

Far Gosford Street

Conservation Area Appraisal



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This Appraisal has been written on behalf of Coventry City Council by:

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Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Appraisal November 2013

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Appraisal

The Far Gosford Street Conservation Area was designated by Coventry Council on the 21st of October 1992. The area has not been extended since its designation. This Conservation Area Appraisal draws upon an earlier comprehensive appraisal prepared by Coventry City Council in 2004. The *Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Policy Framework*, was prepared by Mark Singlehurst, with contributions by George Demidowicz and Andy Duncan. The 2004 Appraisal incorporates *Historical Notes*, a document prepared to accompany the exhibition for the Conservation Area declaration in 1992 and revised in 2000.

The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the need for local planning authorities to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Local planning authorities are required to define and record the special characteristics of heritage assets within their area. The existence of a clear definition of an area's character helps reduce uncertainty for owners and developers and provides a sound basis, defensible on appeal for local plan policies and development control decisions.¹

Far Gosford Street Conservation Area has recently benefited from the first phase of a Townscape Heritage Initiative, with funding provided from a variety of partners including the Heritage Lottery Fund, ERDF and Advantage West Midlands. Coventry City Council have been awarded a further phase of THI and ERDF funding. The aim of Phase 2 is:

- to extend the heritage restoration work to the remainder of the street, so that the improvement is universal rather than patchwork, including key medieval buildings and the last remaining court houses;
- to focus on education, pulling together a wide partnership including the University and College to ingrain heritage understanding into the business and residential community.

The purpose of the Appraisal is, in accordance with the methodology recommended by English Heritage,² to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area. This Appraisal has been used to prepare a Management Plan which sets out suggested actions to maintain and enhance the special character of the area. Both the Appraisal and the Management Plan will assist in the delivery of Phase 2 of the Townscape Heritage Initiative. These documents will also support the active management of the Conservation Area through the development control process, including support for appeals.

This document is not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content. Omission of any specific building, structure, site, landscape, space, feature or aspect located in or adjoining to the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area should not be taken to imply that it does not hold significance and positively contribute to the character and appearance of the designated heritage asset.

1.2. Definition of a Conservation Area

A conservation area is an area “*of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”³. Designation takes place primarily by local planning authorities under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation

¹ National Planning Policy Framework. 2012.

² English Heritage. *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (London: English Heritage, February 2005).

³ Section 69 (1) (a) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Areas) Act 1990. Local planning authorities also have a duty from time to time to review the extent of designation and to designate further areas if appropriate⁴.

Conservation area designation recognises the unique quality of an area as a whole. It is not just the contribution of individual buildings and monuments, but also that of features such as topography, layout of roads, pathways, street furniture, open spaces and hard and soft landscaping which assist in defining the character and appearance of an area. Conservation areas identify the familiar and cherished local scene that creates a sense of place, community, distinctiveness and environment.

⁴ Section 69 (2) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2. Planning Policy Context

2.1. Planning Policy Context

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Planning Policy Framework provide the legislative and national policy framework for conservation area appraisals and management plans. The NPPF states:

Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
- an opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place

This document must be considered alongside Coventry City Council's planning policies concerning development and the use of land as set out in the Coventry City Council Saved Local Plan Policies BE8: Conservation Areas, BE9: Development in Conservation Areas, BE10: The Retention of Buildings in Conservation Areas, BE11: Alteration or Extension of Listed Buildings, BE12: Changes of Use to Listed Buildings, BE13: Demolition of Listed Buildings, BE14: Locally Listed Buildings and BE15: Archaeological Sites and Proposed Local Plan Policies HE1: Conservation and Heritage Assets, DE1: Ensuring High Quality Design and SC1: The Network of Centres. The Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Control Plan and Design Guidance Manual (2005) is the supplementary planning guidance of particular importance. Additional relevant supplementary planning documents for the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area include: Planning policy for the location of satellite antenna, Installation of security shutters and grilles and the Highways Design Guide.

2.2. Conservation Area Policy Guidance

This appraisal was undertaken consulting guidance provided by English Heritage in the subsequent documents:

- Measuring and Assessing Change in Conservation Areas 2005
- Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals 2006
- Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas 2006
- Understanding Place: An Introduction 2010
- Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments in a Planning and Development Context 2010
- Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice 2010; Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management 2011
- Understanding Place: Character and Context in Local Planning 2011
- Streets for All
- Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance

The English Heritage document *Conservation Principles* provides policies and guidance for identifying significance. Four heritage values are assigned through which a site or place can be interpreted; evidential, historical, communal and aesthetic.

Further guidance has been issued by English Heritage in the suite of documents *Understanding Place* with a view to setting out approaches to undertake assessments of historic areas allowing a greater understanding of the character of a place and its capacity for change. In particular *Understanding Place - Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice* stresses the importance in 'identifying and understanding particular qualities, and what these add to our lives, is central to our engagement with our history and culture.' As referenced in *Understanding Place - Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice*, *Power of Place* published by English Heritage, stressed the positive impact of local and 'ordinary' heritage – what might be termed the buildings and spaces in between 'monuments' – on the quality of people's lives and its central role in constructing local identity'.

The proposals set out by this appraisal shall undergo a period of public consultation and will be submitted for consideration at a public display and drop-in sessions in the area to which they relate.⁵ The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the drop-in sessions or during the period of consultation.⁶

2.3. Control Measures Brought About by Designation

In determining applications for development in conservation areas, local planning authorities must pay special attention "to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area"⁷. This requirement, as set out in legislation, is also reflected in national and local policy.

In order to protect and enhance conservation areas any changes that take place must do so in a way that encourages positive conservation and management. Statutory control measures are designed to prevent development that may have a negative or cumulative effect on the character and appearance of an area and include the following;

- Planning permission is usually required to totally or substantially demolish buildings or structures within a conservation area.
- The extent of 'permitted' development is reduced, such as cladding, extensions to the side of the original dwelling or the installation of satellite dishes. Further control measures such as Article 4 directions may be placed upon an area (the introduction of such controls is the subject of consultation with owners to establish support). These may be served to protect elements such as windows, doors, chimneys boundary walls and gate posts and restrict certain types of extensions.
- Any works to prune or fell any protected trees requires the written consent of the Local Planning Authority. In the case of all other trees or shrubs over 75mm in trunk diameter, six weeks written notice is required to allow consideration for protection. Should a tree be felled, a replacement is usually required. Restrictions apply regarding the type and size of advertisements that can be erected without advertisement consent.

⁵ Section 71 (2) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

⁶ Section 71 (3) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

⁷ Section 72 (1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3. The Summary of Special Interest

The special character of Far Gosford Street Conservation Area derives from the following elements:

- Far Gosford Street was the main road out of Coventry to London and Leicester and had houses fronting onto it as early as the 12th century;
- Land ownership on Far Gosford Street can be traced from the Medieval period to the present day due to the existence of some of the most complete records in the Midlands;
- The high archaeological potential for Medieval remains concentrated to the west of the Conservation Area around the former gate and bridge over the River Sherbourne;
- The cluster of timber framed buildings dating from the 15th and 16th centuries;
- The existence of court houses and workshops to the rear of the properties, a once common feature of the growth in the post Medieval period;
- The three groups of the distinctive weavers' 'topshops' which provide evidence of the former industrial use of the street for silk and ribbon weaving in the late 18th and early 19th centuries;
- The high proportion of inserted shop fronts documents the transformation of the residential and industrial buildings into commercial premises in the late 19th century;
- The impressive offices of two former Cycle works, which later became automobile manufacturers, and a large number of workshops on a further site of automobile manufacturing, documents the late 19th and early to mid 20th century industrial uses of the area.

4. Assessment of Special Interest

4.1. Location and Setting

Location and Setting of Far Gosford Street Conservation Area

The Far Gosford Street Conservation Area is situated on the edge of Coventry City Centre. To the west the Conservation Area is bounded by the Gosford Gate roundabout, to the north is the Blue Sky Way Relief Road, Gosford Green is to the east and the to the south of the Conservation is an area of terraced residential properties.

Coventry is situated 19 miles east south-east of Birmingham, in the West Midlands. It is to the north east of the historic County of Warwickshire. The centre of the city is situated on a slight slope that rises reaches its highest point to the south of the Holy Trinity Church. From the highest point in the city the ground falls away steeply to the north and at a shallower gradient to the south, east and west.⁸ The site is situated in a large shallow basin, with hills to the northwest, west and northeast. The geology of the area is dominated by the area is dominated by Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures. These underlie Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich and Dudley.⁹ The majority of the City of Coventry is based upon Permian Breccia and Sandstone; there is also a ridge of Triassic Keuper Sandstone that gives way to Keuper Red Maris to the eastern side of the ridge. The River Sherbourne winds through the central, western and eastern parts of the medieval section of the city. The river is joined from the north by Radford Brook.¹⁰

General Description, Character and Plan Form

Far Gosford Street is a busy commercial street just east of the centre of Coventry. It is predominantly linear in plan form, and is comprised of numbers 18 to 88 on the north side of the street and number 66 Far Gosford Street to number 18 Binley Road to the south side on the street. The A4600, Sky Blue Way runs along the northern parameter and eastern end of the Conservation Area. To the west the area is bounded by the Sky Blue Way roundabout. To the south the boundary runs to the rear of the commercial properties along Far Gosford Street, excluding the residential terraces to the south.

