a significant element of their original detailing and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.2.9 There are several three-storey buildings fronting onto the road and this gives it a different stylistic character to that of Victoria Road. As the buildings fronting the northern side are set slightly back from the pavement and raised above street level, they have a 'grander' appearance than would otherwise be the case. The buildings are a mix of brick and stucco and some, like on Victoria Road, have a rather 'Georgian villa' appearance, for instance No. 26 (Oakhurst). The properties fronting the southern side are both two- and three-storey, again built of local brick with some being stuccoed. The architectural nature of these houses is, with the exception of No. 43, relatively modest. The terraces have the typical feature of arched passages between them to allow pedestrian access through to the rear.
- 5.2.10 At the eastern end of the road, the two-storey terrace formed by Nos. 34-42 is fairly similar in character to the late 19th-century terraces at the northern end of Victoria Road, built of red brick with stone sills and lintels, and having attractive doorcases with bracketed canopies. All have replacement uPVC windows and No. 41 has lost historic character through the reconfiguration of its window openings. No. 38, too, has had a bay window and box-like glazed porch added. Nos. 43 and 43a (both included on the local list) stand out from the rest of the buildings in this part of the road because of their scale and level of architectural detailing. No. 43 is of three storeys and has a rather 'grand' three-bay façade with two-storey height bay windows to the outer bays (with a modern bay window rather unfortunately added at third-storey height to the left) and a central entrance deeply recessed behind a basket-arched

opening with highly attractive decorative window surrounds above. No. 43A is of two storeys but is part of the same build and has the same architectural elements.

- 5.2.11 Adjoining these is the 2005 flats development of Argyle Court, with Albion Court behind. This has been successfully executed, clearly taking the architectural style of No. 43 and other neighbouring properties as a guide for its front elevation, and it fits well into the streetscape. Beyond here, Nos. 44-47 have attractive round-arched hood moulds over the doors, and stone lintels with keystones over glazing bar sashes (and bracketed carved lintels to Nos. 46 and 47). Adjoining No. 47 is a large surface car park, entered via a rusting steel 'gantry' and separated from the pavement by low kerbing only.
- 5.2.12 On the north side of the road, is The Albert, a domestically-scaled public house which forms part of a terrace of three houses with Nos. 30-31. The Albert is an attractive building with original unhorned glazing-bar sashes, and is included on the local list (strengthening the case for the inclusion of The Tweeddale Arms and its rear accommodation wing on the local list also), but it is unfortunate that the adjoining Nos. 30-31 have had their original window openings moved and the frames replaced, which rather detracts from the appearance of The Albert as well as from their own character.
- 5.2.13 Nos. 27-29 form an attractive terrace of three houses with prominent round-arched door openings having stone hood moulds with keystones and semi-circular fanlights. The windows have bracketed flat stone hoods. Stylistically, they form a good group with the similar Nos. 44-47. Adjoining Nos. 27-29 are three detached houses, Nos. 24-26. No. 26 (Oakhurst) is on the local list, a well-proportioned three-bay late 19th-century stuccoed villa, again with a rather Georgian appearance, having a prominent pilastered doorcase, ground-floor stone-dressed canted bays and bracketed lintels to the first floor. However, the sashes noted in the local list description have since been replaced with uPVC frames. Unfortunately, the original ground-floor bay windows to No. 25 have been crudely replaced with smaller modern bays, and all windows have been replaced with uPVC frames. This is unfortunate, as the large stone-dressed bays are a particular feature of the north side of the street, present also on Nos. 22-24.

