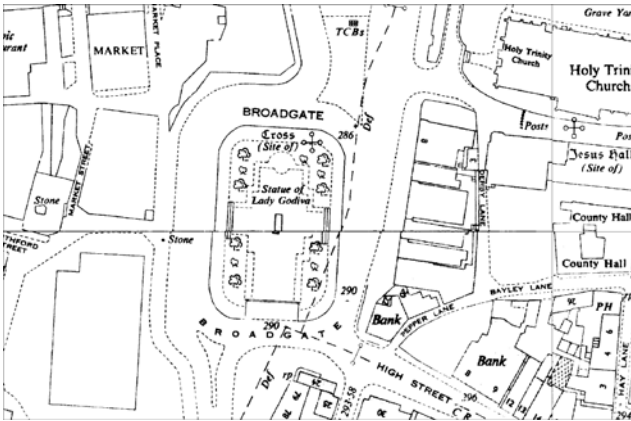# COVENTRY HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION FINAL REPORT

English Heritage Project Number 5927

Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk

Front cover images: Extract of Board of Health Map showing Broadgate in 1851
               Extract of Ordnance Survey map showing Broadgate in 1951
               Extract of aerial photograph showing Broadgate in 2010

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COVENTRY HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a desk-based analysis of the historic development of the landscape, principally from cartographic sources. It results in the definition of polygons in GIS format identifying land use types of different dates. Initially applied to rural areas, HLC projects have recently been undertaken for urban areas including Merseyside and the Black Country. Unlike conservation area appraisals, HLC provides comprehensive coverage of the whole of a given local authority area, not just designated sites or areas. HLC itself does not seek to ascribe relative values to different character polygons, but one outcome might be the identification of areas meriting conservation area status or buildings or structures meriting local or statutory listing. HLC can be undertaken at different levels of resolution, for example the Black Country HLC has been followed by a higher resolution characterisation of the Wolverhampton ABCD area. Funded by English Heritage, HLC projects have been completed for almost two thirds of England and the Coventry HLC will contribute to the data available for analysis at regional and national levels.

1.2 Location and Context

With a population of 317,000, Coventry is the 12th largest UK city overall (outside of London) and is the second largest city in the West Midlands region after Birmingham, which lies 20 miles to the northwest.

Unlike many other UK cities, Coventry does not have an extensive 'greater' urban area because its boundaries were drawn to include practically all of its suburbs, and partly because Coventry has comparatively little in the way of contiguous satellite towns and dormitory settlements. The M6 motorway lies directly to the north of Coventry and acts as a boundary which prevents expansion into the Nuneaton and Bedworth urban area.

Figure 1: *The location of Coventry within the UK*

This is true also of the areas of green belt which surround the city on all sides and which have helped to prevent the city expanding and enveloping surrounding towns such as Kenilworth, Leamington Spa, Warwick, Rugby and Balsall Common. Within the city boundary approximately three quarters of the area is developed with the final quarter in the northwest of the city remaining as predominantly rural land.

Figure 2*: The location of Coventry within the West Midlands and surrounding areas for which HLC Projects are complete*

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Other information © Coventry City Council
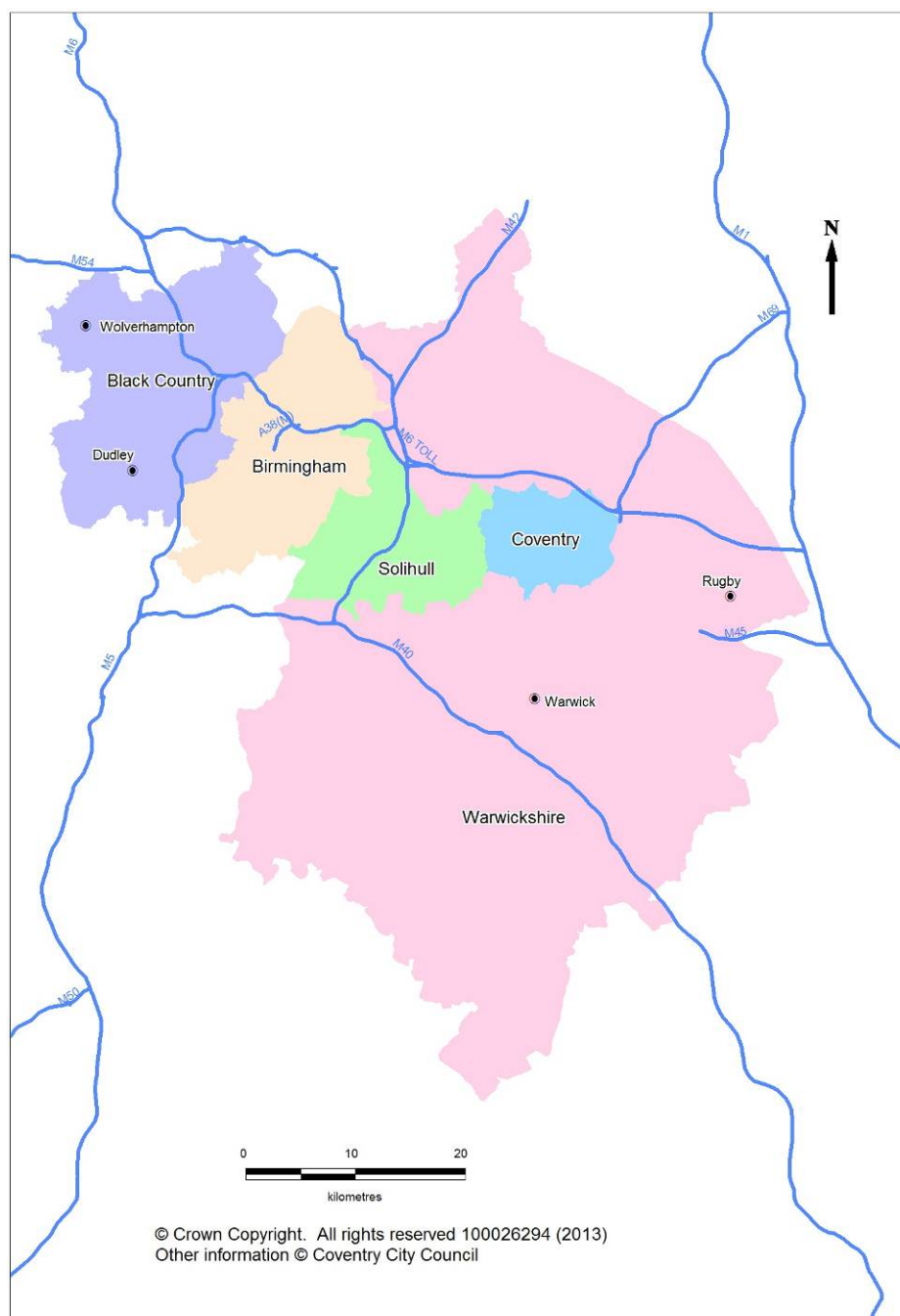
1.3 Coventry HLC: Aims, Objectives and Access to the Dataset

This study is part of a wider project aimed at establishing a new information resource on the historic character of the English landscape. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) approach is one that has been used to define Coventry's character as represented by the visible historic environment by using character types to identify and define character areas. The Coventry HLC project covers an area of 9834 hectares, 7789 hectares of which is urban.

Within Coventry, the main objective of the HLC is to ensure that the historic environment is fully incorporated into all future development for the city. It should be used at the early stages of planning at a strategic level and should guide detailed research at later stages of design.

This report is a summary of a much larger HLC dataset that comprises a GIS layer with each polygon linking to text record. Each record contains details of the HLC type (i.e. current land use), its period of origin, a short description, previous land use, and sources used to create the record.

The records are held within a relational database structure using HBSMR software supplied by exegesis SDM Ltd. There are just under 1800 records covering the city centre and suburbs to the city boundary.