To the east end of Far Gosford Street is an open area of land, on the site of the former St Margaret's Chapel. This area is landscaped with a combination of grass, planting and hardscaping. Another area of open space within the Conservation Area is the former All Saints' churchyard to the north side of the street. Further open space along Far Gosford Street includes the Gosford Industrial Estate, an estate of early-mid 20th century and 21st century industrial buildings and a car park to the west of this.

The buildings within the Conservation Area vary in date and architectural style. There are examples of structures from the 16th to 20th centuries. The area is considered to be an area of archaeological constraint due to the longevity of the use of the area and the high amount of medieval remains recovered in various excavations. The long thin plots of many of the structures in the area are still reminiscent of medieval burgrave plots. The area is predominantly commercial in character, and most of the buildings have shops or commercial premises to the ground floors. There are examples of structures that were built as commercial premises, structures that were converted from residential to commercial uses and buildings that have always had a combination of uses. There are still

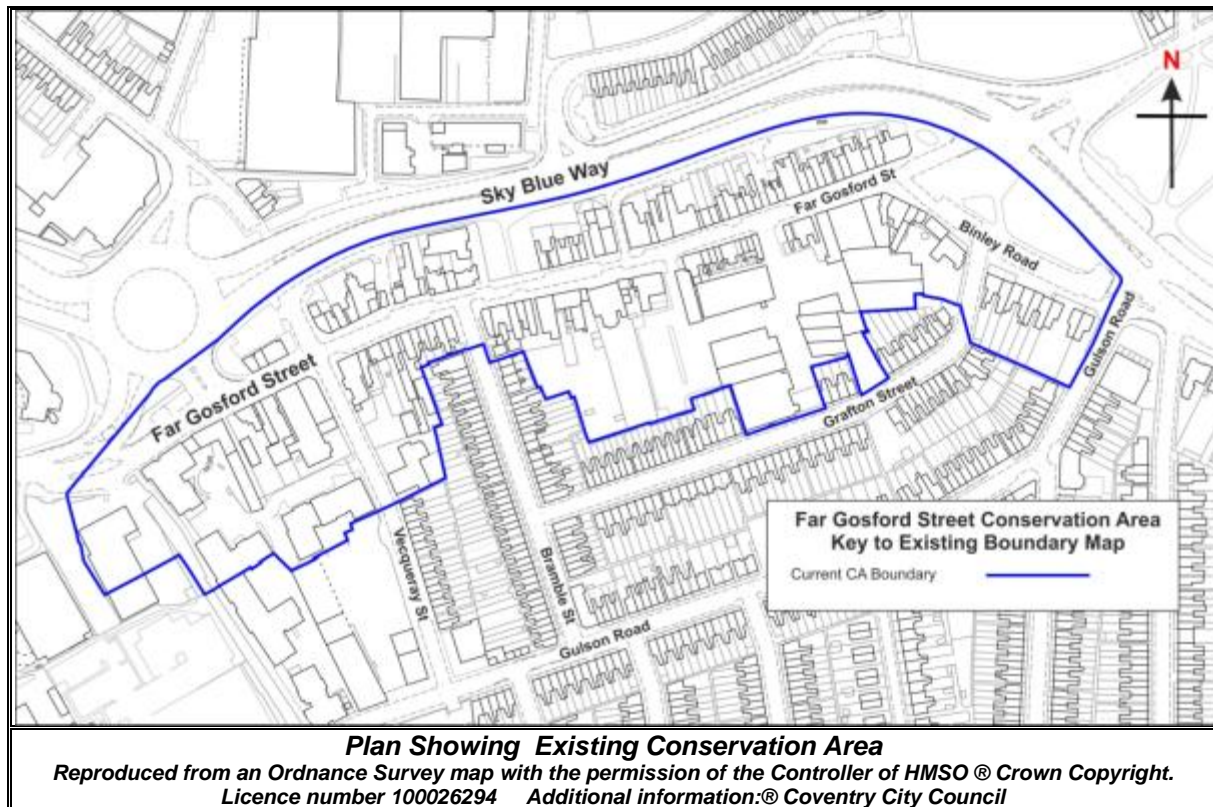
⁸ W.B. Stephens (Editor), *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume. The City of Coventry and Borough of Warwick*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁹ Natural England. 2005. Web. <<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/geodiversity/englands/counties/>>

¹⁰ W.B. Stephens (Editor), *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume. The City of Coventry and Borough of Warwick*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

examples of buildings that reflect the historic industries in the area such as the former weaver's houses with 'topshops'. Although a few historic shop fronts remain, many have been replaced with modern designs in inappropriate modern materials.

The streetscape is of tarmac road surfaces with pavements of flagstones, herringbone brickwork and tarmac. In Harnall Row there are areas of historic cobblestones that have survived. Curbstones are of concrete. The street furniture varies throughout the area – street lighting is a combination of highly modern brushed aluminium streetlamps to the open space to the east, metal lamp posts and concrete lampposts. There is also a variety of bollards throughout the Conservation Area, some are metal painted black and others are brushed aluminium.



4.2. Historic Development of Far Gosford Street

Far Gosford Street was originally a section of Gosford Street that lay beyond the city walls, to the east. This area formed one of Coventry's medieval extra mural suburbs. Its modern extent was formerly bounded, at the western end, by Gosford Bridges (the bridge over the Sherbourne and a parallel stream course, Springfield Brook), Gosford Gate and the Chapel of Saint George (on the Bridge and linked to the Gate). To the east lay Gosford Green and St Margaret's Chapel. The building of the Gate and city wall physically separated the two parts of the street into 'Gosford' and 'Far Gosford', but even before this the distinction had already been made, first by the 'goose ford' across the river and brook, and then by the bridges built across them. There are references in the 12th century to 'extra' or 'ultra' Gosford, in the late 13th to 'ultra pontes (bridges) de Gosforde', and in 1410-11 of 'vicus de Gosforde extra portam' (Gosford Street beyond the Gate).

The site of the medieval St. Margaret's Chapel and hermitage was at the western most point of Gosford Green, to the east end of Far Gosford Street. The HER states: At far end of Gosford St

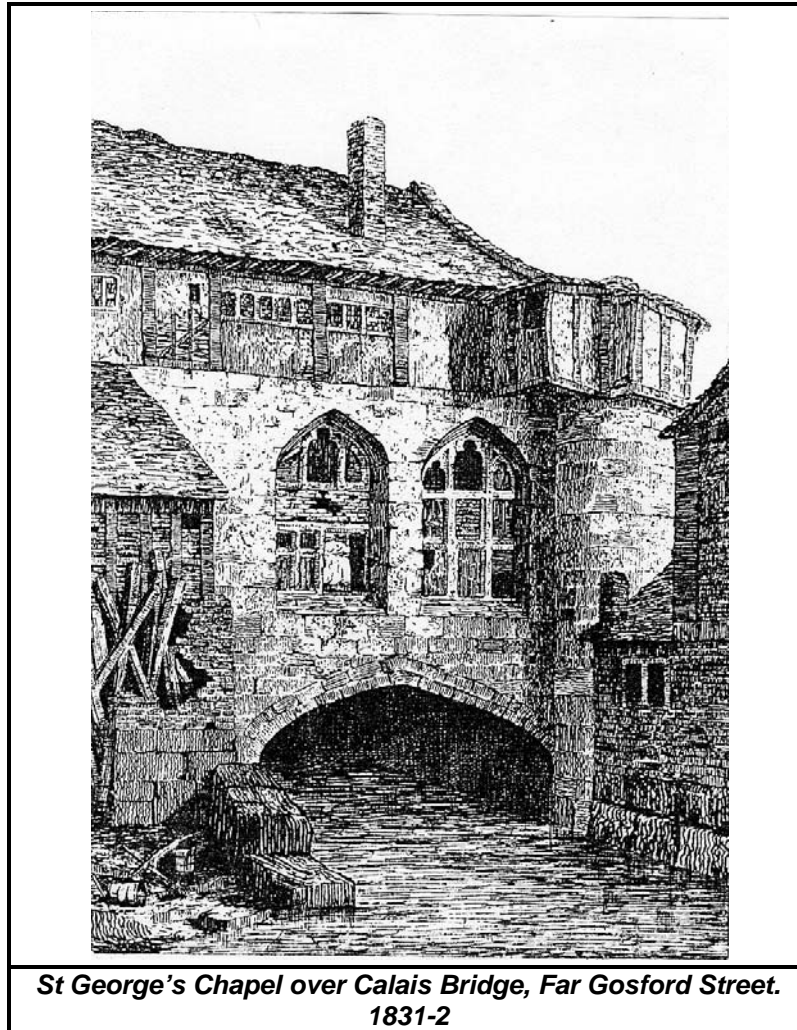
stood chapel of St Margaret, to which was attached a hermitage. Fragments of this edifice remained, until a few years ago incorporated with a building called 'The Trinity Tithe Barn'.

