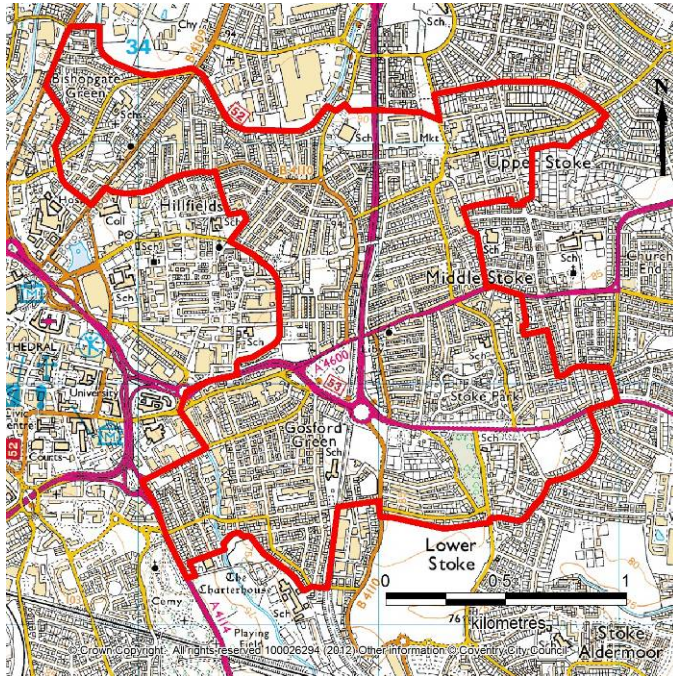


Location and Context

Residential area located to the east of the city centre. The Character Area is surrounded by housing to the east and west, and industry to the north and south.



Heritage Designations in the Character Area

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: 0
 Archaeological Constraint Areas: 17
 Listed Buildings: 7
 Locally Listed Buildings: 29
 Conservation Areas: 2
 Registered Parks and Gardens: 0

Historic Development

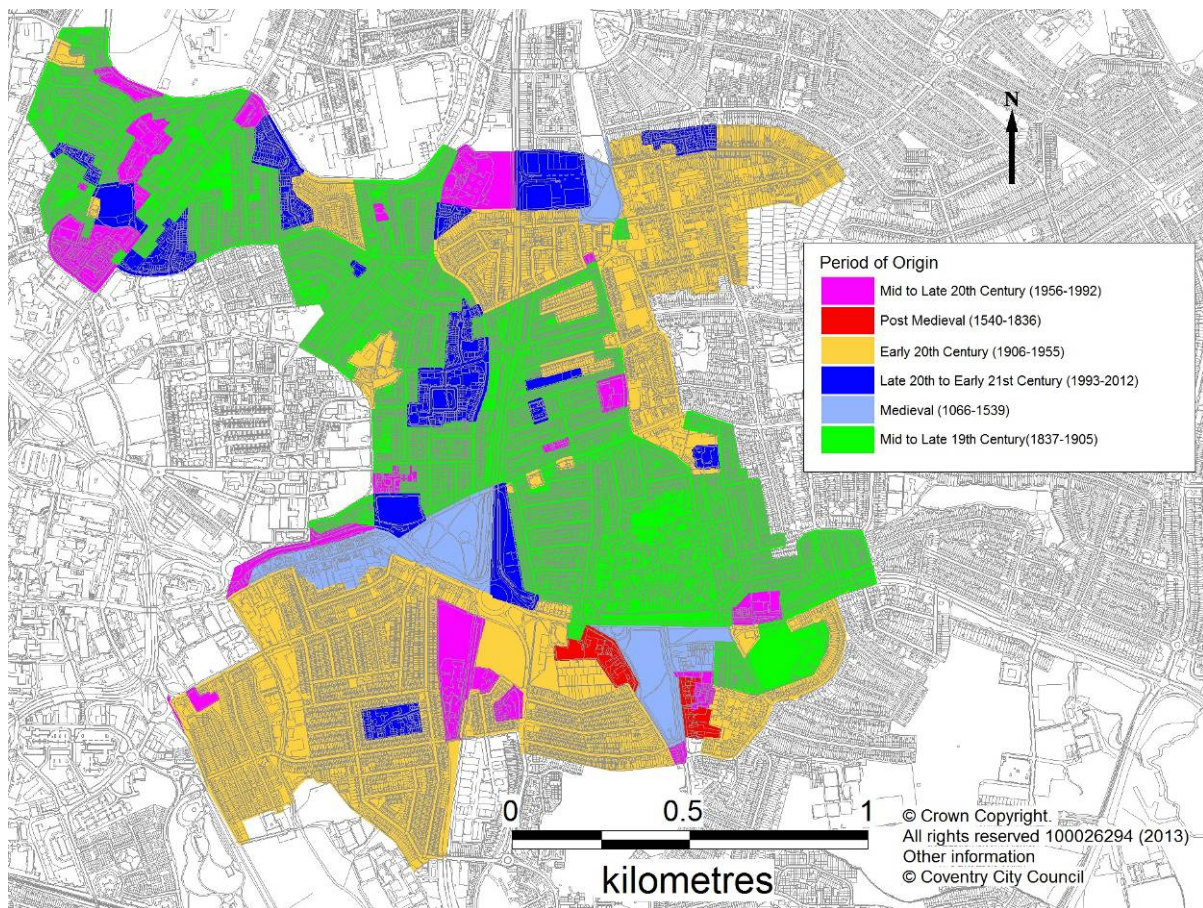
The first significant evidence of activity in the Character Area dates to the medieval period. Far Gosford Street has its origins as a medieval 'extra-mural' suburb; that is, one situated