The Coventry HLC is a publicly accessible database and can be viewed by appointment. Alternatively extracts of the dataset can be requested by contacting:

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2. COVENTRY'S PREHISTORY AND HISTORY

2.1 Coventry's Prehistory

There is no direct evidence for human occupation within the Coventry City boundary during the Palaeolithic period. Although field walking exercises carried out between 2008 and 2010 recovered twelve flint tools and cores of Middle to Lower Palaeolithic date these were all considered to be found in surface deposits of drift geology and therefore they have no context.

That is not to say that early humans were not moving through Coventry's landscape during this period, however. Occupation would have been determined by changes to the climate, resulting changes to the environment and the consequent migration of animals such as reindeer and bison. The Bytham River, an ancient river system whose northern bank is thought to equate to the high ground in the north Warwickshire area, ran through the Midlands and into East Anglia. This may have been a major route into the British mainland during the Lower Palaeolithic period (500,000-150,000 BC). Furthermore, one of the earliest archaeological sites in the country lies just to the south of Coventry at Waverley Wood Quarry near Bubbenhall. Finds recovered from the site during the 1980s included the teeth and bones of a straight-tusked elephant and four handaxes, three of which were made from andesite, a volcanic rock which is only found in north-west England. The site dates to over 500,000 years old.

Iron Age roundhouses excavated at Warwick University Campus

Evidence for occupation within the Coventry area during the Mesolithic period (10,000-4,001) is more certain and two potential settlement sites have recently been identified through field walking on the higher south-facing ground in the north of the city; one site to the west of Fivefield Road and another between Tamworth Road and Bennetts Road South. At both sites significant assemblages of flint tools and waste flakes have been

recovered. West of Fivefield Road the diverse set of tool types suggests that a full range of subsistence activities was taking place indicating that this may have been a seasonal settlement used over a long period of time. Occupation of this site continued into the Neolithic period (4000-2201 BC), which also saw new settlement sites develop in several locations either side of Tamworth Road and to the north of Upper Eastern Green Lane. Elsewhere throughout the city a large number of Neolithic axes have been found. This unusually high number relative to the area of the city may be due to the work carried out by Professor Shotton of Birmingham University. The assemblage of finds has been interpreted as being due to chance losses as people travelled through the landscape but equally it could be argued that the axes are indicative of a landscape containing numerous settlements during the Neolithic period.

Conclusive evidence of settlement in the Coventry area during the Bronze Age is yet to be discovered but there is no reason to suppose that this did not occur. Several of the flint assemblages found in the Allesley and Keresley areas suggest that these settlements probably extended from the Neolithic period into the early Bronze Age. There was certainly occupation in the southern part of Coventry during the late Iron Age, settlements having been excavated at Willenhall in the southeast and Warwick University in the southwest. A large earthwork enclosure a kilometre east of this latter site may also date to this period and just north of the modern city border is the hill fort of Corley Camp. Current evidence suggests that occupation during the Roman period was not prolific but recent fieldwork has found evidence of settlement immediately east of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in the city centre as well as north of Upper Eastern Green Lane.

Current archaeological evidence puts the majority of Prehistoric and Roman sites around the periphery of the city but this is largely because these areas have received more attention in terms of archaeological fieldwork due to their rural character. Elsewhere the majority of land within the city is built up and early sites are more difficult to identify. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that other sites may exist across the city, especially along the Rivers Sherbourne and Sowe.

2.2 The Early Medieval/Saxon Period

Excavated remains of a building associated with Godiva and Leofric's 11ᵗʰ Century Priory

The most compelling evidence to date for Saxon occupation within modern-day Coventry is concentrated around Hill Top in the city centre. The foundation of the Benedictine Priory of St Mary in 1043 by Leofric, the Saxon Earl of Mercia and Godiva, his wife, is known from documentary evidence and parts of the site have been intensively excavated over the years. Two stone structures discovered in the most recent excavations of 1999-2000 may belong to Leofric and Godiva's foundation but there is a tradition that this was preceded by St. Osburg's Nunnery, which is thought to have existed on the same site from the mid-9ᵗʰ Century before being destroyed by Edric the Traitor in 1016. The same archaeological excavations also recovered fragments of a human skull from beneath one of the stone structures. The fragments were radiocarbon dated to AD 870, clear evidence that there was late Saxon occupation on this site at about the same time as the foundation of St.

Osburg's. Whilst the Hill Top area may have been a religious centre during this period, mid to late Saxon pottery recovered from excavations in Bayley Lane to the southeast suggests the presence of domestic settlement in this area. There may also have been settlement on the south-facing slopes to the north of the River Sherbourne where environmental evidence indicates that coppicing of the woodland was taking place here during the 10th Century.

Elsewhere within the modern city archaeological evidence for Saxon occupation is lacking but place-name evidence suggests that there may have been settlements of this period at Allesley, Keresley, Canley and Binley, the 'ley' ending meaning a clearing in a wooded area.

2.3 The Medieval Period (1066-1539)

The extent to which Coventry existed as an urban settlement at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 is uncertain. The entry for Coventry records it only as a large farming community but it has been argued that this represents Godiva's rural estate and that the urban area was omitted from the survey in the same way as London and Winchester.

Either way, in the following years the Norman Earls of Chester began to play their part in encouraging economic growth; they had obtained a large part of the Coventry/Cheylesmore estate and built a motte and bailey castle in the late 11th century. Coventry Castle, except for a few fragments, was gradually dismantled from the mid-12th century onwards and a new town plan was laid over its site.

Medieval timber framed buildings on Spon Street

Despite the complications which followed in the jurisdiction of the town between the Prior of the Benedictine Monastery and the Earl, there was unparalleled urban growth and Coventry became a major centre for the making and trading of cloth, particularly wool. An important influence was the proximity of the Cistercian sheep granges of Combe Abbey and Stoneleigh Abbey and another three monastic houses were also founded; Whitefriars, Greyfriars and Charterhouse. By the 14th century Coventry was the fourth largest city in England and the scale and richness of buildings reflected its large size and the self-esteem of the ruling merchant guilds. The town wall, constructed over 180 years from the mid-14th century, was less a defensive structure and more an expression of civic pride in a town which had 'come of age'.
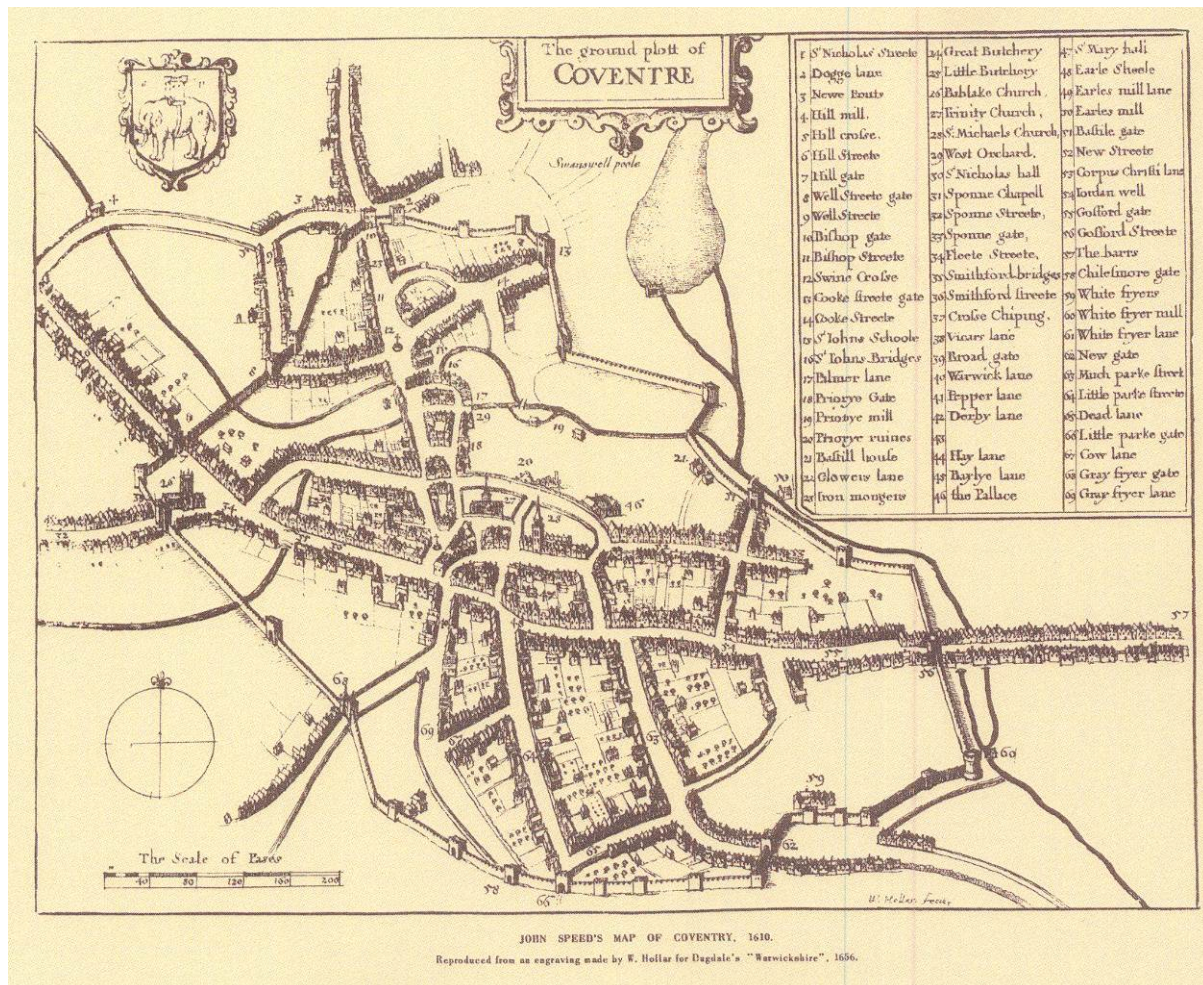
Map of Coventry by John Speed, 1610

