

# Foregate Street and The Tything Conservation Area (CA8)

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals  
Adopted by Planning Committee – 14 April 2011

First designated 1980; 11.9 hectares

## Summary of Special Interest

- Street pattern based on medieval suburb with narrow burgage plots and rear access lanes;
- Sites of 12th century St Oswald's Hospital and the Priory of Whiston;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings: 75 listed buildings including 5 grade II\*;
- Nos 2 - 4 Barbourne Road, remaining from 17th century;
- Cohesive 18th century architectural character especially along the west side of Foregate Street;
- Mostly 18th century appearance with 19th century and later infill in The Tything;
- Large institutional buildings on east side of streets, including RGS;
- Ensemble of civic buildings in Foregate Street;
- Pierpoint Street with historic buildings;
- Taylor's Lane, a medieval alley;
- Traditional 'back lanes' of Farrier Street (much altered), Britannia Road and Back Walk;
- Lodges, railings and forecourt to the Shire Hall with statue of Queen Victoria;
- Views to spires of nearby churches;
- Good eastward view along Pierpoint Street;
- Foregate Street railway bridge, an important gateway;
- Nos. 12-20 (even) Barbourne Road, a row of late 18th century dwellings at the northern gateway to the city;
- Historic shopfronts, or shopfront details;
- Prevalence of red brick and painted stucco;
- Ornate door surrounds, iron balconies and other 18th century details;
- St Oswald's Almshouses and Queen Elizabeth Almshouses and their secluded courtyards;

- Grounds and trees to the rear of St Oswald's Chapel;
- Open space and trees in the RGS grounds;
- Street trees;
- Interesting and varied roofscape;
- Local details that collectively and individually give the conservation area a distinctive identity, e.g. foot-scrapers, pavement grills, iron bollards and street name signs.

## Principal Conservation Issues

- Changes to boundaries of conservation area;
- Losses of original architectural details;
- Tree management;
- Settings, views and gateways;
- Historic shopfronts;
- Recent shopfront design;
- Advertisement control;
- Building maintenance and repair;
- Personal security in side alleys;
- Back lanes;
- Design of new development;
- Traffic noise and air pollution;
- Traffic signs;
- Quality of pavement surface.

Heritage and Design  
Tel: 01905 722501  
[www.worcester.gov.uk](http://www.worcester.gov.uk)

## Character Area 1: Foregate Street

There is a mix of uses, primarily business, institutional and residential; includes the City Library, the Crown and County Court, a large cinema and a large bingo club. The west side of Foregate Street has an 18th century appearance with an almost uninterrupted row of 18th century buildings with a 'Georgian' character each having vertical proportions to windows and doors. Buildings are generally 3 storeys in height and there is a strong horizontal emphasis arising from a near uniformity of the line of eaves, string courses and window levels despite the survival of each distinct property with differing details. Red brick is prevalent, laid in Flemish bond, but there are also instances of stucco and painted brick. Ridged roofs of clay tiles are the norm, hidden behind a parapet, with brick stacks with clay pots.

The east side has a number of large purpose-built single-use buildings, with the Gala Bingo and The Postal Order (ex telephone exchange) along with those for civic use. The frontage of the street is broken by the deep set-back of the Shire Hall and entrances to Pierpoint Street and Taylor's Lane.

To the rear, Sansome Walk is notable for views of the grouping of the Judge's Lodgings and Victoria Institute. Farrier Street allows views of the rear faces of historic buildings on Foregate Street while infill development generally provides a street frontage.

## Character Area 2: The Tything

This area comprises the whole of The Tything and Britannia Road. A key characteristic is the marked bend in The Tything, which is greater along the west side of the street with a notable widening in the middle, perhaps the site of a market. Almost every building in The Tything is listed and even the unlisted buildings make a positive contribution to the townscape.

Buildings date predominantly from the late 18th century and early 19th century. The architectural appearance is less cohesive than that of Foregate Street. Building materials are more varied, there are fewer parapets and the building height varies between two and four storeys. There is a marked drop in scale proceeding northwards to Upper Tything. Dormers are common and window glazing patterns are made up with fewer panes of glass. Red brick is common but stucco and painted brick, sometimes painted in bright pastel colours, are also present. Most of the shops are located on the west side and the widening of the street at its mid-point affords good views of the lively, colourful streetscape from either end.

Britannia Road is a traditional 'back lane' between Castle Street and Britannia Square. Many of the properties address both Britannia Road and The Tything. From here there are views of the asymmetrical plan form and variations in building height of the rear of the mainly 18th century properties facing The Tything. A sequence of mainly 19th century workshops is significant to the historical character.