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- 5.2.14 Nos. 22-23 form an attractive pair, with the characteristic round-arched hood moulds over their entrances, here supported by slender columns on plinths. Original sashes have been retained. Another important element of the north side of the road is the retention of many original boundary walls and gate piers.
- 5.2.15 The majority of properties on the street have in fact lost their original timber windows, front doors and roof coverings, which has eroded the original character of the road. Where original features do survive, however, they illustrate the architectural detailing that went into even the most modest residential property. Nos. 57-62 on the south side of Albert Road at its western end, form an attractive and virtually unaltered terrace, with small gables with applied timber framing supported on carved brackets, Edwardian glazing bar sashes and casements, ground-floor square bay windows and mostly original doors with fanlights in stone-dressed architraves. The quality of the architectural detailing on these buildings is such that an Article 4 Direction could be justified.
- 5.2.16 Rather unfortunately, No. 62 is directly adjoined by the single-storey No. 64, a garage and row of shops with a low-pitched corrugated steel roof. The structure adjoins the much more visually interesting three-storey 1900s structure on the corner with Lower Gungate (Essence of India). While the ground floor of this building suffers from the addition of a prominent and unsympathetic shop front, the upper two storeys are eye-catching, in bright red brick and with a full-height projecting domed hexagonal 'tower' to the corner with multi-aspect windows separated by fishscale tiles and another two-storey high canted bay in the centre of the Lower Gungate elevation, flanked by pilasters. The building is a prominent feature of the street and could be added to the local list.
- 5.2.17 The north side of the road west of Marmion Street is lined with an attractive row of buildings, including terraced, semi-detached and detached properties. The majority are of two storeys, flanked by the three-storey No. 2 at the western end and the three-storey Nos. 14-17 further east. No. 12 is on the local list, a three-bay Victorian villa (again of rather Georgian appearance) with a hipped roof, dentilled eaves cornice, ground-floor canted bay windows and semi-circular stone steps up to a rather grand classical doorcase.

- 5.2.18 Nos. 54-54A (Rowlands Pharmacy) is recommended for addition to the local list, primarily for its interest as a purpose-built corner shop which retains a late 19th-/early 20th-century shop front. Although other windows have been replaced with uPVC frames, the building has stone sill bands and string coursing, lintels, round-arched hood mould and frame for signage on its canted corner.
- 5.2.19 Outside the conservation area, two large early 21st-century flats developments have been constructed. Consort Place, at the eastern end of Albert Road (on the site of the former railway sidings), is highly visible in views into the conservation area from the large traffic island on the ring road, and rather dwarfs the much smaller scale Tweedaale Arms. Its large bulk, and high ratio of blank wall to rather meanly-proportioned window, has little regard for the prevailing architectural and historic context. Behind the north side of Albert Road is the Penny Court sheltered housing development (still under construction in January 2007); this is of similar style, but better concealed from the conservation area, its direct visual impact on it being its proximity to the Rosy Cross terraces, which it dwarfs.

Marmion Street

- 5.2.20 The now rather isolated Offa's Dyke terrace (Nos. 37-41) that survives at the northern end of Marmion Street, is composed of No. 37-41, five two-storey plus attic houses with large dormer windows. All the houses have been thoroughly compromised by 20th-century alterations, particularly by the relocation of original window openings and their replacement by openings with a horizontal emphasis and uPVC frames, and the application of hard render, all of which has given them an unattractive blank appearance.

Rosy Cross

- 5.2.21 The two terraces comprising Nos. 1-11 Rosy Cross (built in 1882) have also been heavily altered, with added porches, reconfigured fenestration, and all with replacement uPVC window frames. Those houses not covered with render show that the buildings are of red brick with blue brick string coursing and sill banding, and stone lintels. They face across small front yards and a narrow lane to the high brick boundary wall that defines the back plots of properties on Albert Road, which gives

them a secluded air. In architectural and visual terms they are no longer obvious candidates for inclusion in a conservation area, but given that they form part of the same planned development as Victoria Road and Albert Road and probably have direct historical associations with the railway, it is considered that they should be retained within the conservation area boundary.

Negative Features

- 5.2.22 The main feature that blights this zone is the extensive area of car parking along the east side of Marmion Street and fronting the south side of Albert Road. The demolition of former street-frontage terraces and the use of the resulting space for this purpose has created a large 'open' area and the loss of the historic character of this part of Marmion Street, compounded by the large concrete bulk of the 1970s police station on the west side of Marmion Street (outside the conservation area) and the further large car park south of it. While the loss of the Victorian street terraces has opened up views of the town to the south, these are only available across a wide expanse of tarmac and parked cars. The smaller car park at the northern end of Lower Gungate has had a similar negative impact.
- 5.2.23 The unattractive 1960s/70s Youth Centre and Youth Employment Bureau on the south side of Albert Road actively detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area and it is recommended that the boundary be amended to exclude both them and the Marmion Street car parks from it.
- 5.2.24 The traffic island at the junction of Albert Road and Marmion Street, although small, has prominent signage and obstructs views along Albert Road. While it clearly needs to be where it is, it could be made more attractive in order to enhance views along Albert Road.
- 5.2.25 There is a profusion of telegraph poles and wires and poor-quality street lighting on Albert Road and the pavements are surfaced with rather patchy tarmac.
- 5.2.26 The views to the south along Marmion Street from Albert Road are dominated by the overbearing impact of the 1970s Police Station, which replaced the Victorian school on

Spinning School Lane. The architectural style and scale of the building is at odds with the Victorian domestic architecture on Albert Road.