Beyond the city walls lay a largely agricultural landscape. The Lammas and Michelmas lands, used for common pasturing rights at particular times of the year, restricted the expansion of the city on its west, north and east sides until their enclosure during the 19th Century. To the south the deer park of Cheylesmore Manor had a similar effect.

Beyond this, two differing patterns of ancient settlement and agriculture existed in the medieval period; the Arden landscape of north Warwickshire and the Feldon landscape of south Warwickshire. Coventry seems to sit on the border between the Arden and Feldon areas. The Arden landscape comprises hedged, irregular-shaped enclosed fields and small woodlands. Place-names which end in 'Green', such as Pickford Green and Brownshill Green, are often indicative of the Arden landscape, which is interspersed with farmsteads linked by narrow, often sunken lanes. In contrast, settlements in the Feldon landscape were nucleated, often around a church and with a moated manor house nearby. Settlements were often surrounded by, or located close to, large open field systems. These were later enclosed to form a pattern of larger, regular rectilinear fields. The historic village cores of Walsgrave on Sowe, Canley, Binley, Allesley and possibly Hall Green and Bell Green in Foleshill, with their nearby open fields, were more typical of the Feldon landscape. Parts of Coundon and Keresley in the north and northwest of Coventry, as well as parts of Allesley

beyond the former area of the open fields, retain many characteristics of the Arden landscape. Dispersed throughout the area were also large areas of common or waste, for example Little and Great Heaths in the Foleshill area, Bradnocke and Hernies Waste in north Coundon and Sowe Waste. The waste in Coundon was enclosed by St. Mary's Priory fairly early on in the medieval period but elsewhere, such as at Foleshill and Corley Common, the wastes remained until the 18th and 19th Centuries. Several commons, such as Gosford and Stoke Greens and Hearsall Common still remain today.

2.4 The Post Medieval Period (1540-1836)

By the early 1500s the wool and cloth industry had started to decline and economic stagnation began to set in. The Dissolution of Coventry's monastic houses from 1539 caused further disruption, their churches and many of their other buildings being demolished. Remaining buildings, for example the east cloister range at Whitefriars and the Prior's lodgings at Charterhouse, were granted by the Crown to wealthy individuals who converted them into private residences. The Bendictine Priory Cathedral in the centre of the city was slowly taken down, the only cathedral to be demolished in England at the Dissolution.

The economic downturn meant that elsewhere the medieval city became fossilised and by the late 18th Century, the beginning of the city's second boom, Coventry was still essentially a medieval town packed with timber-framed buildings.

During this period the new successful industries of silk ribbon weaving and watchmaking emerged. The Coventry Canal was opened in 1769 and the Foleshill and Stoney Stanton Roads were turnpiked. By the early 1800s the population had doubled to 16,000 and it continued to grow through the first half of the 19th Century. The remaining large open areas within the walled city, for example the sites of Whitefriars and Greyfriars, and Bull Yard, were developed but housing for the working population was mainly accommodated by building rows of tiny, often single aspect, cottages within the long burgage plots of the   medieval city. These became known as court dwellings.

Court 38, Spon Street   (Reproduced by permission of Coventry History Centre, Herbert Museum and Art Gallery)

An industrial corridor developed along the Coventry Canal and the turnpike roads particularly in Foleshill, Wyken and Hawkesbury as the coal mining industry grew. The ribbon weaving and watchmaking industries also expanded into Radford, Keresley and Foleshill. As a result road-side squatter settlements developed and other pockets of common land were also colonised. Elsewhere, in the rural south and west of the city the small village centres of Allesley, Stivichall, Binley and Walsgrave on Sowe remained untouched by these developments.

The early years of the 19th Century saw the first significant areas of suburban development to the southwest of the city around the old Summerland Butts Lane linking Greyfriars Green and Spon End. There was also some development to the northwest in the Hill Street and Upper Well Street area and the Dog Lane (later Leicester Street) area to the north near the terminus of the Coventry Canal.

These were the only parcels of land adjoining the old city that were not restricted to development by common grazing rights on the Lammas and Michelmas Lands. In order to house the ever-growing population and to ease overcrowding in the city the first development that was completely detached from the old city began in 1828; eight streets at Hillfields. The development was based on the line of an old route from Swanswell Mill to Primrose Hill and ran north to the old Harnall Lane. Its significance to Coventry was recognised and early on in its development it was referred to as 'New Town'. By 1837 the streets appear to be well built up with properties ranging from formal terraces, for example on the south side of Primrose Hill Street, to groups of 'back to backs' in courts.

Extract from the 1849 Holy Trinity Tithe Map showing the Hillfields development

2.5 Mid to Late 19th Century and Beginning of the 20th Century (1837-1905)

The success of the ribbon weaving industry continued into the 1850s and ensured a steady build-up of the Hillfields suburb with the development of the distinctive three-storey 'topshop', with wide top floor workshop windows. At the height of the boom several topshops were sometimes amalgamated into 'cottage factories' which shared a common steam power source. The best example of this, Eli Green's triangle of cottage factory dwellings at Vernon Street, was sadly demolished in the 1970s.

Three-storey ribbon weaving top shops in South Street (Reproduced by permission of Coventry History Centre, Herbert Museum and Art Gallery)

The arrival of the London and Birmingham Railway in 1838 had little direct impact on industrial development, which was already benefiting from the Coventry and Oxford Canals and turnpike road communications, particularly on the strategic London to Holyhead Road. The new railway line avoided the built up area of the city to the south and had little influence on its physical development.