### Key assets and characteristics:

- Distinctive 18th century architectural character especially on waterside;
- Prevalence of red brick;
- Ensemble of historic civic buildings: Shire Hall, Judges' Lodgings, City Museum and Art School;
- Forecourt to the Shire Hall with statue of Queen Victoria;
- Views to spires of three churches;
- Foregate Street railway bridge - an important gateway;
- Historic shopfronts or shopfront details;
- Ornate door surrounds, iron balconies and other 18th century details;
- Historic buildings in Pierpoint Street;
- Eastward view along Pierpoint Street to Sansome Walk;
- Taylor's Lane - a narrow, enclosed medieval alley;
- Iron bollards in Taylor's Lane and forecourt of the Shire Hall;

### Negatives:

- Design of some 20th century development fails to preserve the area's 18th century architectural character;
- Unwelcoming recessed rear exit from Foregate Street Station;
- Poor quality pavements;
- Visual clutter of road signs and traffic lights;
- Cheshire Cheese Entry - potentially intimidating;
- Garish shopfront signage;
- Painting or rendering of brickwork especially;
- Loss of architectural details - original windows, doors and chimneys;
- Blank aspect of rendered gable of No.30 Foregate Street;
- Car park in Sansome Walk - a gap site dominated by the bulk of rear the Gala Bingo Club
- Modern development at Nos.31 and 32 Foregate Street spoil the continuity of the west side of street;
- Historic character dispelled by the wide gap of Castle Street;
- Traffic noise and air pollution in Foregate Street.

### Key assets and characteristics:

- Bends, widening then narrowing of the road;
- Continuous historic development on both sides of the street;
- All frontage buildings are either listed or 'Buildings of Townscape Merit';
- Predominant 18th century appearance with 19th century infill;
- Two large office buildings, formerly Kays at Nos.9/10 and No.23;
- No.1 The Tything set back from the eastern building line;
- Historic shopfronts including a complete 1880s shopfront at Nos.5 and 6;
- Varied rooflines and chimney stacks;
- Prevalence of red brick and painted stucco;
- Ornate door surrounds, iron balconies and other century details;
- Newman's Passage, the vestiges of an early footpath, which adds to pedestrian permeability;
- Historic shopfronts or shopfront details;
- Britannia Road - a traditional 'back lane' with old workshops;
- Modern development in St Mary's Street (Crown Green Court);
- Eastward view along St Mary's Street includes spire of St Mary's church and mature roadside plane trees;

### Negatives:

- Vacant shops at Nos.13, 28 and 53;
- Garish shopfront signage;
- Poor quality pavements;
- Potentially intimidating alley (Newman's Passage);
- Painting or rendering of brickwork has spoiled historic detail;
- Loss of architectural details such as original windows, doors and chimneys;
- No. 6 Britannia Road is out of character because of scale and materials;
- Modern walls, fences and doors in Britannia Road have eroded historic character;
- Traffic noise and air pollution in The Tything.

## Character Area 3: Upper Tything and Barbourne Road.

This area covers Upper Tything and the south end of Barbourne Road. The almshouses, chapel and grounds of St Oswald's Close are also included because of its historic links with the site of the Cistercian Nunnery and because it marks a significant drop in scale in scale of development, to two storeys as compared with the predominantly three storey scale of The Tything.

The area has a mix of retail, residential and educational uses. There are no shops on the east side of the street which contains, in the main, the buildings of Alice Ottley School and the Royal Grammar School. The west side of Upper Tything is predominantly three storeys or less. It comprises an almost continuous row of 19th century development, interrupted only by the entrance to Back Lane. The east side which contains many buildings set back from the road, has a less uniform appearance and a more spacious character than the thin strip of continuous development on the west side. However, the streetscape is softened by some roadside trees (three in the pavement outside St Oswald's Close) but dulled by a long brick wall in front the Grammar School.

The area is less economically active than Foregate Street and The Tything and there is evidence of poorly maintained buildings, especially above ground floor. Trees, particularly in the school grounds, are a feature. Back Walk is a narrow, traditional back lane with a strong sense of enclosure and a variety of frontage development.

### Key assets and characteristics:

- St Oswald's Close including chapel and courtyard;
- Open space of grounds to the rear of St Oswald's;
- Buildings of RGS;
- Tertiary shopping area;
- Historic shopfronts and shopfront details;
- Georgian brick-built town houses at Nos.12- 20 Barbourne Road;
- Site of medieval Cistercian Nunnery and St Oswald's Hospital;
- Open space and trees in school grounds on the east side;
- Long brick boundary wall on Tennis Walk;
- Queen Elizabeth Almshouses and secluded courtyard;
- Narrow depth and almost continuous development on west side;
- Important northern gateway to the city at pinchpoint in Barbourne Road;
- Timber-framed No. 2 - 4 Barbourne Road, a 17th century building;
- Raised walkway with railings in front of Nos.12-20 Barbourne Road;