General Condition and Capacity for Change

- 5.2.27 The buildings on Albert Road, many of which are in commercial use, appear generally well maintained, although there are one or two individual buildings where some maintenance/re-decoration would be beneficial. For instance, the roof to No. 28 looks in poor repair and there is significant staining to the render of No. 42.
- 5.2.28 More significantly, the area of car parking along Marmion Street presents an opportunity for sensitive and appropriate redevelopment. It would certainly be beneficial to Albert Road if a built frontage was restored from the existing No. 47 west to the junction with Marmion Street. This would help to reinforce the junction with Marmion Street and would partially block unappealing views of the police station. Provided development was carried out with regard to the character and appearance of the conservation area, it could have a significantly beneficial impact on the street as a whole and this part of the conservation area.
- 5.2.29 Despite the obvious intractability of some of the major negative features of the street, smaller changes could be carried out to its general environs, which would have a beneficial impact upon its appearance. This could include removal of overhead wiring, the introduction of more sympathetic lighting and screening of the car parks.
- 5.2.30 Nos 57-62 Albert Road should be put forward for inclusion upon the local list. The architectural quality of the terrace may also justify the designation of an Article 4 Direction to ensure that inappropriate changes to windows and doors do not occur.



Looking east along eastern stretch of Albert Road



Looking east along Albert Road from junction with Gungate



Looking west along Albert Road; the prominent traffic island and signage blocks views along the street



The locally listed No. 26 Albert Road (Oakhurst)



The locally listed Nos. 43-43A stand out for their architectural detailing



Argyle Court has been designed sympathetically and fits well into the streetscape



The locally listed Albert public house; the adjoining terraces have been heavily altered



Nos. 27-29 form an attractive group, showing the characteristic round-arched hood moulds found on Albert Road



Nos. 59-60, part of the terrace Nos. 57-62, recommended for local listing. These buildings have a virtually unaltered appearance



The eye catching building on the corner of Albert Road and Lower Gungate; the building has suffered from the insertion of an unsympathetic modern shop front but is recommended for local listing



Nos. 54-54A, prominent corner shop recommended for local listing



The heavily altered Offa's Dyke terrace



The heavily altered Victorian terraces of Rosy Cross



Looking south across the large surface car parks on the east side of Marmion Street, which have stripped it of its historic character



Looking east to junction with Marmion Street, showing gap in street frontage created by car park beyond the junction



The Youth Centre and Youth Employment Bureau, south side of Albert Road, are not in keeping with the street's historic character

6.0 Proposed Boundary Amendments, Recommendations for Listing and Article 4 Directions

6.1 It is proposed that the conservation area boundary be amended in four areas in order to exclude areas which no longer make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6.2 The proposed deletions include the removal of the car parking areas east of Marmion Street and off Lower Gungate to the rear of Albert Road. It is also recommended that the boundary be redrawn along the south side of Albert Road to exclude the Youth Centre and Youth Employment Bureau, and Offa's Dyke Terrace, and that a small amendment to the boundary be made south of No. 28 Marmion Street. The final amendment is recommended to exclude the Telephone Exchange and snooker club building on the east side of Victoria Road. The exclusion of these areas will emphasise the importance of the areas remaining within the conservation area and draw attention to their special interest.

6.3 No unlisted buildings are considered to merit inclusion on the statutory list. In addition to retaining the existing locally listed buildings on the local list, the following buildings are recommended for inclusion:

- The Tweeddale Arms and associated outbuildings.

- Nos. 13, 15 & 17 Victoria Road

- Nos. 54 & 54a Albert Road

- Nos. 57 - 62 Albert Road

- No. 64 Albert Road (three-storey structure to corner with Lower Gungate)

6.4 Under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, a general planning permission is granted for a range of minor developments. These 'permitted development' rights are more restricted in

conservation areas for certain types of development, including the addition of dormer windows, some types of cladding, the erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway, and the reduction in size of permitted extensions.