Coventry's other successful industry of watchmaking was centred on the west side of the city around Spon Street. It avoided the fast developing Hillfields and grew more steadily during the 19th Century consolidating the Butts suburb. Eventually in 1846 it led to the planned development at Chapelfields, a triangle of land between the Allesley Old Road and Hearsall Lane, with Craven, Duke, Lord and Mount Streets being rapidly built up with distinctive watchmakers 'middleshops'. The watchmakers considered themselves to be superior to the ribbon weavers land from the street their houses appeared to be ordinary two-storey domestic dwellings. The workshops with their wide windows for the maximum light required
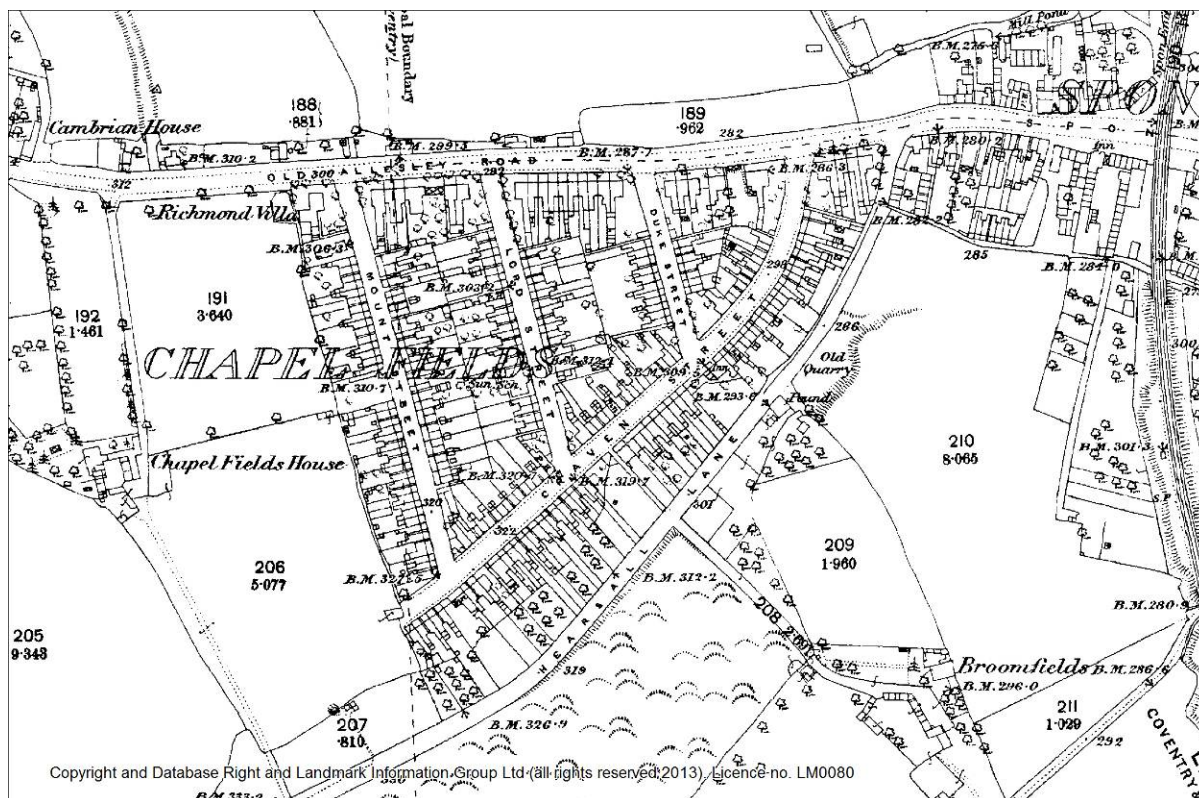
Extract from the 1ˢᵗ Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1:2,500 scale) circa 1888 showing the Chapelfields development

for their intricate work were concealed at the back of the property under a 3ʳᵈ residential storey or a rear wing.

At about the same time an early building society movement, the Freehold Land Societies, played a significant role in expanding the physical extent of the city. They offered opportunities for ambitious Coventry artisans to leave the crowded inner city by buying available development land and acquire voting rights at the same time. The first scheme in 1848 consisted of just one street off Harnall Lane, aptly named Freehold Street. This was followed in 1852 by three more ambitious developments well away from the city at Earlsdon to the southwest, Upper Stoke to the north east and at Red Lane in Foleshill.

The Earlsdon development was primarily aimed at the watchmaking community and appears to have been a modest success, although only half the plots had been developed by the time of the 1888 Ordnance Survey Map. The development of Upper Stoke, however, was aimed at the ribbon weavers and appears to have fallen victim almost immediately to the slump brought on by the Cobden Treaty of 1860 with very low initial take up. The Red Lane scheme had a direct link into the city along the newly turnpiked Stoney Stanton Road and was more successful but it was to be over 50 years before these areas became physically part of the expanding city.

Two further Freehold Land Society developments were also promoted in the early 1850s, the first being at Howard Street south of Harnall Lane West with its neat grid layout in an area which was already developing. The second at Spittlemoor – Raglan Street/Lower Ford Street

– with its distinctive fan of streets was well embedded within the emerging Hillfields development area and was quickly built up with a mixture of housing and industry.

Apart from in Earlsdon there has been little documentary research of these early developments despite their influence on the city's suburban form and the fact that the physical evidence is being steadily eroded. The Howard Street area which included an interesting mixture of topshops and mid Victorian terraces was largely cleared in the 1970s, as was a group of particularly fine topshops in Stratford Street within the Upper Stoke development. A large section of the Red Lane scheme, though already somewhat eroded, was lost to a comprehensive development in 2007.

Elsewhere, the late ribbon weaving boom of the 1850s also intensified the sporadic roadside ribbon and squatter settlements developments across the enclosed heaths of Foleshill at Edgwick, Little Heath, Longford, Courthouse Green, Aldermans Green and Bell Green further pronouncing development stretching north from the city.

Following the collapse of the ribbon weaving industry in 1860 three decades of stagnation began and it wasn't until the 1890s that further significant suburban expansion ensued in connection with the new cycle industry for which Coventry became the national centre. By the early 20th Century this had evolved into the motor car and motor cycle industries, and the city's population almost doubled from 62,000 in 1901 to 106,000 in 1911.

2.6 The first half of the 20th Century (1906-1955)

This next wave of expansion was subject to the byelaw controls which had been introduced under the later 19th century Public Health and Local Government Acts. In 1890 and 1899 the City expanded its administrative control over the rapidly developing areas of Earlsdon, Stoke and Foleshill. They were quickly filling up with the very tightly built, regular streets of narrow-fronted, tunnel back terraced houses that are typical of the Midlands. Street and housing modules were simply packed onto parcels of land as they became available. Minimum widths for carriageways and footways were laid down as were minimum front building lines from the centre of the street and requirements for rear access for refuse disposal. 'Back to back' and courtyard housing was now forbidden and minimum standards became the common standard to which all developers built.

Whilst the filling in of the Foleshill area was fairly haphazard a more ordered progress can be discerned from early 20th Century OS maps of the uniform developments that emerged on the green fields of Earlsdon and Stoke. Suburban development was supported by and then followed the electric tramway network with further branches out to Bell Green along the Stoney Stanton Road, Stoke Green via Hillfields, Earlsdon and Chapelfields by 1905.

In contrast, Cheylesmore Park remained largely undeveloped, apart from some industry at Parkside and upmarket housing along Park Road. Development along Warwick Road and Barrs Hill provided small enclaves of middle class housing. Throughout the later 19th century houses fronting Foleshill Road were also popular among the middle classes but increasing industrialisation of the area in the 20th century resulted in a more downmarket atmosphere in this area.

By 1921 the population of Coventry had reached 133,000. There was a more ordered approach to suburban development and a steady improvement in development standards. Even lower class houses built during this period had a small front garden and bay windows. The Coventry Town Planning Scheme No. 1 which was drawn up from 1926 – 1931 detailed routes and widths for main arterial and connecting roads, as well as specifying maximum housing densities in designated areas. Zones in north Foleshill, parts of Stoke and Binley were earmarked for industrial development. During the war some large scale social house building had started at Stoke Heath, London Road and Radford for munitions workers. This continued in the 1920s and the first large city council housing estate was begun on fields at Radford. These 'garden city' style estates featured cottages with wider frontages and larger front gardens and more interesting curving street layouts than the earlier tight grid layouts. These standards were later followed by the private developers, giving rise to a characteristic pattern of this phase of development - the typical inter-war street.