Documentary evidence tells us that Calais and Dover Bridges, bridges over the River Sherbourne was situated at the west end of Far Gosford Street in the medieval period. It is thought to date to the 13th century and probably replaced an earlier ford at this location. J.B Shelton noted in 1949 "Beneath this gate [Gosford Street] a number of stepping stones were found over which the inhabitants crossed this Gosford Brook long before the City Gate was built [c.1355]". A timber post, several pits and a post hole were also excavated in this area and may be the remains of a bridge, jetty or pontoon over the River Sherbourne. Pottery found in one of the post holes suggests a possible date for the structure of the late 12th or 13th century.

Gosford Gate, a medieval gatehouse built in about 1355, was part of the defensive circuit around the town. It was the second of the twelve gates to be built. In this area there were already earlier defensive 'bars' to east of the bridges, near Shut Lane and at the west end of Gosford Street. The gate consisted of a rectangular, 2-storeyed structure, with upper floor lit by pointed windows of 1 and 2 lights. There were also two circular turrets at parapet level on its outer wall and the chapel of St George was attached to its north east corner. The Gosford Gate was built on oak piles 4ft 6" in length. In one corner of the structure a tree had been cut and used in the construction of a section of the gate. Part of the wooden drawbridge was found in its original place. Eight piles of oak measuring 4ft 6" to 6ft were found at the same depth, supporting the buttress of the Gate. The piles and beams had been used in some former building, possibly a Norman or Saxon house. The gate was one of the stations for the Coventry Mystery Plays, where the Shearmen and Tailors performed their pageant; they held their secular meetings in the room above the gate. In 1643 deep trenches were made before several gates, including Gosford Gate, and 'half moons' were made without three of them and drawbridges set up. In 1645 new defences were dug, creating a strong outwork without Gosford Gate, encompassed by the River Sherbourne. Gosford Gate was demolished in 1765. Today the position of the gate is marked in the roadway and the line of the town wall in the adjacent premises. A large plaque at the site gives more information.

The site of St George's Chapel, a medieval chapel and guild meeting house, is situated at the west end of Far Gosford Street. The Coventry Historic Environment Record notes: From about 1380-1400 until its demolition in 1822, St. George's Chapel formed part of the north side of Calais Bridge. Its construction probably entailed the first bridge being rebuilt, or being built in stone for the first time. Bridges are common places for wayside chapels at this period, but its location here might be problematic since it seems that it was also attached to the north-east corner of Gosford Gate, at the first-floor doorway, through which the two structures communicated. During the life of the chapel as a guild meeting house (c. 1380-1547), the gate was frequently used as an overflow room or as secondary lodging quarters. The construction of the chapel was sanctioned by Richard II and his advisors, who were also well aware that the city was also constructing its defences at this time. The chapel itself is known to have been constructed on a plot (partly river-bank, partly bridge-abutment and. It comprised meeting rooms, including kitchens with a priest's dwelling attached. Its wooden pile foundations were supposedly located by the antiquarian John Shelton in the 1930s."

Documentary evidence, the earliest of which dates to the 16th century, states that numbers 133-140 Far Gosford Street were medieval buildings, gardens, an orchard and two enclosures. These belonged to Charterhouse and eventually became to the property of Norton's Charity. In the 19th century part of the property became the Hare and Hounds public house with a ribbon weaver's shop to the upper floor. Also at this time, four of the buildings at the west end of the block were demolished and rebuilt, one being a butchers shop.



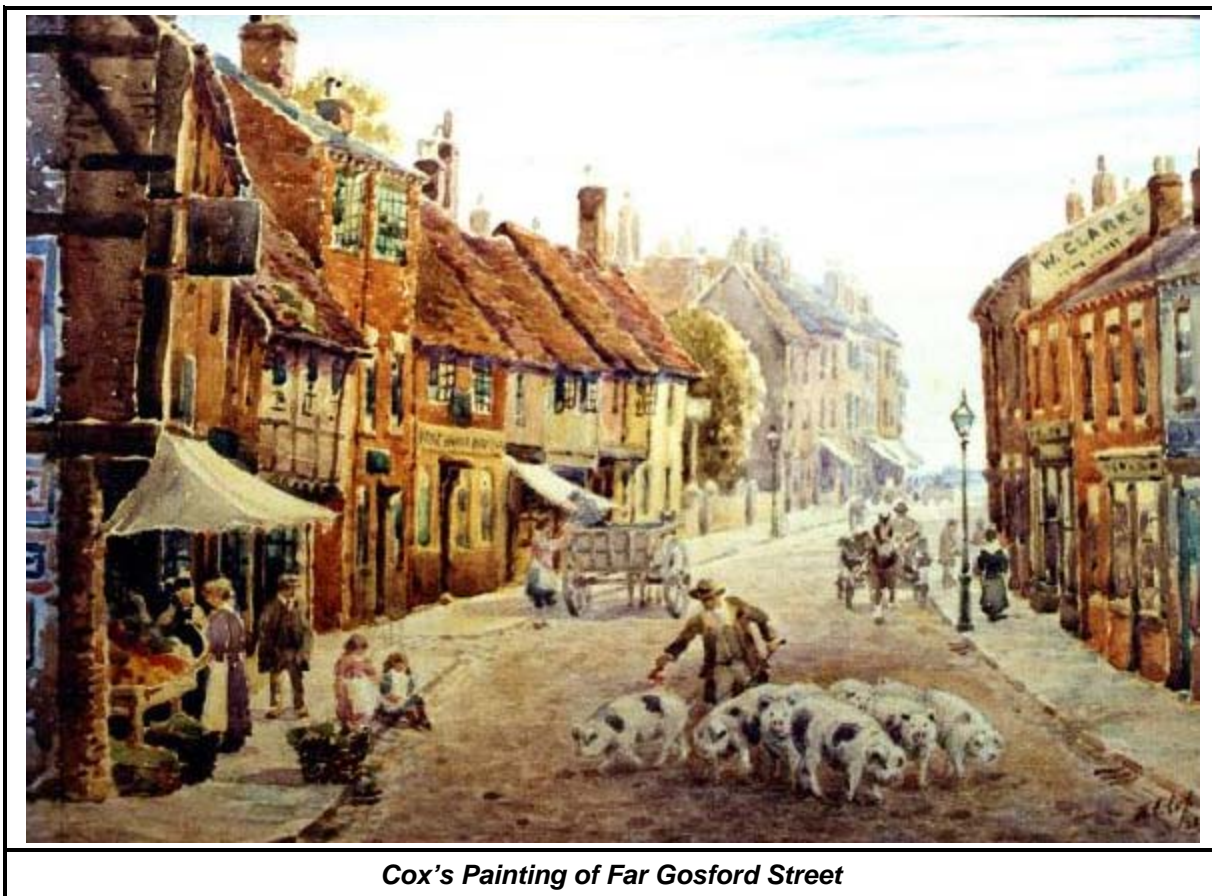
There were already houses fronting the street as early as the 12th century. There is a possibility that the medieval suburb was laid out in a planned manner, at least on the north side. By the end of the 12th century, the wool and cloth trades were well established in the southern part of the town and all the processes associated with this trade were being handled in the streets. There was a process flow of work along the town's east-to-west axis, from the import of the wool, through wool-combing, weaving, dyeing and fulling, to exporting the finished cloth or selling it (and goods made from it). As well as this trade, a number of carters operated in the same area, bringing in the raw materials and transporting the finished goods to markets elsewhere.

Gosford and Spon, the early suburbs east and west of the town developed partly due to the fact that the dyers and tanners of the 'Earl's Half' needed to work near running water. This was geographically easily available on the outskirts in the southern part of the town. Far Gosford Street, being on the eastern fringe, probably had a share in most of these trades. In the earlier part of the 13th century, evidence from documentary sources indicates a different trade dominated the area, that of metalworkers and locksmiths. There were also examples of masons, carpenters and weavers. This changed again, and the cloth industry increased in importance by the middle of the century - Drapers figure prominently in deeds of this period. Deeds dating to this period for Gosford and Far Gosford Streets show six drapers in the two streets, and one basket maker in Far Gosford Street. In the later 13th century craftsmen were still mainly found across the east-to-west axis of the

town from Gosford to Spon. The Fullers and Shearmen, who had their chapel and their pageants near Gosford Gate, were both involved in producing cloth. Henry VI licensed their Guild in 1438.¹¹

By the 16th century the prosperity of Far Gosford Street was declining, along with the rest of Coventry; the books of the court leet dating to 1523 and 1525 indicate a process of gradual deterioration. Although Far Gosford Street was still a major route out of the City, the street continued to struggle economically for another hundred years. The open land beyond the bridges lay undeveloped throughout this period, also indicating economic stagnation. Speed's plan of 1610 shows both sides heavily built up, but by 1748 (as indicated on cartographic evidence from this period) there is open land beyond the Bridges for a short distance. Documents from 1670 and 1849 indicate that there was a Hop Yard situated outside of Gosford Gate. This land remained in agricultural use until the mid 19th century; it is mentioned in the Tithe apportionment of 1849 as a meadow. Further agricultural lands in the area are recorded to the south of Far Gosford Street in documents dating to 1605. Orders were given during the Civil War to clear the medieval structures as may be thought necessary to create a clear field of fire around the walls.¹²

By the late 18th and early 19th centuries the predominant industry in the street was the silk and ribbon weaving trade. Many involved in this trade lived and worked along the street. This is evidenced by the buildings with workshops to the upper floors known as 'topshops'. A few of the old 'topshop' workshops can still be seen in the Conservation Area (e.g. Nos 67-72, 74-76, 93-94). The growth of this trade led to a surge of population and so to a demand for more housing. To accommodate the growth in the population of the area numerous 'court' buildings were constructed behind the houses along Far Gosford Street.



