

Britannia Square Conservation Area (CA4)

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

First designated 1969; now 9.4 hectares

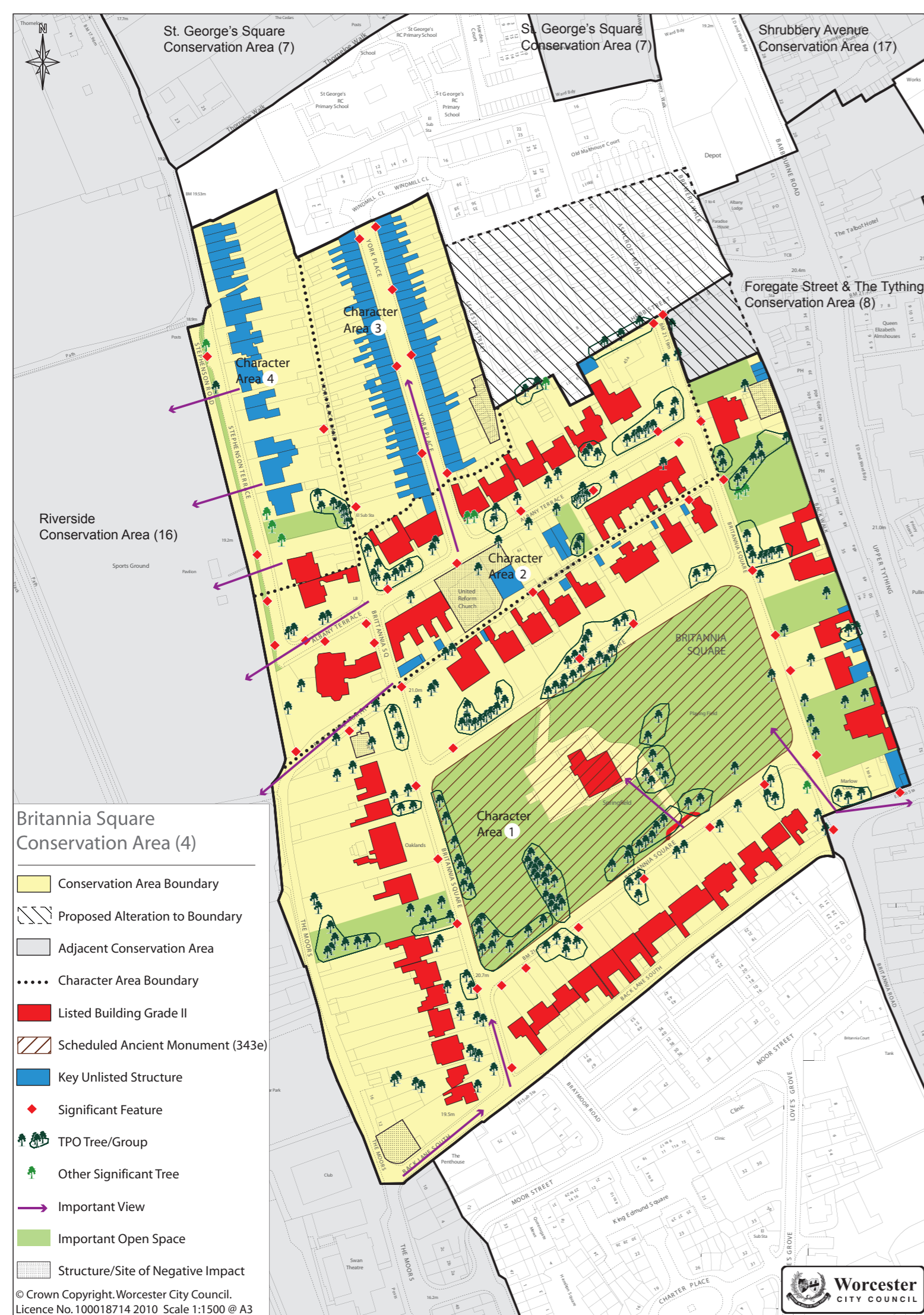
Summary of Special Interest

- A planned early 19th century residential suburb;
- Street pattern and layout reflect former use as agricultural land (field boundaries) and subsequent land ownership;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, 84 of which are Grade II listed buildings;
- Distinctive early 19th century Regency architectural character of the stucco-fronted villa form in Britannia Square and Albany Terrace;
- Good historic terraces on York Place;
- Distinctive group of late 19th century historic buildings on Stephenson Terrace;
- Unaltered terrace of early 20th century houses in Stephenson Road;
- Traditional 'back lanes' on each side of the square and York Place Lane, though the Moors is much altered;
- Prevalence of red brick and painted stucco;
- Large area of open green space at the centre of Britannia Square;
- Mature trees;
- Prevalence of buildings set back from the street frontage with extensively-planted front gardens;
- Well detailed boundary treatments to front areas - walls surmounted by railings;
- Buildings direct to the pavement line on York Place;
- Good westwards views across Worcester Racecourse;
- Large number of historic cast iron street signs, many from the foundry of Hardy and Padmore;
- Cast iron lamp standards;
- Remnants of stone and brick kerbs, with gutters of laid setts;
- Good survival of decorative door and window surrounds, including timber louvred shutters;
- Local details that collectively and individually give the conservation area a distinctive identity, e.g. railings, verandas, balconies, foot scrapers, pavement grilles, iron bollards and street name signs.

Principal Conservation Issues

- Enlargement of conservation area boundary;
- Loss of original architectural details;
- Tree management;
- Back lanes;
- Vehicle parking;
- Street lighting;
- Quality of pavement surface;
- Front boundary treatments;
- Accretions on elevations e.g. security alarms;
- Design of new development.
- Character Areas (see map on the back for boundaries).

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Character Area 1: Britannia Square