Whereas the late Victorian and early Edwardian cycle factories were concentrated in the city centre, Coventry's large scale modern car, engineering and artificial textile factories were widely dispersed across the city so workers could still live near their employment in the suburbs. Humber/Hillman, the later Rootes Group, was at Stoke, as was the massive Peel Connor – later GEC- telephone works. Standard was in Canley and Daimler in Radford. Each was the focus of a large area of well organised suburban development. The two Courtaulds rayon works were located in Foleshill as well as the gasworks and several brickworks. This reinforced the more workaday development of the northern sector of the city which mingled with the older industrial settlements of the coalfield fringe. After 1934 development on the former Cheylesmore Park finally began with an attractive central park with lake and a shopping parade, terraced housing in the north and higher quality semi-detached housing to the south. Similar developments focused around a shopping parade at Jubilee Crescent took place to the northwest of the city centre on the site of Radford Aerodrome and was aimed workers at the Dunlop and Jaguar factories at Whitmore Park.

Coventry's modern industries were not seriously affected by the depressions of the 1920s and 30s and suburban development steadily increased throughout this period. In 1936, in view of political developments in Europe, the Government decided to expand the aircraft industry and embarked upon a Shadow Factory Scheme for the production of aero engines, aircraft and associated equipment. Other key areas of military production soon followed. In Coventry this meant the building of new factories and the extension of existing ones at sites such as the Standard factory at Banner Lane and Armstrong Siddeley at Parkside, Whitley and Baginton. Alvis had 20 sites in Coventry alone. This expansion of industry led to a huge influx of workers to the city. By 1940 the population had grown to 240,000 and in the period leading up to the Second World War over 4000 houses were being built each year. At the outbreak of war vast areas in Stivichall, Willenhall, Coundon and Wyken had already been prepared with new street networks ready for development when all non-priority building came to a dramatic halt. Many of these partly made up streets subsequently formed the basis of large wartime workers hostels which, in turn, later formed ready-made locations for large quantities of prefabricated single-storey detached emergency housing (prefabs) for the homeless victims of the bombing raids which hit the inner and industrial neighbourhoods of the city. The gradual redevelopment of these vast wartime 'temporary' housing areas for new

mainly social housing has been an ongoing theme of Coventry's post-war development right up to the present day.

2.7 Second Half of the 20th Century (1955-present)

During the early post-war years the population stood at about 260,000 but the resumption of house building was delayed and many Coventrians were living in makeshift accommodation. The former shadow factories of the war turned to car production, such as Daimler at Allesley, Standard at Banner Lane and Rootes at Ryton on Dunsmore, and the surrounding areas became the focus of suburban expansion. Early post war council housing estates were laid out on spacious lines at Monks Park, Holbrooks and Canley. The 1950s saw innovatively designed council housing estates of mixed houses and flats built in the Tile Hill area and later in the decade the radical 'Radburn' style layout, with housing fronting pedestrian greens, was developed at Willenhall. At Wood End densely packed concrete system housing was constructed in the Henley Green neighbourhood in an attempt to increase throughput.

This was followed in the 1960s by developments to the south of the old village of Binley in the Ernsford Grange area and the Stivichall Grange development, which showed some degree of innovation. In some of the areas that were earmarked for building prior to the war, development resumed, especially in the Stivichall area. Not all building took place on previously undeveloped land, however, and the surviving areas of Coventry's first suburban developments at Hillfields and Spon End were swept away to be replaced by high rise flats, which were regarded as the height of modernity and innovation at the time.

The Upper Precinct, 1965

By 1971 the population of Coventry had reached its peak at 336,000 and the city had expanded in most directions to its modern boundary but the decade saw the collapse of

several major industries and the end of the boom period. Suburban expansion slowed dramatically but did not come to a complete halt, although new development areas became less extensive and ambitious than those of the 1950s and 60s. In recent years, most housing has been accommodated on 'brownfield' sites on land made redundant by industrial contraction, such as the Daimler Green and Parkside urban villages.

In the city centre, despite the period of economic growth from the 19th century onwards, a historic town of national importance survived into the 1930s. Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War decisions were been made to modernise parts of the city centre and historic streets such as Great and Little Butcher Row were demolished. These plans coupled with the destruction of the wartime bombing led to comprehensive redevelopment in the 1950s and 1960s so that the new and emerging suburbs had a modern city centre to match. By 1954 the Broadgate area had been redeveloped with Broadgate House being completed first followed by the Leofric Hotel and Owen Owen department store. The Precinct was one of the first pedestrian shopping centres in Europe and was completed by 1956.

Broadgate circa 1971

In more recent years there has been a steady decline of car industry on which much of Coventry's 20th Century prosperity was founded. Several of the large car production plants situated within the city, such as those at Bannerbrook Lane and Humber Road, have closed and their sites reused for large residential developments.

3. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The Coventry HLC was undertaken in accordance with the methodology used for other urban areas - Merseyside, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, the Black Country and Birmingham.

3.1 Sources of Data

The Coventry Characterisation is based on a desk-based examination of published sources, mainly maps and aerial photographs, and reconstruction of the landscape of the pre-Inclosure landscapes from documentary research. All sources are summarised in Table 1. For large areas of the city this analysis is based on a sequence of the Ordnance Survey's 1:2,500 maps (25 inches to approximately one mile) published from the 1880s until the 1930s as well as the series of 1:10,000 post-war maps. The first two editions (c. 1888 and 1905) cover the whole of Coventry. The available third edition (1913-14) covers the central area of the city but does not extend out to the boundary and the fourth edition (c. 1925) is the reverse of this, with no coverage in the central area. The fifth edition (c. 1936) covers the whole of the city. Ordnance Survey maps for the second half of the 20th Century formed an invaluable source with five ephochs covering the period 1955 to 1992.

For earlier periods Coventry is fortunate to have a plethora of historic maps. There is almost total coverage by mid-19th Century tithe maps. For the 18th Century there is one Inclosure Map for Foleshill Parish but several estate maps and farm surveys covering parts of Stivichall, Stoneleigh, Allesley, Binley, Walsgrave on Sowe and Wyken. Smaller areas of the city are covered by 16th and 17th Century estate maps, the earliest being John Goodwin's 1597 'Map of the Severall Grounds Lying in Hurste, Flechamstead, and Candley, being the lands of the Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Leigh'.

Table 1: Summary of Maps and Aerial Photographs Used as Sources

Year of Publication/survey or Period	Map/Photograph	Coverage
Medieval[1]	Open fields of Allesley Parish	Approx 33% Allesley Parish
Medieval[1]	Medieval Landscape of Sowe Parish	Approx 80% of former Sowe Parish
Medieval[1]	Medieval Landscape of Coundon Parish	100% of former Coundon Parish
Medieval[1]	Medieval Landscape of Stivichall Parish	100% of former Stivichall Parish
Medieval[1]	Medieval Landscape of Keresley Parish	Approx 66% of former Keresley Parish
1597	John Goodwin's Plot of the Severall Grounds Lying in Hurste, Flechamstead, and Candley, being the lands of the Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Leigh	Approx 66% of former Stoneleigh Parish
1655[1]	Stoke Inclosure	Approx 50% of former Stoke Parish
1656[1]	Allesley Inclosure	Approx 33% of Allesley Parish