¹¹ M. Singlehurst, *Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Policy Framework*. (City Development Directorate, 2004).

¹² M. Singlehurst, *Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Policy Framework*. (City Development Directorate, 2004)

Until this time (mid 1800s) many areas of land were undeveloped. As shown on the 1851 Board of Health mapping survey, land later occupied from the Springfield Brook and Dover Bridge up to what later became Lower Ford Street was undeveloped. This is also true of the land on the south side from the modern Gosford Lodge and No. 89 up to a structure which stood opposite Nos. 65-72. Land between the All Saints' School site up to a track that became Vecqueray Street was also vacant in the mid 19th century. Other than a row of three terraced houses the land to Shut Lane was vacant. There was also only one building between there and Springfield Brook. The site of the All Saints' Church and the builder's yard (that is now the site of 'Future Fitness' gymnasium) was undeveloped at this time. After the mid 1800s, the land that has stood vacant for a long period of time was gradually filled in with Terraced housing. Eventually, most of the houses were converted into shops. Ashville Terrace (Nos. 77-83) was originally a residential development, which was set back from the main building line to provide modest front gardens. These buildings were extended to the street line and are now occupied by modern shops to the ground floors. The Townend Brothers' offices replaced the houses to the east. Other modern buildings that have been rebuilt along the street since the mid 1800s include Nos. 52-57, 105-115, 119-120 (the Hand and Heart Public House), 126-141 and 143-7, 149-50 and everything formerly around the junction of Gosford and Far Gosford Streets. During the 19th century there was a tram system running along Far Gosford Street, as evidenced in historic photographs dating to this period¹³ and the street gradually became more commercial in nature and character, with the addition of awnings to the commercial properties along the street.



¹³ M. Singlehurst, *Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Policy Framework*. (City Development Directorate, 2004)

The weaving industry declined after 1860 and cycle manufacture took over. Calcott Bros. was established on Far Gosford Street in the 1886, with an imposing office block added on the street frontage in 1896. At the opposite end of the street, Townend Bros. established their cycle works in the early 1890s. With the development of the motor car the cycle industry gave way to the car industry. The Townends' works had become the Coronet Motor Works, producing motorcycles by 1903 and their first car by 1904. The workshops were located to the north of the office block and to the rear of Ashville Terrace. Humber used the works briefly around 1906-1907, but suffered a fire there in December 1906. The factory was empty in 1909 but had been converted into a number of shops by 1910¹⁴ and by 1925 the site was partially used by the Paynes Lane Motor Engine Works. At the far west end of the street, Calcott Bros produced car components, followed by their first motorcycle in 1905 and their first car in 1913. They had produced 2,500 models by the time the Singer Company acquired the firm in 1926. The extensive workshops of the Daisy Motor Works, primarily engine builders, were located on the south side of Far Gosford Street on a site later renamed the Gosford Street Industrial Estate.

In 1927 Lower Ford Road was widened and the buildings on the junction of this and Far Gosford Street were demolished. Also in this year, showrooms were added to the ex-Calcott factory. These replaced a block of three-storeyed weavers' tenements (Nos. 166-172).



Demolition of Nos. 26 and 27 Far Gosford Street

During the Second World War Coventry fell victim to German air raids. During a Blitz in November 1940 the Scala Cinema on Far Gosford Street was hit. Four people perished on that day and many more witnessed the attack. The memories of these people were recorded as part of a video project that recorded people's memories of this time. In addition to the damage to the Scala Cinema, the

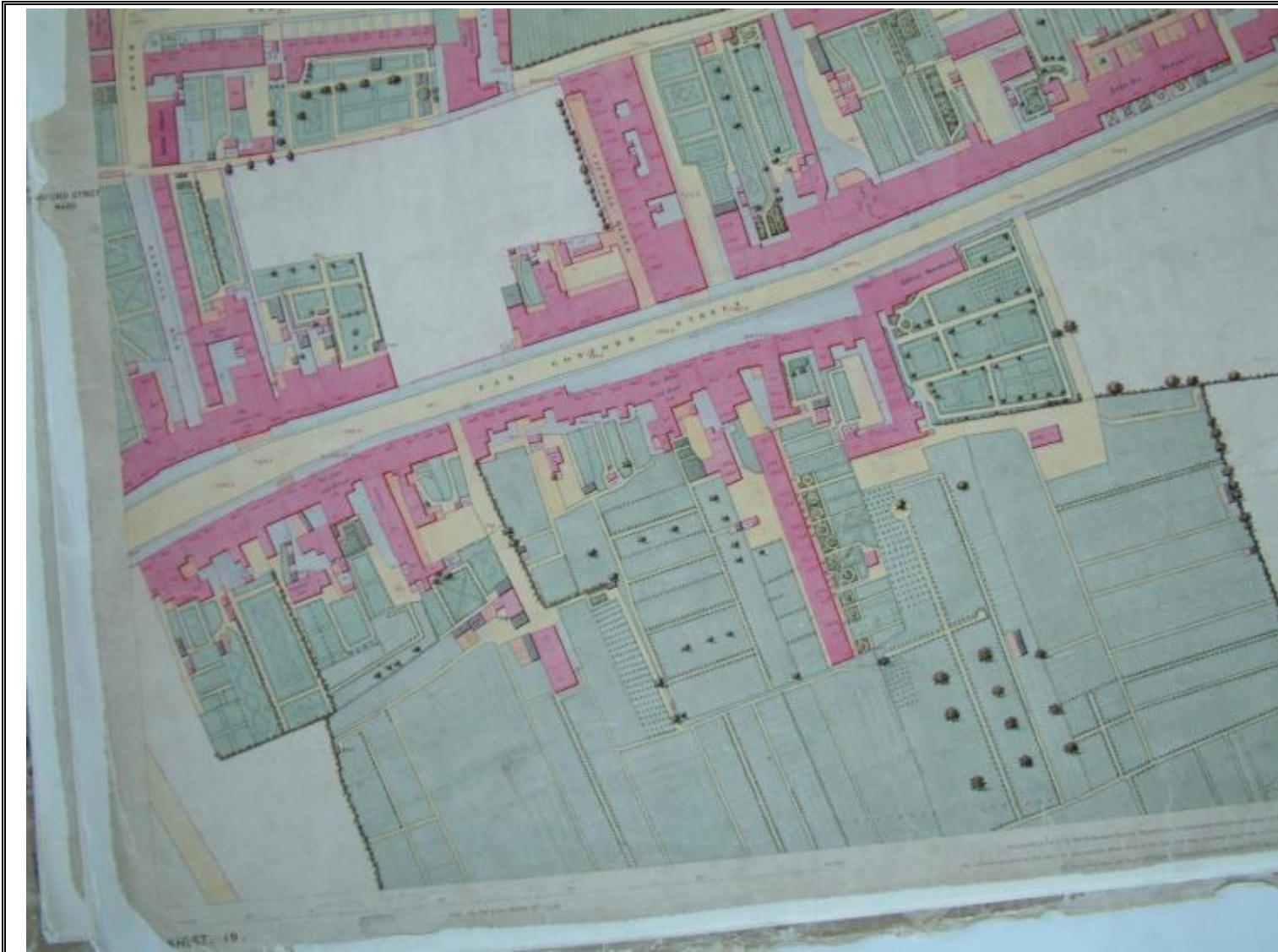
¹⁴ M. Singlehurst, *Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Policy Framework*. (City Development Directorate, 2004).

Beer Engine Public house was hit by a bomb which also damaged Nos. 32-33, resulting in the roofs being replaced in corrugated metal, and severely damaged No. 34 and No. 36, now a gap site. Beyond these two bombs, the street escaped much serious damage in the World War Two air raids and was far enough away from the city centre to avoid large-scale redevelopment. Far Gosford Street was a thriving shopping area by the 1950s, selling a wide range of quality goods at competitive prices. Until the late 19th century there had been few shops in the street, but by the mid 20th century the balance of uses had completely changed. Much of Gosford Street was redeveloped in the 1960s and '70s, and although the city end of Far Gosford Street (1-7 and Court No. 1) was lost to road building in the early '70s, with further losses (8-17) for the construction of Sky Blue Way in 1986, the street has managed to retain much of its character and separate identity.¹⁵

In recognition of the significant heritage of the area, Coventry Council designated the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area on the 21st of October 1992. Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage Initiative, ERDF and Advantage West Midlands has recently supported improvements, repairs and redevelopment of gap sites at 25 properties or sites. Far Gosford Street Conservation Area has been awarded a further phase of Townscape Heritage Initiative and ERDF funding. The aim of Phase 2 is to extend the heritage restoration work to the remainder of the street, so that the improvement is universal rather than patchwork, including key medieval buildings and the last remaining court houses and to focus on education, pulling together a wide partnership including the University and College to ingrain heritage understanding into the business and residential community.