outside a town wall and its gates. It was the main route out of medieval Coventry towards Leicester and London, and was already beginning to be built up by the 12th century. From the 13th to 15th Centuries it was dominated by the metal working and weaving, woollen industries but the area declined between the 16th and 18th Centuries. Some of the medieval buildings in the street were demolished during the English Civil War but many remained and some are still standing today. The late 18th and early 19th centuries saw the growth of silk ribbon weaving, which came to be the predominant trade in the street, as elsewhere in the city. The distinctive 'top shops' associated with this trade appeared in various parts of the street and the grade II-listed row at Nos. 67-72 remains as a good example of this building type. The weaving industry declined after 1860 and eventually cycle manufacture and later the car industry took over. Change in the street has been slow and piecemeal over the centuries and has helped to preserve much of the historic fabric of the street, which largely avoided the devastating air raids of the Second World War. Consequently, Far Gosford Street is one of the few early Coventry Streets that retain anything like their pre-war character and is a Conservation Area. There are 14 statutorily listed buildings (all Grade II), including a number with medieval timber frames, and 17 locally listed buildings.

Elsewhere in the Character Area during the medieval period the land use was predominantly agricultural, a mixture of open fields and enclosures interspersed with large areas of common land, and pockets of settlement and industry. South of Far Gosford Street is thought to have been the location of the Manor of Shortley, the manor house itself may have existed in the vicinity of Northfield Road. To the east was the common land of Gosford Green which merged into Stoke Green. The area was known as being the site of a major medieval clay tile industry and this was demonstrated by the discovery in the 1900's of kilns

in the area of Brays Lane and Agatha Road. Also in the south of the Character Area and located on the River Sherbourne was Charterhouse Mill, sometimes called Bisseley Mill, which dated to at least the 12th century. Biggin Hall, a medieval moated grange associated with Combe Abbey was situated along the current Biggin Hall Crescent.

There was probably little significant change until the late 18th/early 19th Century. The 1840 Tithe map confirms that the majority of the Character Area comprised small, enclosed fields and also records some of the older street alignments including Binley Road, Clay Lane, Stoke Row and Barras Green. Walsgrave Road is also recorded on the tithe survey although it was formally called Sow Road.



The tithe map also shows that by 1841 a substantial part of Stoke Green had been built upon with housing, many of these buildings are now locally listed. Stoke Park was laid out to the north of the common in the second half of the 19th century with its distinctive road pattern on the site of the former horse racing circuit. In the northeast of the Character Area a grid pattern of streets was laid out in the second half of the 19th Century. This included Freehold Street built as part of an early building society movement, the Freehold Land Societies, which offered Coventry artisans the opportunity to leave the crowded city centre and buy available development land. The majority of plots were, however, developed for terraced housing between 1905 and 1913. Other areas of late 19th Century development included new streets and houses built along Stoney Stanton Road, Freehold Street and Adderley Street in the northwest. A programme of rapid housing development was rolled out

across the Character Area in the early 20th century and by the 1920s almost the whole area was covered with terraced housing.