1668	Landscape of the Caludon Estate	Approx 50% of former Wyken Parish
1699	Map of Foleshill	Area NW of Bell Green Rd
1756[1]	Sowe Inclosure	Approx 33% of former Sowe Parish
1766	Survey of the Manor and Parish of Stoneley with lands belonging to Lord Leigh	100% of former Stoneleigh Parish
1775	Plan and Survey of the Estate of Stivichall	100% of former Stivichall Parish
1775	Foleshill Inclosure Map	Approx 66% of former Stivichall Parish
1775	Foleshill Antient Inclosures and Cottages - Particular Survey of Antient Inclosures in the Parish of Foleshill	Approx 66% of former Foleshill Parish
1778	Craven Estate Maps for Wyken, Binely and Sowe	
1787	Survey of the Manor and Parish of Stivichall with lands belonging to Arthur Gregory	100% of former Stivichall Parish
1770-1808	Allesley Farm Surveys	Approx 66% of Allesley Parish
1841-1849	Various Tithe Maps	Total coverage apart from Wyken and Stivichall Parishes and parts of Sowe and Foleshill
1851	Board of Health Map	City centre
1888-1889	1:2,500 1st Edition Ordnance Survey	Total coverage
1905	1:2,500 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey	Total coverage
1913-1914	1:2,500 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey	Partial coverage
1925	1:2,500 4th Edition Ordnance Survey	Partial coverage
1936-1937	1:2,500 5th Edition Ordnance Survey	Total coverage
1955 (Epoch 1)	1:10,000 Ordnance Survey	Total coverage
1961-1970 (Epoch 2)	1:10,000 Ordnance Survey	Total coverage
1970-1979 (Epoch 3)	1:10,000 Ordnance Survey	Partial coverage
1974-1982 (Epoch 4)	1:10,000 Ordnance Survey	Total coverage
1980-1982 (Epoch 5)	1:10,000 Ordnance Survey	Partial coverage
1992 (Epoch 6)	1:10,000 Ordnance Survey	Total coverage
2005, 2007, 2010	Aerial Photography	Total coverage
2012	Ordnance Survey Mastermap (Topoline)	Total coverage

[1]Reconstruction of the landscape using various documentary sources

In contrast to some other HLC Projects Coventry was fortunate to have an extensive range of sources to draw upon when creating the character polygon data. This is particularly true of the 18th Century Estate and Inclosure maps. This, and the variety of maps available for the 20th Century, which saw the most intensive period of development in the city, makes it unlikely that any particular period is under-represented in the dataset.

3.2 Modern Land Use

As in other recent HLC projects, each polygon was given a Broad Character Type. Under each Broad Type was a narrower HLC Character Type, which was also assigned to the character polygon and together they record the current, most recent land use within the polygon. The classification system employed was largely the same as that used for the Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation except for those character types coming under the broad type of 'Fieldscapes'. In this instance, the character types used were those adopted by the Warwickshire HLC. The Broad Type Classifications can be viewed in Table 2 and the HLC Character Types in Appendix 1.

Within some polygons it was sometimes necessary to use a single HLC Type to describe a polygon which might actually contain one or more different land uses, or features from different periods. In these cases, the dominant type, was recorded. Other less dominant types contained within such a polygon are referred to within the description field of the database.

Table 2: Broad Type Categories Used in the Coventry HLC

Broad Type	Scope Note
Commercial	Areas which are predominantly retail/office.
Extractive	Areas of quarrying which is not linked with a specific production plant.
Fieldscapes	Areas of farm land, both arable and pasture.
Industrial	Areas where industrial activity is the predominant activity.
Militarised	Military sites.
Open Land	Areas of open land such as common and heath. Also for derelict land which had previously had industry or housing on it and for small vacant plots which appear among housing areas.
Recreation	Sites of recreation, professional sport, and large landscaped areas
Religious	All religious buildings and for large cemeteries.
Settlement	Areas of residential housing, which can include other elements such as shops or public houses as attributes where they do not cover an area large enough for their own polygon.
Civic	Services including educational facilities, medical facilities, emergency services, government & local government, community centres
Transport	Transport networks and services - including linear features (canals) but not roads, unless they are a significant feature of the character polygon.
Woodland	Areas of woodland.
Water	Large areas of water, for example, lakes.

3.3 Period of Origin of Modern Land Use

The date ranges used to define period of origin for current land use (i.e. 'HLC Type') are broad. The beginning and end dates are largely defined by the years in which the principal source maps were surveyed/published but also by significant points in history which led directly to physical changes to the city's landscape, for example the boom in the watchmaking and ribbon weaving industries in the mid to late 19th Century.

The decision to use these broad period ranges was made because if a larger number of categories had been used this might make it difficult to discern any patterns in the data at the analysis stage. However, where HLC Type polygons fell within a particular period range but it was possible to narrow down that range using specific sources, the narrower range was recorded in the individual HLC record in the database. This creates the opportunity for more detailed analysis based on period of origin at a later stage. Table 3 shows the period of origin ranges used in the HLC.

Table 3: Period Ranges within the Coventry HLC

1066-1539 (Medieval)	This follows the standard HER period and used where HLC Type is known from entries in the HER or from landscape reconstructions for later documentary sources.
1540-1836 (Post-medieval)	A date range from the end of the medieval period to the beginning of the watchmaking and ribbon weaving boom and used where HLC Type is known from entries in the HER or present on 16th to mid-19th Century maps.
1837-1905 (Mid to Late 19th Century)	Used where HLC Type is present on Tithe Map and/or 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1:2,500 scale)
1906-1955 (Early 20th Century)	Used where HLC Type is present on one or more of the 2nd to 5th Edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1:2,500 scale) and/or the 1955 (Epoch 1) 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey map.
1956-1992 (Mid to Late 20th Century)	Used where HLC Type is present on one or more of the Epoch 2 to Epoch 6 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Maps
1993-2012 (Late 20th/Early 21st Century)	Used where HLC Type is present on 2005, 2007 and/or 2012 aerial photographs or on modern Master Map Ordnance Survey mapping

3.4 Past Land Use

The narrow categories used to describe previous land use are largely the same as those used for the current landscape discussed above. There are a small number of cases, however, where a category of previous land use does not have an equivalent term, for example, where an HLC polygon lies in the area of a former medieval open field.

One important point to remember is that whilst a previous land use type might geographically fall within an HLC polygon, the polygon is recording current land use whose boundaries may not necessarily be the same as those of the previous type. Where the current HLC type's boundaries do reflect those of the previous type this is recorded in the description of the HLC record.

4. ANALYSIS OF COVENTRY'S LANDSCAPE

One of the advantages of creating HLC data is for its use in associating parts of the landscape that have similar character traits. An example of this is the allocation of each part of the landscape to categories of modern land use (broad type). HLC data can also be used to examine the sequence of changes in the landscape over time, whether for a specific location or in order to make comparisons across the city. The ways in which the HLC data can be analysed are numerous but two main themes will be explored in this report.
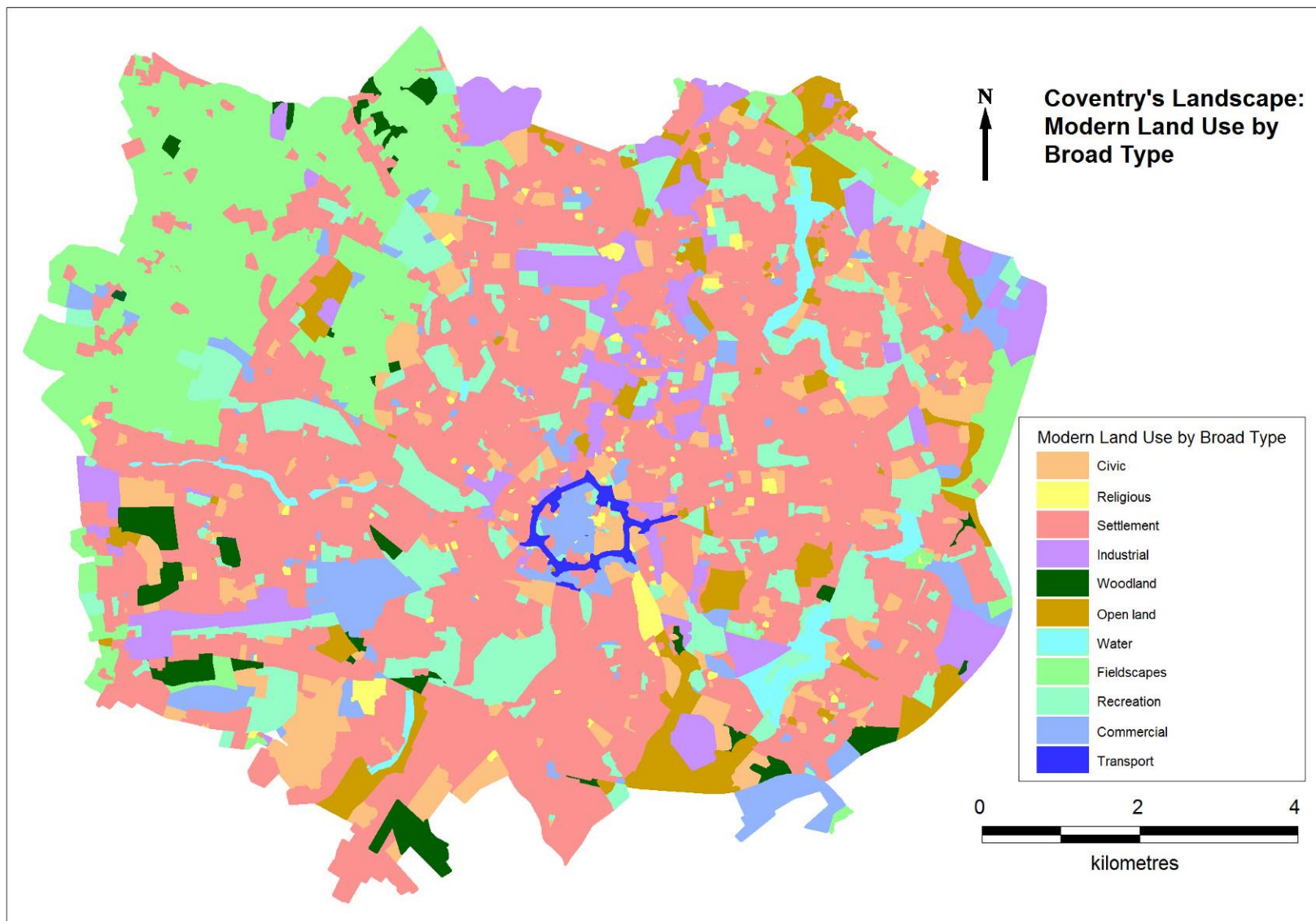
 4.1 Coventry's Modern Landscape