- 6.5 Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Order enable local planning authorities to make certain directions withdrawing permitted development rights. Article 4(1) directions apply to any type of land or building but need to be approved by the First Secretary of State. Article 4(2) directions may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affects aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. The removal or alteration of a particular type of architectural feature important to the character and appearance of the conservation area, such as distinctive windows, gates and boundary walls, can be specified in the direction.
- 6.6 Local authorities should notify local people and take account of public views before deciding whether to confirm an Article 4(2) direction.
- 6.7 Article 4 directions applying to features like doors, windows, porches and roof coverings work best in areas of strongly-defined (and well-preserved) architectural character.
- 6.8 In the Victoria Road/Albert Road Conservation Area, it may be considered appropriate that an Article 4(2) direction is served on Nos. 57-62 Albert Road, which retain a high level of original detailing and joinery and are recommended for local listing (see above).
- 6.9 Similarly, an Article 4(2) direction could be served on Nos. 13-17 Victoria Road (also recommended for local listing), which retain original and attractive window joinery and stained glass. At the northern end of Victoria Road, the streetscape is characterised by the survival of attractive original gate posts, which it is desirable to protect despite the loss of much of the original boundary walling, and an Article 4(2) direction may also be beneficial here.
- 6.10 While individual buildings elsewhere in the conservation area do retain original windows and doors, in general there has been significant loss of such features and

there are few other distinct areas with substantial survival. In light of this it is felt that further imposition of Article 4(2) directions would not now be particularly effective or a good use of resources.

7.0 Monitoring and Revision

- 7.1 As recommended by English Heritage in its 2006 publication, *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, it is essential to monitor the conservation area and to review the published character appraisal on a regular basis.
- 7.2 Changes to the conservation area may occur through the implementation of schemes approved by the Council, such as new development or changes to the public realm, or through both permitted and unauthorised alterations. General deterioration or changes to the condition of the area's physical fabric may also occur over time.
- 7.3 A dated photographic record of the conservation area has been created during the production of this character appraisal. The main aim of this is to provide a baseline for measuring change in the appearance of the conservation area and for monitoring the physical condition of its buildings. The record can also be used as an aid to any enforcement action should unauthorised alterations be carried out. In order to take enforcement action on unlisted buildings the unauthorised alteration must be shown to have been carried out within the last four years, so for these purposes it is important to ensure that the photographic record is updated on a regular five-year cycle.
- 7.4 In the case of listed buildings too, where there is no time limit on when enforcement action can be taken (provided of course that the unauthorised works were undertaken after listing took place), regular updating of the photographic record is equally important, not just as a record of change but as possible evidence in enforcement or prosecution cases.
- 7.5 If appropriate, local community awareness of the conservation area may be maintained by engaging their assistance in the updating of the photographic record. This might be achieved through the use of volunteers from local historical or amenity societies or even groups of schoolchildren or students working on a street-by-street basis. Information could be stored on electronic 'pro formas' which show dated 'then and now' photographs to illustrate where change has occurred. These could be added to every five years with each phase of review.

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- 7.6 English Heritage (2006) recommends that a 'virtuous circle' of monitoring, review and action should be established in order to maintain a sustainable equilibrium. Ideally, a five-year cycle of review should be established. With the aid of an updated photographic record, a street-by-street review of the conservation area in five years' time (2012) to establish what has changed (and why) since this character appraisal was produced will enable it to be updated.
- 7.7 Importantly, such a review will also allow an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's current conservation area policy and a measurement of how successful the Council has been at implementing the recommendations for enhancement made in the character appraisal. The reasons for success or non-success can then be appraised and policies modified or specific actions proposed as appropriate. The rate and nature of change identified may also indicate whether it would be desirable to produce 'Design Guides' providing guidance on topics such as extensions and alterations to historic buildings, development proposals and shop front design.
- 7.8 The review may also lead to further alterations to the conservation area boundary, either to bring new areas into the conservation area or remove areas from it that no longer contribute to or reinforce its character and appearance.
- 7.9 The review may either result in a thorough overhaul and updating of the existing character appraisal and production of a new version, or could take the form of an addendum to the existing document, which focuses specifically on changes that have occurred over the last five years, what effect these changes have had on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and updated recommendations for enhancement.