*Residential properties
fronting onto Stoke
Green*

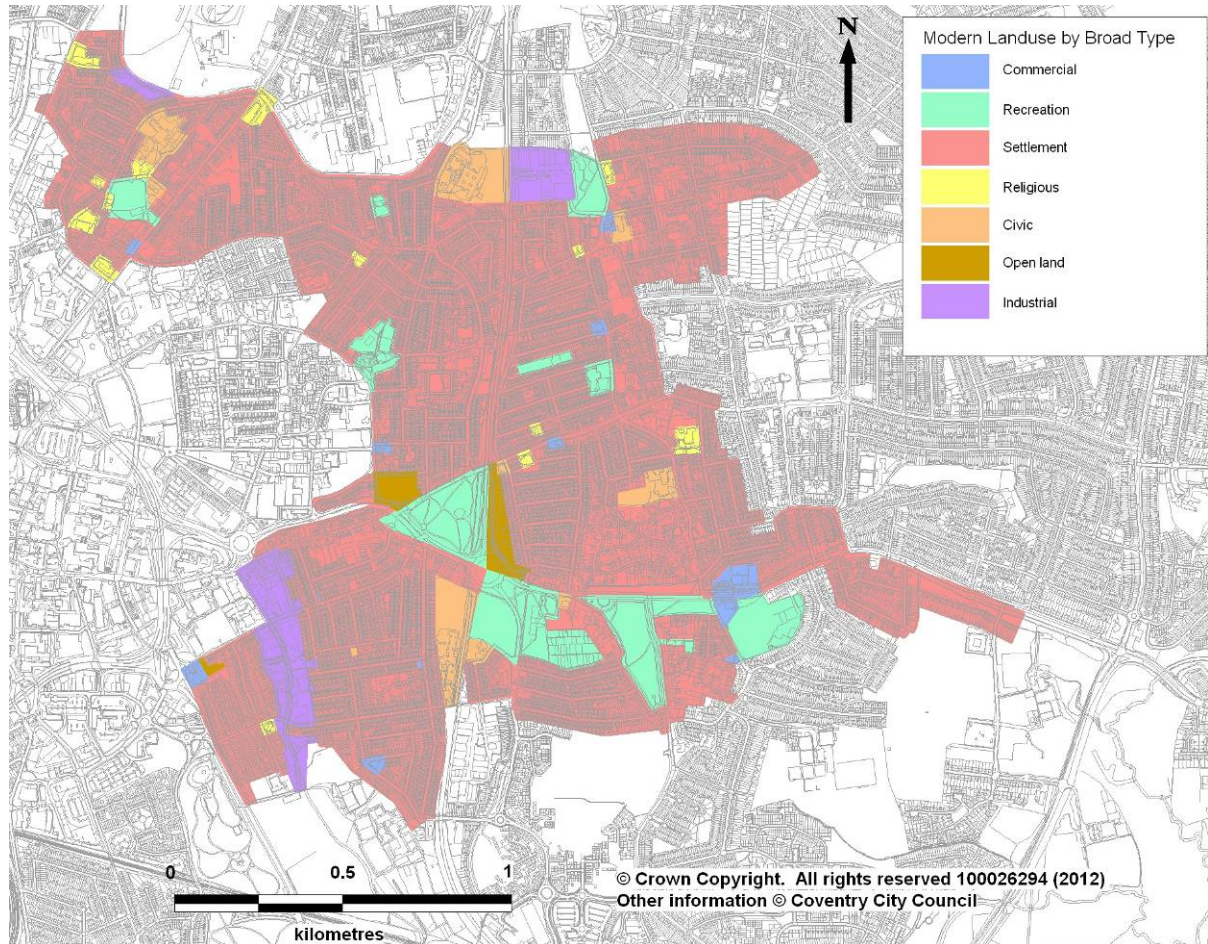
Modern Character

Housing in Stoke Park, which forms part of the Stoke Green Conservation Area, contrasts significantly with the surrounding areas of terraces and is unique in the Coventry area. It consists of detached and semi-detached houses built between the 1860's and the 1970's, in a setting with a large numbers of trees. The house plots are set around looping roads laid out in a 'figure of eight' plan which are lined with thick hedges. To the south of Stoke Park, Stoke Green is a surviving area of medieval common land. The area of the Green was probably defined in the early 17th century and a row of weaver's cottages built at around this time survive on the Binley Road. By the mid-19th the whole east side of the Green had been developed with houses.

Far Gosford Street has managed to maintain its pre-war character due to avoiding World War II air raids and post-war redevelopment. Despite constant piecemeal change since the medieval period, numerous historic buildings survive along the street.

The remainder of the Character Area predominantly comprises small, compact terraced houses. The housing style is homogenous across the whole of the Character Area. All of the terraces have small gardens to the rear. Some of them have a very small set-back from the road, and others have no set-back which is unusual for the Coventry area. The housing is set out in a grid pattern with houses built into the corners of the roads. Terraces in the north of the Character Area have a slightly more irregular road layout due to the morphology of older roads such as Swan Lane. Terraces are built of red brick and slate with decorated door and window lintels. Some of the terraces have a course of dentified brickwork running through the upper storey of the terraces or, in some cases, decorated brick work below the roof eaves. Otherwise, the style of the architecture is plain. Houses which are set back from the road have low, brick wall boundaries. Pavements are narrow with no grass verges or

trees and are congested with parked cars. The roads are long and straight creating closed channelled views. Apart from the surviving 'Greens' the Character Area has few trees or open green spaces. Amenities are integrated with the housing including allotment gardens, small playing fields and schools.



Geology and Topography

The Character Area lies entirely over sandstone. This is a flat, relatively low lying area of land between 80m and 90m above sea level.

Central Avenue, Stoke Park