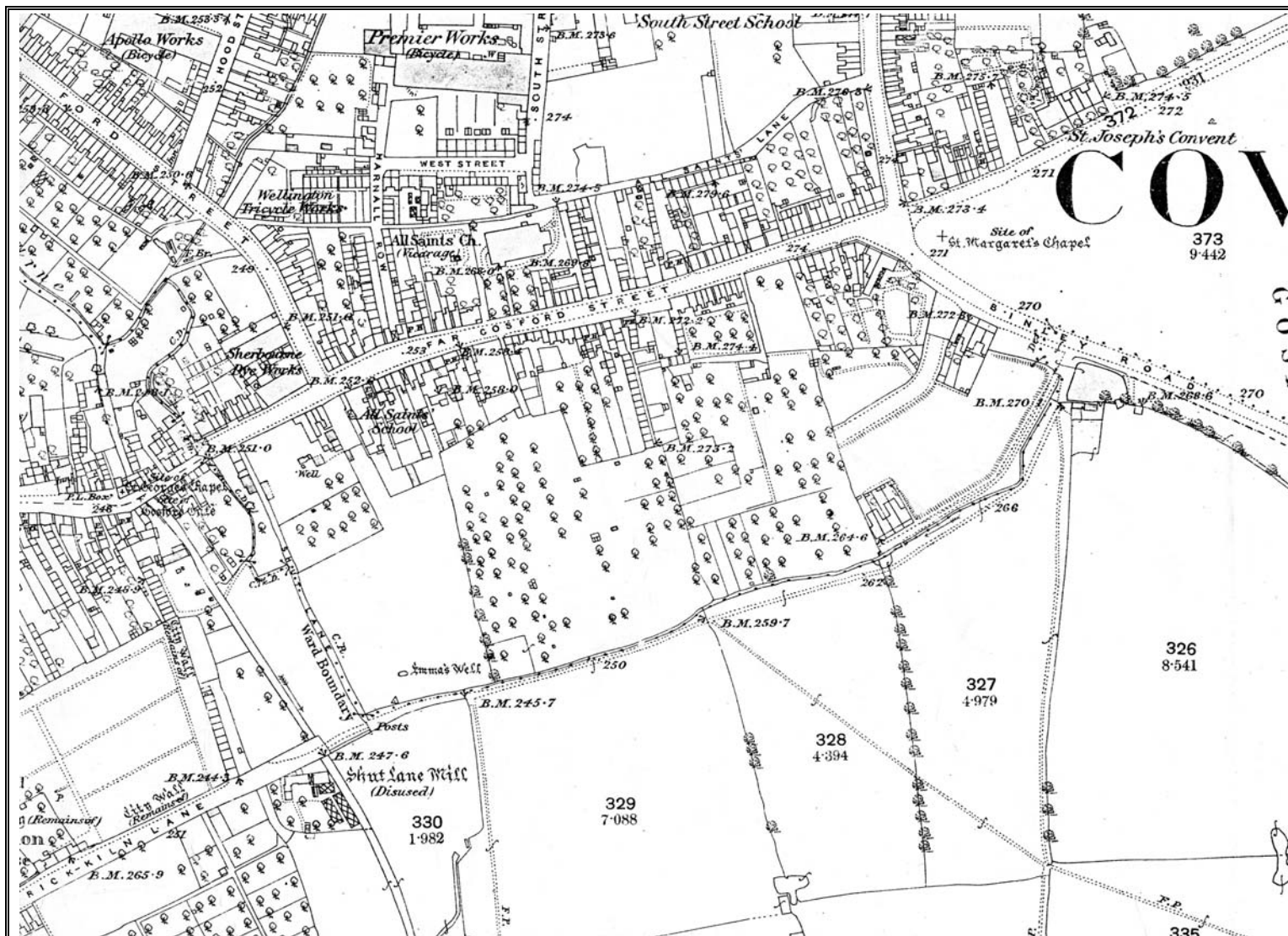
¹⁵ M. Singlehurst, *Far Gosford Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Policy Framework*. (City Development Directorate, 2004).

Sequence of Maps Showing Development of Far Gosford Street



1851 Ordnance Survey Map

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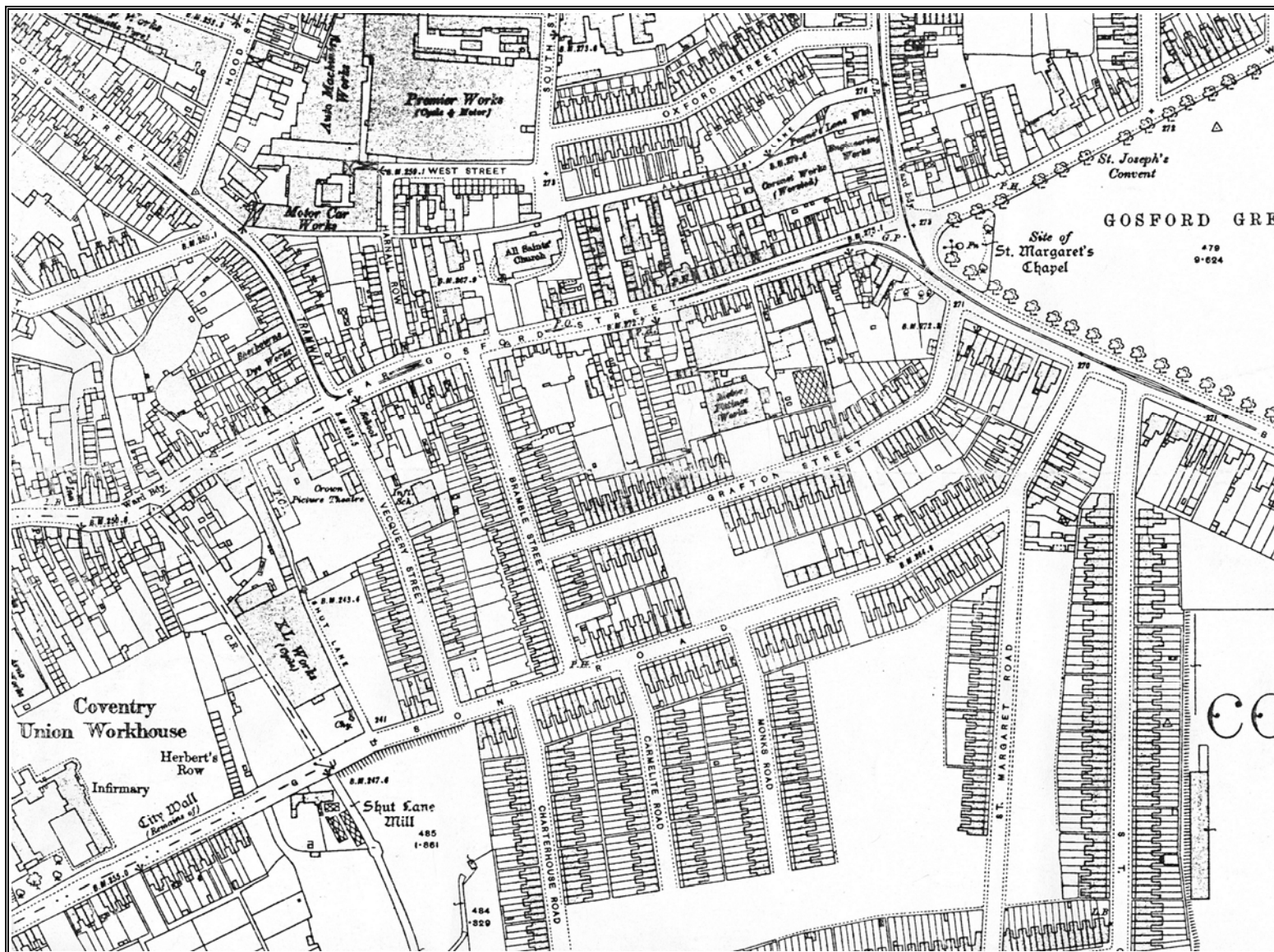