This area comprises the first phase of an early 19th century planned residential suburb. While the street framework and plots were laid out to a designed pattern, the plots were developed by individual owners, in an eclectic range of classical styles, unified by painted stucco facades. The general architectural character is of the Regency period, eg sash windows, cast iron verandas and balconies. The houses range from large detached single houses to short terraces designed to appear as a single entity, a 'palace façade'.

Key assets and characteristics:

- Large central open green space surrounded by railings and high hedges;
- Large detached early 19th century villa, Springfield/RGS;
- Early 19th century stucco buildings facing on to the square;
- Rear elevations of red brick;
- Each side of square has a different character, plot widths, scale, style etc;
- Back lanes:
 - o *Back Lane North*: continuous boundary to street front, red brick walls, with timber gates (good cast iron door knockers), and timber garage doors. Some ancillary service ranges to the houses on each side contribute to character. Brick kerbs and row of three setts;
 - o *Back Lane South* has coherent character on the north side only;
 - o *Back Walk*, outside this conservation area, strong enclosure;
 - o *The Moors* is less intact back lane, only existing on the east side;
- High garden walls in brick to side and rear of properties;
- Stone kerbs and setts;
- Some kerbs and wall copes of engineering brick;
- Original street signs cast by Hardy and Padmore, Worcester;
- Cast iron lamp standards.

Negatives:

- Poor quality of pavements undermines the appearance and setting;
- Loss of some front boundary walls/railings;
- Front gardens used for off-street vehicle parking, with the loss of planting and changed character;
- The painted brick walls along back lanes threaten red-brick appearance;
- New designs of gates on back lanes, the tradition is wood - solid boarded;
- Varied style of house numbers on gate posts;
- Some 20th century infill fails to reflect quality and character of conservation area e.g. no. 36a Britannia Square.



Character Area 2: Albany Terrace

Albany Terrace is the second phase of the Regency suburb development. It is located to the north of Britannia Square, sharing Back Lane North with residents of the square. Buildings are generally of a similar architectural character to Britannia Square, but constructed as cohesive terraces. The exception is no. 4 Albany Terrace (The Albany), where an unscholarly approach has produced a hybrid Greco-Egyptian style that 'betrays at once the provincial quality of the whole' (Pevsner's *Worcestershire*, 2007).