Each part of the city's landscape has been allocated a category of modern land use (i.e. 'broad type'), enabling areas that have similar character to be associated. Just eleven broad types have been used to create a city-wide map of modern land use in order to keep it simple visually so that any patterns can be discerned.

What is clear from Figure 2 is the dominance of the Settlement category of land use across much of the city, with the exception of the north-western area which consists predominantly of rural fieldscapes interspersed with farmsteads or small settlements. Industrial land use is dispersed across the city with a slight concentration running northwards from the City Centre along the Foleshill Road (HLC Area 24). Apart from the obvious concentration of commercial land use within the centre of Coventry, there are other areas of significant size but they tend to be located the periphery. Although there is a considerable proportion of open green space in the form of agricultural land and recreational land Figure 2 clearly demonstrates the paucity of woodland within the city boundary.

As a result of mapping modern land use, statistics for the total area covered by each broad type have been calculated and are shown in Table 4 and Figure 3.

*Figure 3*: *Modern Land Use by Broad Type*

Coventry's Landscape:
Modern Land Use by
Broad Type

Modern Land Use by Broad Type

- Civic
- Religious
- Settlement
- Industrial
- Woodland
- Open land
- Water
- Fieldscapes
- Recreation
- Commercial
- Transport

Table 4: *Area of each broad type and percentage of total area*

Broad Type	Area (km^2)	Percentage of Total Area
Religious	0.8498	1%
Settlement	44.49	45%
Woodland	2.31	2%
Water	0.8449	1%
Fieldscapes	16.61	17%
Open Land	4.858	5%
Recreation	10.5	10%
Industrial	6.974	7%
Commercial	4.59	5%
Civic	7.036	7%
Transport	0.3847	0%
Militarised	0	0%
Extractive	0	0%

Figure 4*: Pie chart showing the percentage of the total area of different broad types*
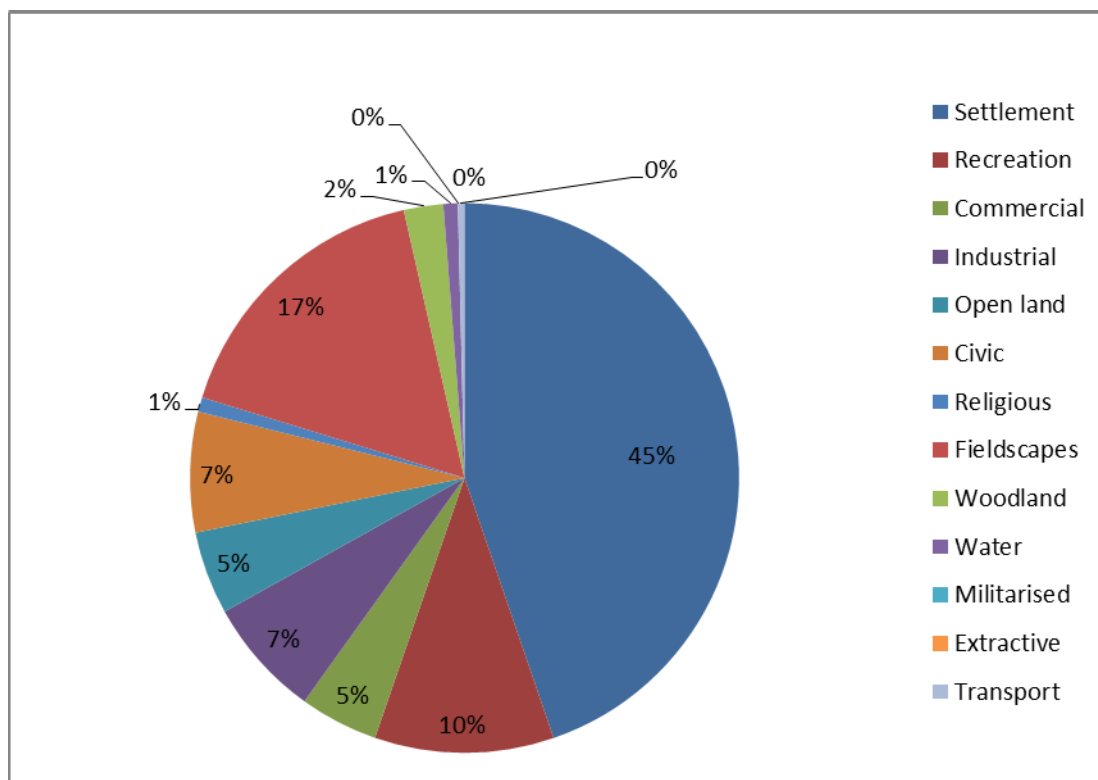
4.2 Period of Origin of Coventry's Landscape