1887 Ordnance Survey Map
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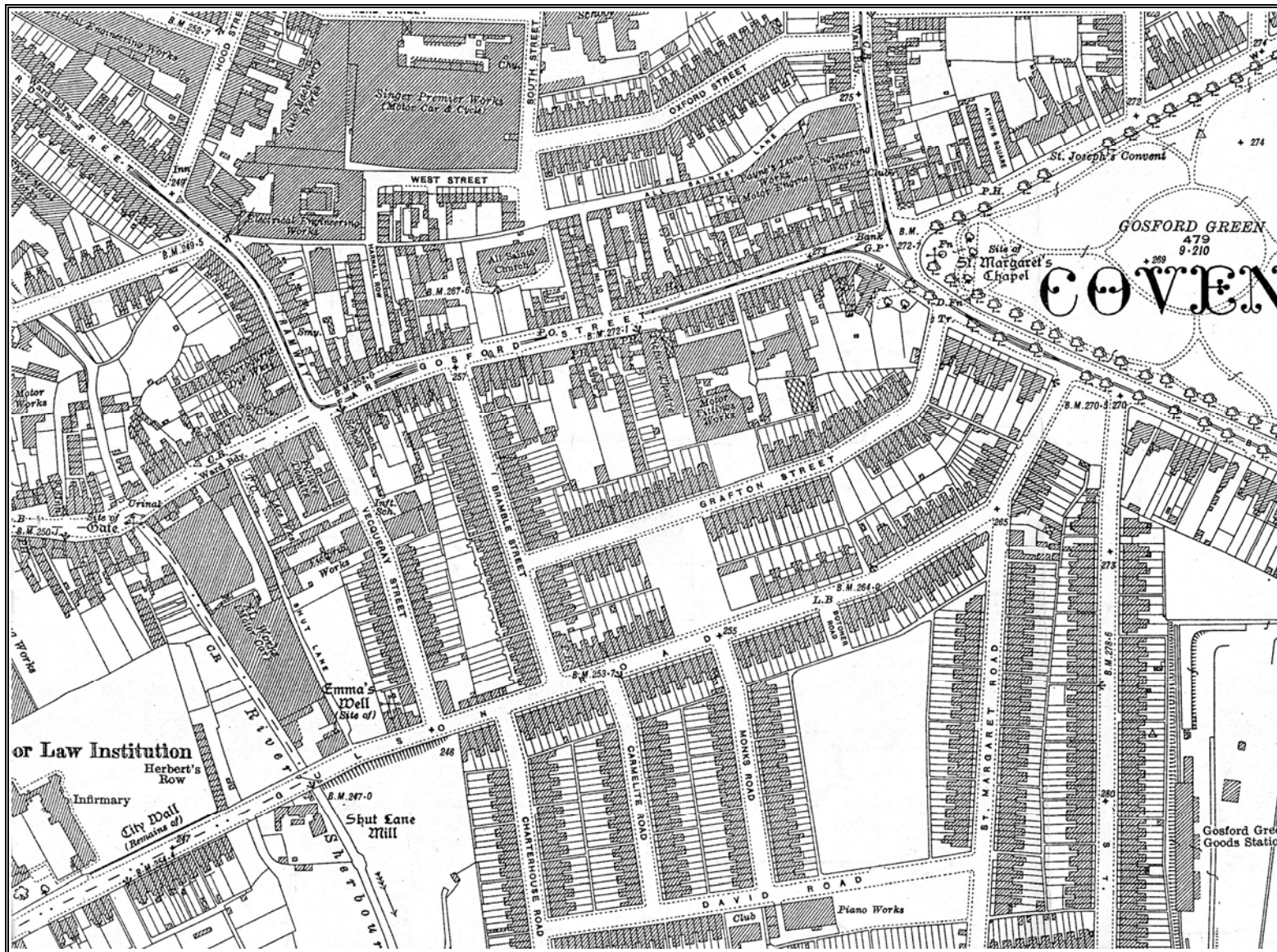


1905 Ordnance Survey Map
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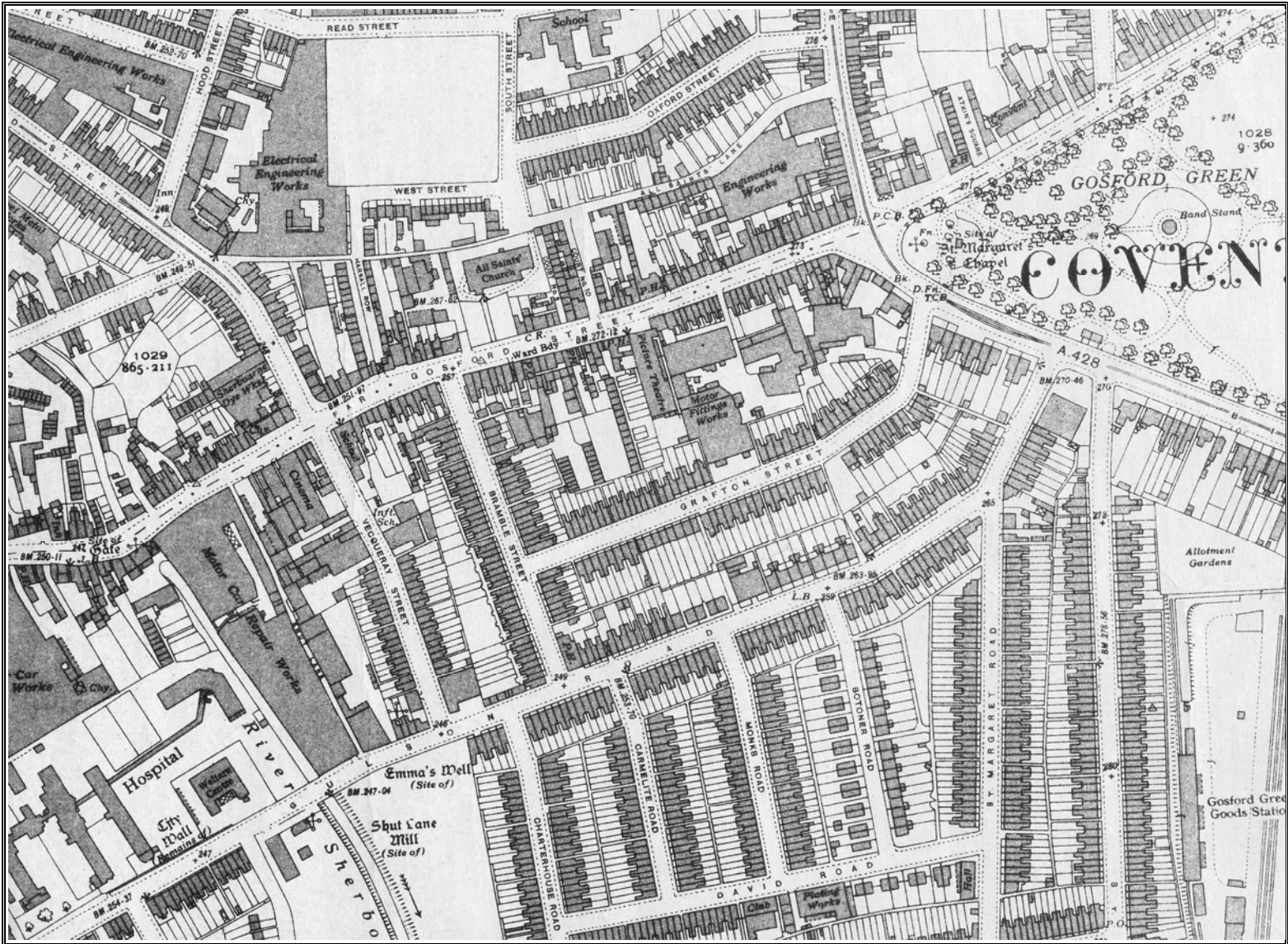




1914 Ordnance Survey Map
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1925 Ordnance Survey Map
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4.3. Archaeology

Archaeological Evidence

The Far Gosford Street Conservation Area is classed as an Archaeological Constraint Area, named the Far Gosford Medieval Suburb. Archaeological evidence in the form of documentation, excavation and survey has recovered information about the past of Far Gosford Street.

Evidence of the Medieval Suburb

The excavations at the former Astley's site at the west end of Far Gosford Street (carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology) identified seven broad phases of occupation and activity, from the 12th century through to the 20th. The excavation recovered significant medieval remains. These included a series of low sandstone walls, probably used as plinths for an earlier medieval timber-framed building built along the frontage of Far Gosford Street. The sites of a numerous medieval buildings were also recovered. In conjunction with the aforementioned sand stone remains, these buildings formed the earliest known frontage along this part of Far Gosford Street. Medieval pits and linear features were recovered to the rear of the medieval properties during excavation. Some of these features were timber lines, and one pit had an additional stone lining. A cache of thirty-eight silver coins, dating from 1272-1327 were also found. A second phase of building on this site is represented by the remains of a later medieval or possibly post medieval building. The structural remains were of a second frontage, comprising walls, hearths and floor surfaces overlaying the layers masking the earlier structures. This building, like their earlier predecessors, would have been timber framed constructions resting on sandstone-rubble plinths. It is thought that these medieval structures may have been demolished, or at least affected by demolition activities during the Civil War.