Appendix 1:

Extracts from historic Ordnance Survey maps



Detail from 1884 Ordnance Survey



Detail of Albert Road from 1884 Ordnance Survey map



1902 Ordnance Survey map extract



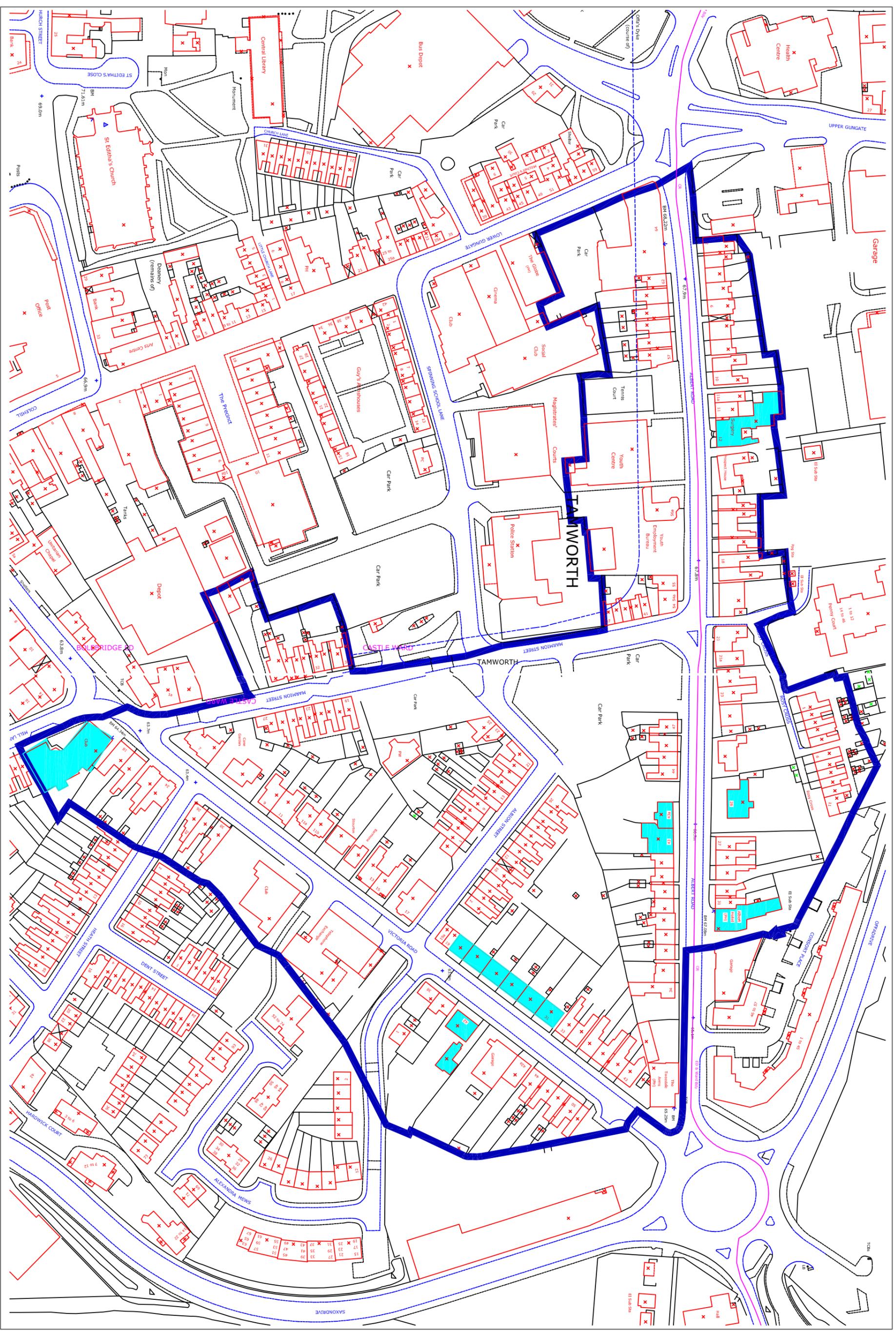
1938 Ordnance Survey map extract

Appendix 2:

Plan 1a – Existing Designations

Plan 1b – Proposals and Recommendations

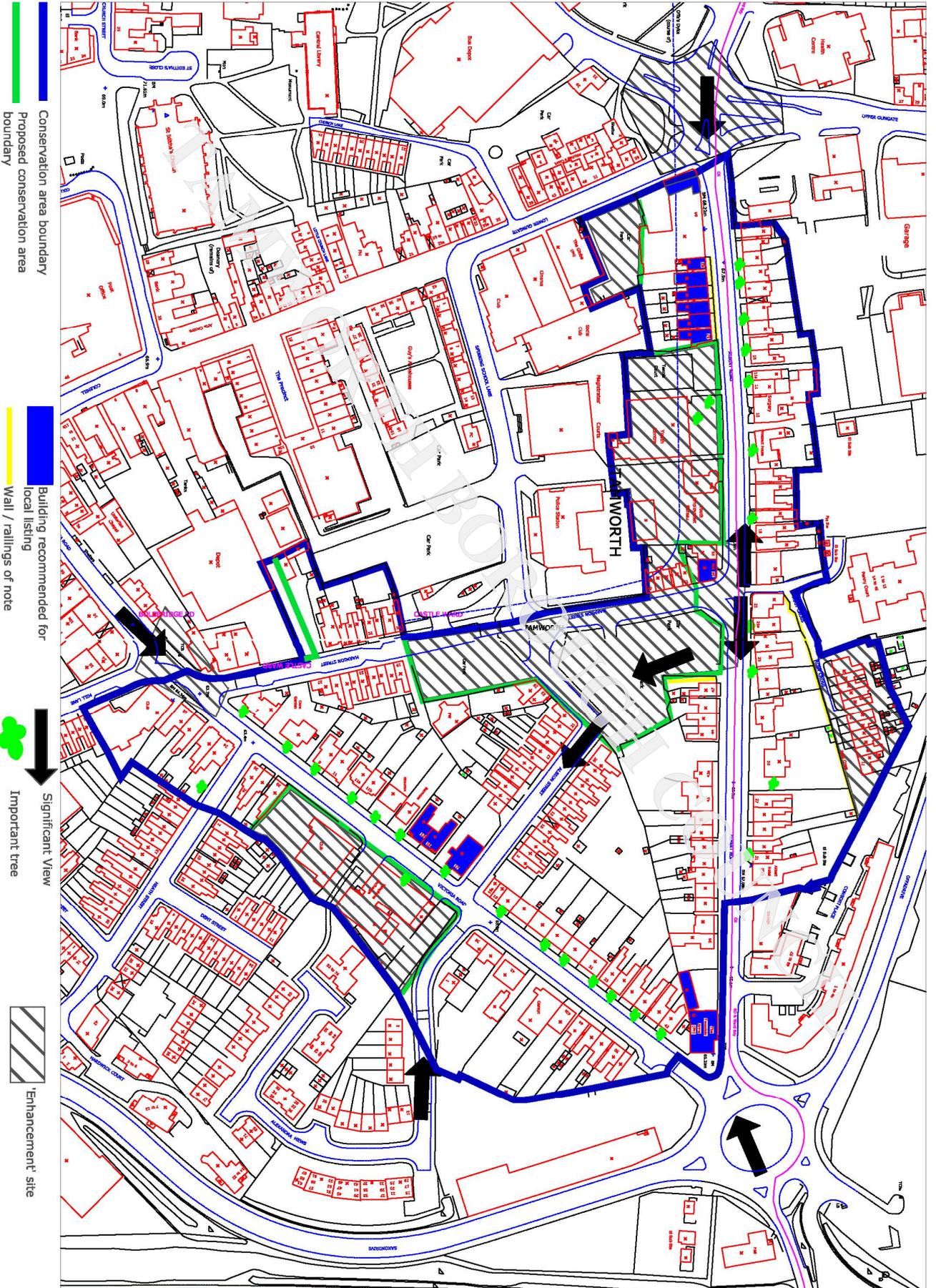
Plan 2 – Character Zones



Conservation area boundary

Locally Listed buildings

Plan 1b Victoria Road / Albert Road Conservation Area; Proposals and Recommendations



Conservation area boundary
Proposed conservation area boundary

Building recommended for local listing
Wall / railings of note

Important tree

'Enhancement' site