Each HLC type polygon was given a date enabling those polygons falling within specific date ranges to be grouped together. The resulting map is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 indicates that Coventry's current landscape overwhelmingly consists of 20th Century development, with early 20th Century growth being more or less equal to that dating to the mid/late 20th Century. Planned expansion on a significant scale really began in the mid to late 19th Century, however, with the building of houses for workers in the watchmaking and ribbon weaving industries. Concentrations of these houses and some associated civic buildings, such as schools and libraries, still survive in the Earlsdon, Chapelfields and Stoke areas of Coventry.
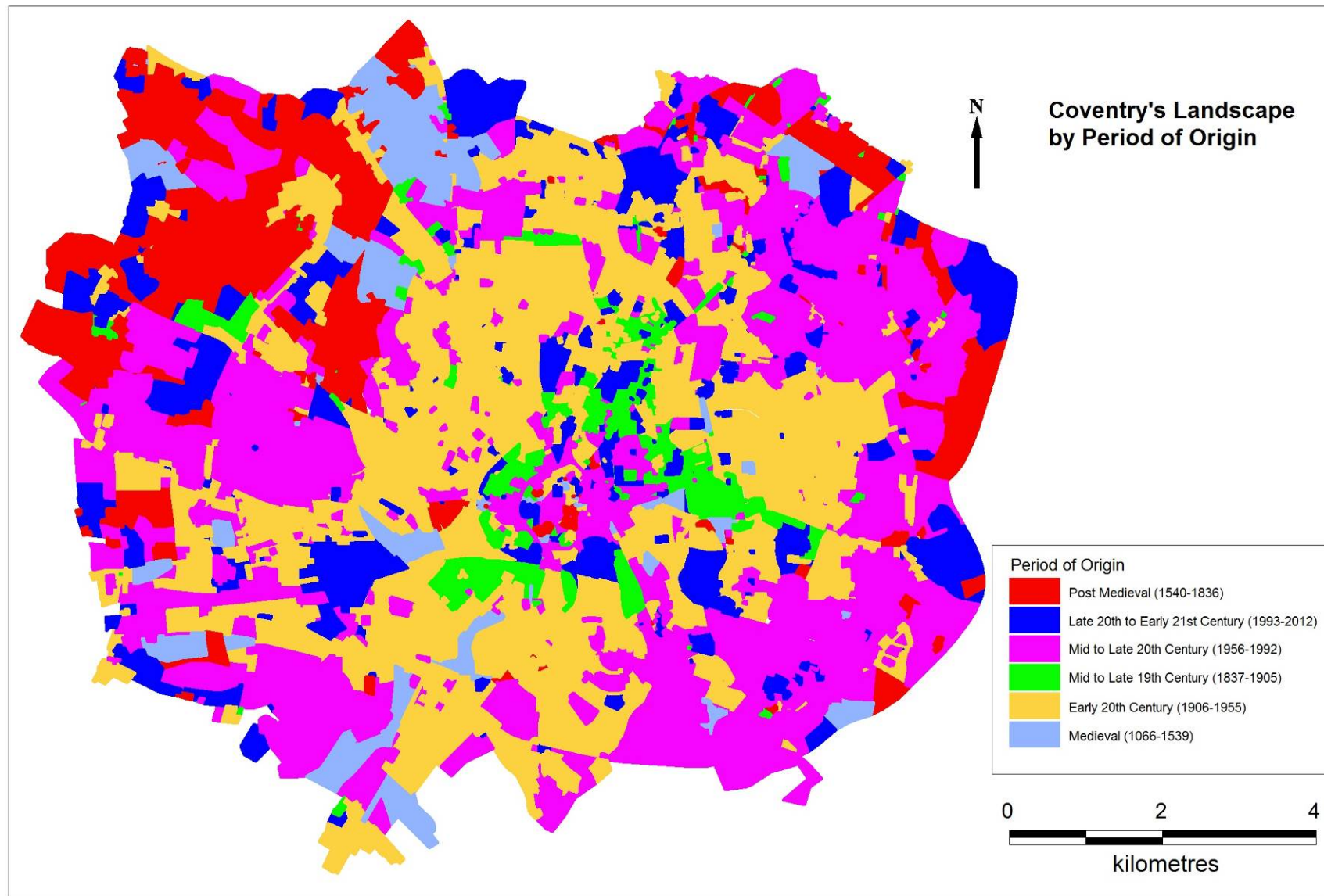
Although it is not entirely clear from Figure 4 there are a significant number of medieval and post-medieval buildings within the city boundary, with the greatest concentration being in the city centre. Larger surviving areas of medieval landscape are also scattered throughout the city, although they only account for 5% of the total area. They comprise mainly of green open spaces representing areas of medieval common/waste, such as Gosford Green, Hearsall Common and Stivichall Common and some small pockets of ancient woodland. In addition there are several areas of ancient Arden landscape that retain the medieval field pattern, with boundaries delineated by ancient hedgerows, and a network of winding lanes. The most prominent of these is in the north Keresley area.

In the rural northwest area of the city large swathes of the post-medieval landscape survive. The field patterns, which are bounded by hedgerows, date from the mid-17th Century onwards and are interspersed with farmsteads. Smaller areas of post-medieval enclosures also survive on the eastern periphery of the city.

A number of historic village cores exist and can be recognised from the surrounding 20th Century development by their concentrations of medieval and post-medieval buildings, usually around the junction of several roads and close to the medieval church. They survive at Walsgrave on Sowe, Stivichall Croft, Allesley and Binley. Place-name evidence suggests the latter two may have Saxon origins.

As a result of mapping HLC type polygons according to their period of origin, statistics for the total area falling into each period have been calculated and are shown in Table 5 and Figure 5.

Figure 5*: Coventry's Landscape by Period of Origin*

Coventry's Landscape by Period of Origin

N

Period of Origin
- Post Medieval (1540-1836)
- Late 20th to Early 21st Century (1993-2012)
- Mid to Late 20th Century (1956-1992)
- Mid to Late 19th Century (1837-1905)
- Early 20th Century (1906-1955)
- Medieval (1066-1539)

0   2   4

kilometres

24

Table 5: *Percentage of Character Type Polygons Falling Within Different Periods of Origin*

Period of Origin	Area (km^2)	Percentage of Total Area
Medieval (1066-1539)	5.359	5
Post Medieval (1540-1836)	12.5	13
Mid to late 19th Century (1837-1905)	4.448	5
Early 20th Century (1906-1955)	31.56	33
Late 20th Century (1956-1992)	30.45	32
Early 21st Century (1993-2012)	11.896	12

Figure 6: *Percentage of Character Type Polygons Falling Within Different Periods Of Origin*
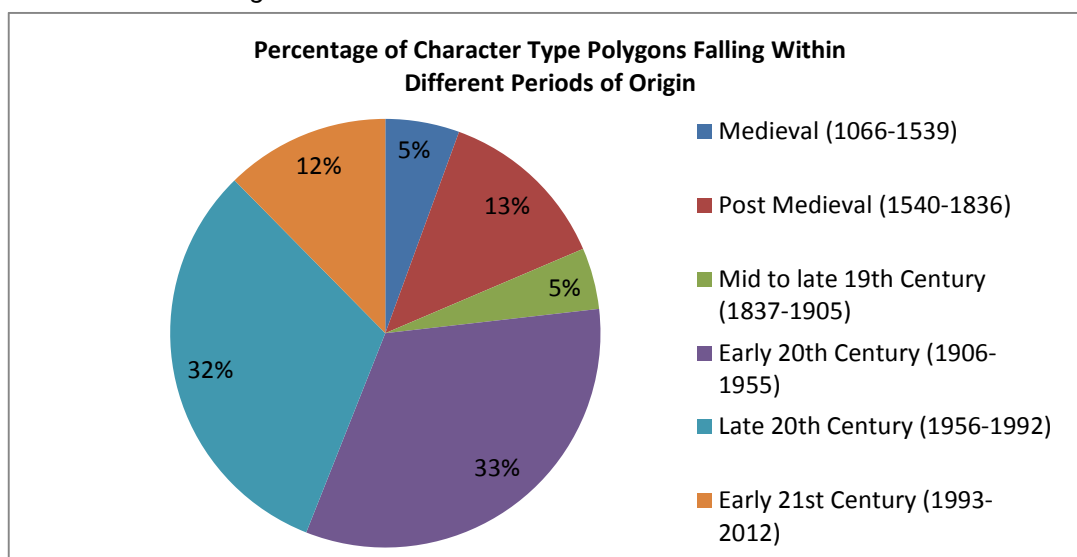
4.3 Potential for Further Analysis

There are several different ways in which the HLC data could be used to analyse different aspects of the current landscape, as well as its historic development. Discussion of the HLC data so far has concentrated on its analysis based on the broad type categories of land use. There is also scope for more detailed analysis, either city-wide or for smaller areas, using the categories of HLC type polygons within a single broad type. One of example of this would be to look at different categories of residential properties i.e. detached, semi-detached, terraced housing, flats etc. Further detailed analysis might look at the period of origin of the different categories of residential properties. Similar exercises could also be carried out for the different HLC types within the broad type categories of fieldscapes and industry.

5. CHARACTER AREA PROFILES

The HLC data have been used to draw up 46 Character Areas by linking those areas that are similar in character and which adjoin each other. For example, parts of the landscape that consist mainly of inter-war residential development or post-war industrial estates might be grouped together in single character areas. Each area is described below in terms of its historical development and its overall modern character.

Figure 7: Location of Character Areas within Coventry