Remains of a Medieval House on the Astley's Site

Evidence of the Medieval City Wall

Excavations have recovered the medieval city wall in three separate trenches to the south of Far Gosford Street. This indicated a change in direction of the wall in order to meet with Gosford Gate. The excavation of the Bridge Street buildings recovered the remains of a timber structure in situ. They are thought to date to the 16th century. Finds from excavations in this area include pottery and animal bone. Foundations of the city wall were also observed by Shelton (1949) at the Gosford Street Gate, 'In one place on the south as the gate a large piece of city wall was found buried with its ashlar and plinth in perfect condition.' Trial trench evaluations undertaken to the rear of 121-124 Far Gosford Street recovered a buried soil deposit containing tile, pottery, copper alloy tack and copper alloy stud. These finds are thought to date to the 16th century.

Evidence From the In-filled Watercourses

Shelton recorded the site of the dam for the White Friar's Mill at the Nurses Home site on Gulson Rd. The wooden piles driven into the ground and the surround of the dam were still in position. The black silt of the dam, which was very deep, was also still in position. Near this site the river course had been straightened in 1860 but the old water race to the mill was clearly visible as excavations took place. Boot soles of C14th, also an old axe and bones from which buttons had been made were recovered. During the 1860s works to the river, the old river bed and banks were found, as were pieces of Norman pottery and animal bones which had been used in cooking. Quite a lot of C14th pottery was also discovered and a steel punch for blacksmith's use.

Evidence of Civil War Defences and Occupation

An excavation undertaken at 63-69 Bridge Street in the early 1990s recovered evidence of settlement in the Far Gosford Street Area. Four layers were examined dating to the mid 17th to early 18th centuries, providing evidence about activities around the town wall. The earliest feature was a pit dating from the Civil War; this is followed by a post-Civil War occupation surface, domestic in character. The final layers were demolition layers of the early 18th century. Finds associated with these layers included animal bones and a drinking vessel.

Potential for Underground Remains

Far Gosford Street Conservation Area is considered to be an area of high archaeological potential and is classed as an Archaeological Constraint area. There is evidence of occupation of the Far Gosford Street area dating back to the early medieval period. As previous excavations in the area have found, there is a high level of potential for underground archaeological remains in this area dating to the medieval and post medieval periods. The most likely archaeological potential in the Conservation Area is associated with:

- the in-filled river valley;
- the city defences;
- the medieval suburb;
- the civil war defences;
- former industrial production;
- the former chapel on Gosford Green.

4.4. Architectural Quality and Built Form

Qualities of the Buildings

There are four listed building entries in the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area, although the entries cover fourteen separate addresses. The listed buildings vary in age and architectural style. Number 32-33 is an excellent example of a late medieval hall-house. This timber framed structure with white washed brick nogging dates to the 15th-16th century. It is of two storeys with a jettied upper floor. The windows are shop windows to the ground floor and casement windows to the first floor.

Numbers 38- 40 are grade II statutory listed buildings of the 16th century or earlier, which have recently been restored under the previous Townscape Heritage Initiative programme, removing the roughcast render, corrugated roof and inappropriate shop fronts. The buildings now display the previously hidden timber frame and have appropriate

67-72 Far Gosford Street is a three storey terraced row, formerly with 'topshops' to the upper floors. Numbers 67-70 to the west of the terrace date to the early 19th century, but 71-72 were built slightly later, in 1840. The terrace is of brick in a Flemish bond; the roof is gabled with tiles and brick ridge and end stacks. The building has recently been repaired and restored under the previous Townscape Heritage Initiative programme.

To the south side of the street number 122-124 dates to the 16th century and is a two storey timber framed structure that has undergone phases of alterations. It was at one time re-faced and the elevation to the street was stuccoed, the roof was replaced with a tile roof. A survey undertaken in 1991 described the structure as

Two-storey, possibly four-bay, concealed timber-framed building with steeply pitched plain-tiled roof. Ground floor: bays one and two form a single shop unit with remnants of a traditional shop front. Bays three and four: two modern shop fronts, but with recessed doorways, echoing traditional shop fronts. On the first floor, bays one to three are completely obscured by panelling and a deep fascia. Bay four also has a deep fascia, and is panelled with a modern casement window in 'traditional' style.

Since the survey of 1991 the building has undergone a scheme of restoration; the render has been removed from the northern elevation and the building has been converted into offices.

Other buildings along the street are of varying dates and styles, there are examples of 15th-17th century timber framed structures as well as Georgian, Victorian and modern 20th century structures. Many buildings have retained original features such as windows, roofs and decorative brickwork. Many of the shop fronts have been replaced, but there are still a few examples of 19th century shop fronts that retain historic architectural details. Astley's is a good example of the use of terra cotta.

Due to the many shop fronts at ground floor level, only a few examples of domestic doorways remain. Examples of which can be seen at number 93, a panelled timber door with moulded architrave. Commercial premises such as the public houses retain doorways with details such as stone or timber surrounds. The doors to the residential properties along Binley Road are combination of modern timber panelled and UPVC.

Surviving historic windows are more common to the upper floors. The most common type of window found on the 19th and early 20th century buildings are vertically sliding timber sash windows. In these windows each light is typically divided into smaller panes by slender glazing

bars, and often surmounted by voussoirs (curved stones making up an arch) in brick or stone, sometimes with central keystones. The later examples of sash windows have fewer glazing bars and larger panes of glass. There are also examples of tripartite sash windows with a central sliding sash set between two narrow sliding sashes. The rear windows often have simpler, curved heads in non-contrasting brickwork; these may have been side-hung casements rather than sliding sash types in some cases. A few of the later buildings have projecting oriel and bay windows. The former All Saints' School has tall and narrow windows in a Gothic style.



Sash Windows to Number 93



Later Sash Windows to Number 96



Windows to the former All Saints' School



Projecting Oriel Windows to Number 126

The timber-framed buildings in the street generally have timber casement windows with side-hung opening lights and small panes. The only examples of stone mullion and transom windows along Far Gosford Street are at the Astley's building. These also have decorative stone surrounds and they all originally had leaded top lights with stained glass. The former 'topshops' have large distinctive multi-pane windows to the top floor.



Building Materials

There are numerous building materials within this area. The predominant building materials are brick, timber with brick noggins, timber framed windows of varying styles and roofs are plain red clay tile or slate. Some of the buildings are rendered and painted. The modern developments are of brick and have UPVC windows and doors.

Ages of Buildings and Dominant Architectural Styles

The Conservation Area presents a continuous row of structures of varying dates. There are examples of late 15th- 17th structures, Georgian and Victorian buildings. There is a combination of residential and commercial uses.

Timber-framed buildings of the 15th to 17th centuries, are predominantly of the Wealden or 'hall-house' type, originally having open halls in one bay and jettied, two-storeyed accommodation in the other bay. Examples of this form of architecture along Far Gosford Street include numbers 28, 31, 32- 33, 38-41, 64/64A, 117, 122-124 and 142. All these buildings are two storeys in height. Many of them have suffered inappropriate alterations, such as the removal of parts of the timber frame (especially on street facing elevations) and general neglect. Only a few of these buildings reveal their timber frame on their external frontages.



The Late Georgian and Early Victorian structures along the street also vary in style and form. They range from terraces of two/ three storeys, some with weaving workshops known as

'topshops' to the upper floors, to public houses and former private houses, now in use as shops. Numbers 67-72, 74-76, 93-94 and the former numbers 61-62 were originally terraced, three-storeyed former weavers houses with second floor workshops above two storeys of living accommodation. The walls of these buildings are constructed of brick or brick and render. The surviving historic windows are a combination of sashes and casements. Some display decorative architectural details such as brick arches or key stones over windows.



93-94 Far Gosford Street



67-72 Far Gosford Street

Numbers 65-66 and 116 are public houses. 65-66 (formerly the Pitt's Head now the Gosford Arms) dates to pre 1808. Number 66 was built at a later date and then incorporated into the public house. It is of red brick with stone dressings; it retains its sash windows at first floor level, the ground floor windows have later frames with plate glass and top lights. A brick parapet conceals a shallow pitched roof, with chimneys. Number 116 (The Hertford Arms, now Palms Bar) dates to the 19th century and is comprised of two distinct buildings joined together. The structure is brick, painted cream with stone window sills. To the east the building rises to a lower level, with two small gables interrupting the roof line. The section to the west also rises to two storeys, but of a higher level. Surviving historic architectural details include stone string courses, stone plinth and decorative stone window surrounds.



The Gosford Arms



Palms Bar, Formerly The Hertford Arms

Further commercial properties within the Conservation Area include numbers 84-88 and 154-156 that were all built as the offices to cycle factories. 84-88 were formerly one office block but have since been subdivided. Numbers 86-88 are now used for the Lloyds TSB bank. The structure rises to three storeys and is of five bays with central projecting bay with gable. The entire structure is rendered, in various shades of beige and cream. The shop fronts to numbers 84 and 85 are modern and that to number 84 is in a state of disrepair. The building now containing the fitness centre at number 42 was once part of the Garlick Brothers' builder's yard. Number 154-156 was formerly the offices of the Calcott XL Cycle Works, the offices facing onto Far Gosford Street with the factory complex to the rear. It is now part of Callice Court, student accommodation. The main office block remains and dates from 1896. This large Victorian building is an imposing landmark in the surrounding landscape. It is built of red brick with cream terra cotta dressings, including window surrounds and mullion and transom windows. It has a slate roof with ornamental gables, chimneys and decorative roof ridge details.