Key assets and characteristics:

- Complete terrace of early 19th century stucco-fronted villas on the north side, broken at junction with York Place;
- Two terraces of early 19th century stucco-fronted villas on the south side;
- Stucco villas almost completely within single residential use;
- Villas set back from the street frontage behind retaining walls surmounted by decorative cast iron railings;
- Well-planted front gardens;
- Some dense hedges provide the boundary to the street;
- Usual form of gate posts is square post with pyramidal capping, stuccoed;
- No. 4 stands in large grounds and is of a more exuberant character;
- Original street signs cast by Hardy and Padmore, Worcester;
- Cast iron lamp standards;
- Curved roof outbuilding – non-conforming but of inherent historical interest - has both positive and negative impact.

Negatives:

- Poor quality of pavements undermines the appearance and character of the conservation area, and erodes the setting of the many listed buildings;
- Inappropriate treatment of boundary walls and railings threatens the character of the streetscape, and the setting of listed building/s;
- Front garden used for off-street vehicle parking, loss of planting;
- Security alarms on front elevations are unsightly;
- 20th century infill not reflecting the character of the conservation area.

For Character Area boundaries see the map on the back page



Character Area 3: York Place

York Place is a linear terraced street. It has a distinct character of a continuous red brick terrace to either side of the street, set at back-of-pavement line. The buildings are of uniform design and scale (two storeys over basements, which open onto rear gardens); the form is derived from the Georgian townhouse prototype. While York Place postdates the early 19th century development of Britannia Square and Albany Terrace, the buildings are 18th century in character. York Place has been protected by an Article 4 direction since 1986.

Key assets and characteristics:

- Linear arrangement of red brick terraces on straight street;
- Buildings set at back-of-pavement line – strong enclosure;
- Buildings of two bays and two storeys plus basement on the York Place elevation, with three full storeys to the rear garden elevations;
- Retention and reinstatement of joinery – sash windows and front doors;
- Good timber door surrounds, mostly replicas;
- Full width timber shop front at no. 15;
- Some original decorative cast-iron pavement grilles retained;
- Some survival of original joinery on rear elevations;
- Retention of chimney stacks and pots;
- Replica cast iron lamp standards.

Negatives:

- Poor quality of mass concrete pavements undermines the character;
- Loss of decorative pavement grilles and the varied treatment of the front basement lights detract from the unified streetscape;
- Poor visual stops to the vistas, out of character;
- Enlarged window openings threaten the architectural cohesion;
- Security alarms on front elevations are unsightly;
- Examples of unsympathetic door and window joinery, such as uPVC;
- Painted/rendered facades undermine the unity of the red brick terraces;
- Discordant additions and changes to rear elevations;
- Garages and fences to Back Lane and Leicester Street are incoherent.



Character Area 4: Stephenson Terrace

Stephenson Terrace developed significantly later than Britannia Square, the distinctive architectural character of this area indicates that most were constructed in the last quarter of the 19th century. The houses are picturesque in theme, characterised by asymmetric facades, with fenestration, cast iron detailing, and proportions typically Victorian. The seven houses in Stephenson Road, in contrast, form a continuous Edwardian terrace, almost completely unchanged on their west facades. Though there is no common style houses share a location at the edge of the higher ground enjoying views across Pitchcroft.

Key assets and characteristics:

- Development only on the east side of Stephenson Terrace;
- Open views west across the racecourse;
- Large detached and paired villas;
- Division between Stephenson Terrace and Stephenson Road; retaining wall and 'ha-ha';
- Houses retain a very large proportion of original joinery and ironwork;
- Houses set back behind extensively planted front gardens;
- Good boundary treatments: brick walls with boulder coping and low brick walls with decorative cast-iron railings;
- Stone villa signs.

Negatives:

- Losses in retaining wall between Stephenson Terrace. and Stephenson Road;
- Security alarms on front elevations;
- Concrete lamp standards.

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