Dorchester Way Character Area   *HLC Area 43*
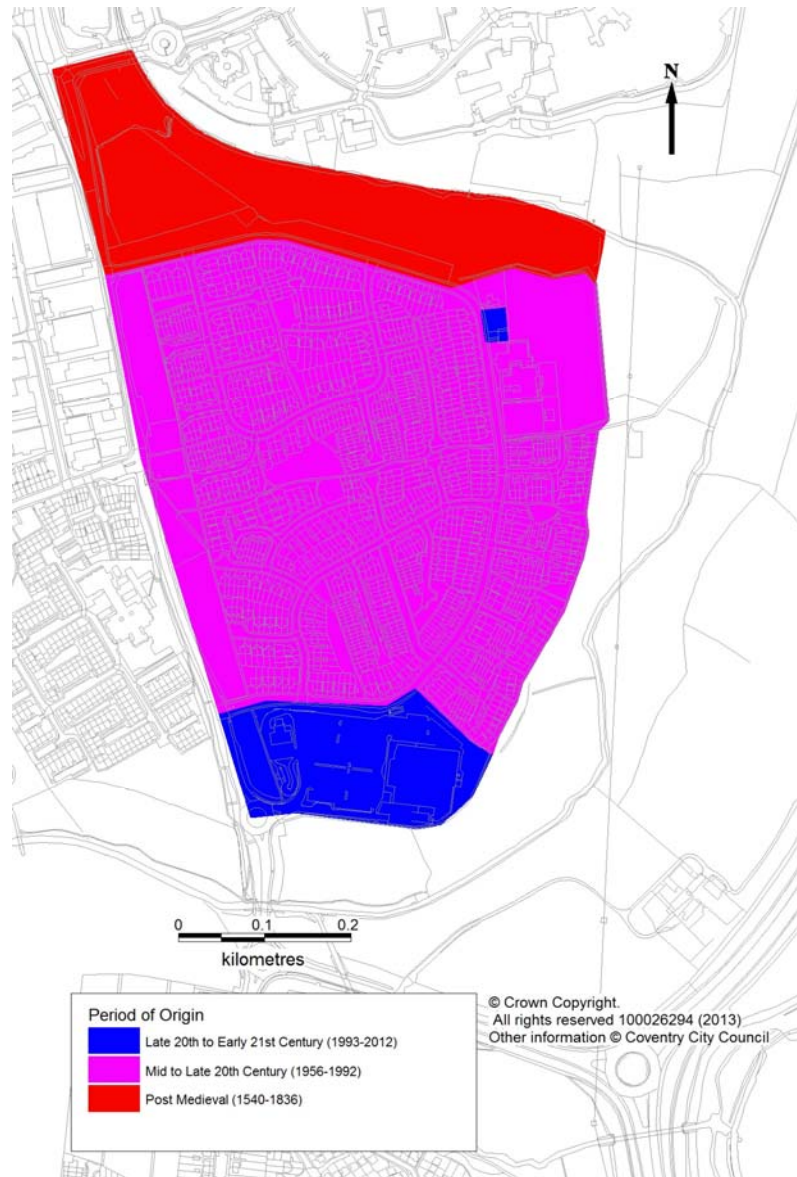

Location and Context

Character Area comprising late 20th Century housing located on the eastern fringe of Coventry. It is almost entirely surrounded by a floodplain of the River Sowe. To the west of the Character Area is a small light industrial estate.