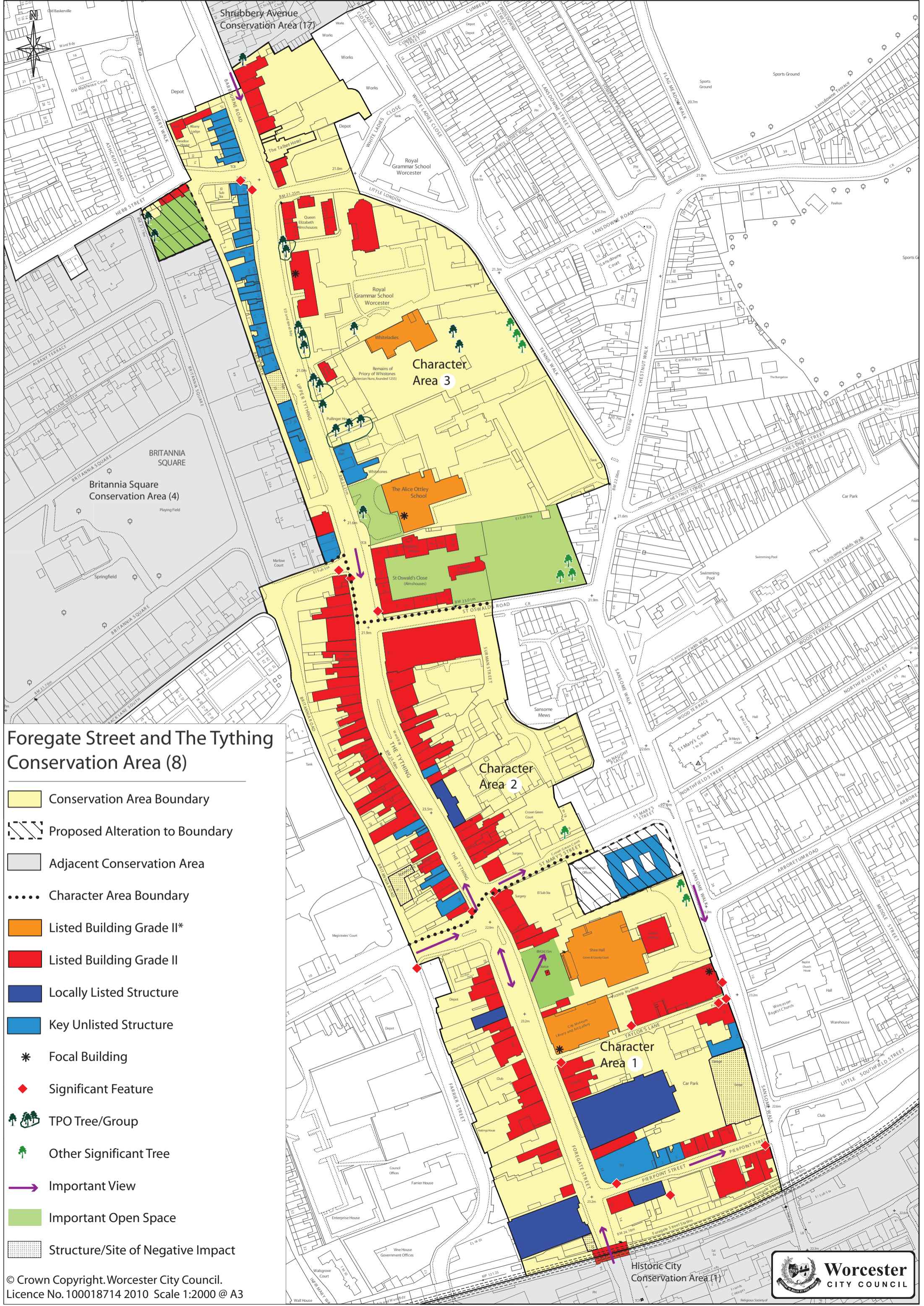
- Single storey shops and shopfronts at Nos.40a/ 40b/41 and 42 Upper Tything;
- Back Walk, a traditional 'back lane';
- Attractive historic shopfront at No.9 Barbourne Road;

### Negatives:

- No.48a (Machine Mart) Upper Tything detracts from the special historic character of the area in scale, details and signage;
- Loss of historic streetscape in the Little London area;
- Some upper floors in need of routine maintenance and repair;
- Poor quality pavement surfaces;
- Some sense of insecurity in Back Walk;
- Garish shop signage and advertising spoils historic ambience;
- Painting of brickwork has obscured historic detail;
- Loss of original detail e.g. windows, doors, chimneys and roof materials;
- Inappropriate galvanized steel railings in front of Nos.12-14 Barbourne Road;
- Westward view along St Oswald's Road terminates in a long empty shopfront (No.28 The Tything);
- Traffic noise and air pollution.

For Character Area boundaries see the map on the back page

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.



### Foregate Street and The Tything Conservation Area (8)

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



Historic City Conservation Area (1)