Heritage Designations in the Character Area

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: 0
Archaeological Constraint Areas: 2
Listed Buildings: 0
Locally Listed Buildings: 0
Conservation Areas: 0
Registered Parks and Gardens: 0
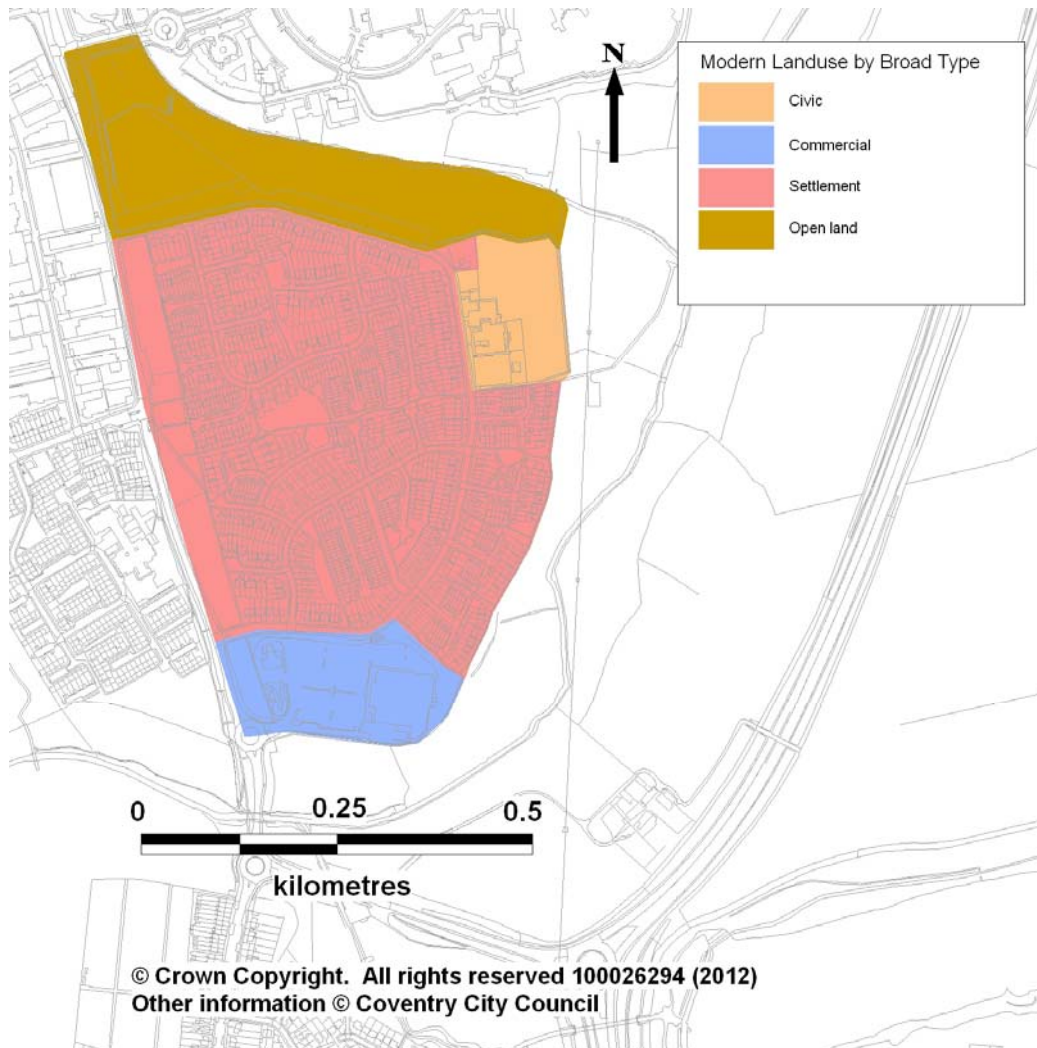
Historic Development

The earliest documentary evidence relating to the Character Area is an estate survey produced in 1778, at which time the area comprised small, enclosed, agricultural fields with a farmstead located in the centre. The farmstead is recorded as Hungerley Hall Farm on an 1888 map and from 1905 it is called Ungley House Farm. This is perhaps a mistake as Hungerley Hall Farm is located to the east on the other side of the River Sowe. The landscape remained relatively unchanged until the 1930s but before or during the Second World War an industrial hostel was built to the west of the farm. This is one of several hostels constructed in Coventry at this time which provided housing for migrant factory workers, but also those who had lost their homes in the Coventry blitz. Ungley House Farm was last recorded on a 1967 map and by 1974 both it and hostel had been demolished. The rest of the Character Area remained as agricultural land. During the late 1970s and early 1980s much of the area was developed for housing and a school was built at the same time. A little later a supermarket was built at the southern end of the Character Area.

Period of Origin

- Late 20th to Early 21st Century (1993-2012)
- Mid to Late 20th Century (1956-1992)
- Post Medieval (1540-1836)

Modern Character

The Character Area is residential, consisting of a mix of semi-detached houses and terraces. The street pattern comprises long, curving roads with many cul de sacs. There are small green spaces integrated with the housing with a relatively large park in the centre of the housing estate. Footpaths lead between the houses to the main park. There are grass verges and occasional trees along the footpaths. Trees are also present in the parks. There are no trees or verges along the pavements probably because this would impede access to driveways. More parking spaces are available at the end of the cul de sacs. All of the houses have small gardens to the rear and are set back from the road with space for a driveway and a small garden area. Most of the houses have garages to the front of the properties but some garages are located to the rear. There are no physical boundaries to the front and the property boundaries are simply delineated by changes in paving or areas of lawn. The architecture of the housing is plain, comprising red brick and painted (usually white) weatherboards. There are no decorative features on the windows or doors. The

architecture within each street is homogenous but the uniformity is broken by the variety of the front gardens and driveways, and the curving roads which create hidden views. There are no amenities integrated with the housing although an out-of-town supermarket and primary school are located on the fringes of the development. At the north end there remains an area of open land which contains several hedgerow boundaries that are probably remnants of the 18th century field pattern.

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Overall, the Character Area has a feeling of seclusion. The development is almost completely surrounded by the River Sowe and its associated floodplain. An industrial area located to the west of the Character Area is segregated from the housing by a buffer zone of trees. Consequently, the Character Area is well screened from its surroundings.

Typical semi-detached houses on Blandford Avenue

Geology and Topography

The Character Area lies entirely over mudstone with a drift geology of sand, gravel, clay and silt deposits associated with the River Sowe. This is a flat, relatively low lying area of land between 75m and 80m above sea level.