84-88 Gosford Street



154-156 Far Gosford Street

There are numerous examples of former private houses that have been converted into commercial premises. These include numbers 77-83, 89b-91 and possibly numbers 96-101, 105-113, 141 and 143-144. 77-83 were formerly 'Ashville Terrace', a row of residential properties, recessed from the main building line with small gardens to the front. These were in existence on the 1851 Board of Health map. The properties were converted for commercial use with accommodation above in 1910. This was accomplished by addition of projecting shop fronts of a unified style. The basic form of the shop fronts (pilasters, consoles and cornices) remain, but there have been modern alterations and additions to many of the facades. All

properties retain their chimneys and numbers 78-80 have retained slate roofs, the rest having been replaced with concrete interlocking tiles. 89b-90 are two storey double fronted classical buildings, with sash windows to the first floors and modern shop fronts to the ground floors. Classical decorative elements include dentillated eaves cornices and pediment window surrounds. Number 96-101 date to post 1870 and have been much altered. Numbers 96 and 97 have retained their first floor sashes, but others have been replaced with UPVC windows. The slate roof to number 96 and 97 has also been retained, but replaced to numbers 99-101, with concrete tiles and inserted roof lights. The entire row has retained cornice details. The shop front design varies. Number 96-97 is currently of an inappropriate modern design, with large plastic fascia and modern shop window and area of tiling. In 1991 numbers 99-101 was a single commercial unit. This has since been subdivided. The shop fronts to the remaining premises are more in keeping with the character of the area, with timber framed traditional shop windows, modest timber fascias and timber pilasters.



89b Gosford Street



91 Far Gosford Street



77-83 Gosford Street



105-113 Far Gosford Street

The former All Saints School No 147 is a landmark Victorian property situated on the corner with Vecqueray Street. It has been remodelled following a period of vacancy, and is currently 'Scholars' venue and nightclub. The original window and door openings at were restored in the 1990s, but the loss of the original ground floor brickwork has resulted in pebble dashed wall facings, although the upper level brickwork and decorative work remains exposed. The former Parish Rooms, also situated along Vecqueray street are an attractive example of Victorian Architecture, of red brick with stone dressings.



Numbers 63 and 63a, 92 and 126-140 also date to the Victorian and Edwardian Periods. They are classed as commercial premises with accommodation above and were probably constructed for this use. Number 63 has a good shop front in the late Victorian early Edwardian style, with brick walls and a clay tiled roof, but No 63a has a modern shop front in aluminium, with a projecting roller shutter box and deep fascia. Numbers 91-92 forms a prominent corner building of brick to the ground floor with mock black and white timber detailing above. The voussoirs and keystones above the windows have been painted black to resemble part of the timber frame. The original sash windows have been replaced by timber casements containing leaded glass. The roof is a shallow pitch, hidden behind a parapet. There are two plaques at first floor level that state "Est'd 1836". This must be a reference to the occupier of the building, as the structure was erected at some time between 1851 and 1873. To ground floor level there is a modern shop front and a plain, deep fascia. There is also a carriageway opening on the far right of the facade. Numbers 126-130 are of two storeys in brick (some with render) and projecting bay windows to the first floor level. Not all of the bay windows are original, some have been replaced by modern units. The structures date to the late 19th and early 20th century. The shop fronts to the ground floors are all modern, in a variation of styles, some retaining a few elements of the historic shop front design. 131 to 133 differ in style, and are rendered with roughcast. Number 131 had sash windows with a stone surround and number 132 was the same, but all have now been removed and replaced with modern alternatives. The first floor windows have brickwork surrounds in a 'quoined' effect.



135-140 are two storey single bay Victorian shops with single first floor window and shop front below. All of the properties have retained their original decorative stone window surrounds,

although many of the windows themselves have been replaced. Some of the shops have been painted brick work, others are bare brick.

Residential properties in the area include the Victorian terrace of houses at numbers 2-14 Binley Road. These are red-brick and grey slated roofs, some with pebbledash. Several have single and two storey bay windows and stone dressings. Further architectural details include decorative eaves cornices to front elevations and gable ends. Some of these residential properties have now been altered for commercial uses, such as Duo Hair, in number 10. Further residential properties dating to this period include the semidetached pair, numbers 16-18 Binley Road. These are also red-brick with grey slate roofs with two storey bay windows and stone dressings. Number 18 has now been converted to the Penington Dental Practice.



20th century structures within the Conservation Area include brick retail premises at number 146 Lower Ford Street and numbers 18-21, 26-27, 52-57, 89-89A and 149-152 Far Gosford Street. There are also two modern public houses numbers 35 and 119-120, a stripped-down former cinema number 150, a car repair workshop and tyre centre on the site of number 65-66 Far Gosford Street.

Number 18-21 is a single storey 1920s commercial building with shop front facing onto Far Gosford Street and a blank brick façade facing onto Sky Blue Way to the north. The building now stands alone due to the demolition of its neighbours to facilitate the building of the Sky Blue Way traffic island, and has lost much of its integrity. The shop front to Far Gosford Street retains some elements of the original design. The central plaque bears the name 'French's Corner'. This is a reference to the former complex of buildings in this vicinity: the dye houses and laundries of Messrs J. R. French & Co which occupied the site between the mid-1880s and 1907. It is proposed to demolish this building to allow a redevelopment which will strengthen the streetscape at this end of the Conservation Area.



Number 52-57 is a post-war block of shops with flats above. It is three storeys, of light brown brick with a flat roof. It is one of the few examples of modern 'functional' architecture in the street.

Numbers 149- 152 have been altered since their erection. The northern elevation of Number 149 has been altered and is now red brick with mock sash windows. The former cinema, number 150 has more recently been converted to a nightclub. This building presents a plain elevation to the street; with large recessed entrance area. Number 151 is a plain brick building with a large vehicular opening occupying most of the street frontage. There are current proposals to improve the building by inserting a new shop front, designed along traditional lines. Cluttered signage and utilitarian frontages at number 152-3 detract from the historic character of the Conservation Area. The monumental mason's premises, has a plain modern exterior with a deep fascia and plate glass windows.

The Scala development to the rear of 114-115 is a combination of glass and rendered brick, in a modern design with uPVC windows. The Gosford Industrial Estate contains a variety of 20th century buildings, all of brick. There is a two storey five bay industrial building with factory workshops to the rear to the southwest of the site. To the east of the area there is a row of three brick industrial buildings with single pitch roofs. The Carpet Warehouse, a large red brick warehouse with large central doorway is situated to the northwest corner of the site.

Backs of Buildings

Historically the linear plan of the street meant that most of the backs of the properties facing Far Gosford Street were not easily visible but this has now changed due to the construction of Sky Blue Way to the north. The forthcoming developments at Kilby Mews and Fargo Village on the former industrial estate will further increase the visibility of the backs of properties on the southern side of the street. In many cases the backs of properties along Far Gosford Street are very prominent, particularly from Sky Blue Way which is a major approach to Coventry City centre. This means that poor quality extensions and alterations to properties, service yards, bin stores and modern boundary walls are highly visible and in many cases have a negative effect on the integrity of the structures and the character and perception of the area.



Local Details

There are examples of simple architectural details that are repeated throughout the Conservation Area. Elements of stone dressings (lintels, sills, voussoirs) and string courses appear on many buildings, such as numbers 84 and 85-88, 119-120; Far Gosford Street and 2, 16 & 18 Binley Road. Projecting bays and oriel windows to residential and former residential properties are common, as are timber sash windows. There are numerous examples of name/ date plaques and decorative window surrounds of varying styles are also repeated throughout the area. Polychromatic brickwork is also a detail that appears more than once, for examples to number 47 and the former All Saints' School. Buildings rising to three storeys with 'topshops' to the upper floors is also a characteristic local detail in the area.

Shop Fronts

Due to the dates of the shop conversions along the street, many of the shop fronts date to the late 19th and early 20th century. The Conservation Area has examples of many typical elements of Edwardian shop front design such as: low stallrisers, moulded pilasters and consoles (corbels), shallow timber fascias, recessed doorways, large display windows (divided by slender mullions) and a row of toplights (transom lights) or a decorative cast iron vent. The principal material used was usually timber, although stallrisers might be tiled, faced in marble or rendered and pilasters might be stone-faced. Unfortunately very few examples now survive completely intact in the street, although many buildings retain some historic elements. There are many examples of modern shop fronts within the Conservation Area. These are typically constructed from aluminium or other modern materials, with signs of UPVC. There does not appear to be any unifying design to the streetscape, and there is a wide variety of styles and proportions. Something common to many of the modern shop fronts are over-deep fascias, or fascias of varying heights in the same row of shops. There are examples of roller shutters with projecting shutter boxes but also example of shutters with more visibility through the shutters.



Public Realm

Along Far Gosford Street the roads are of tarmac, with exception of a small area of cobbles and stone curb along Harnall Way to the rear of numbers 33-34. In some areas the tarmac is in a state of disrepair and there are areas where previous patch repairs to roads create an unsightly appearance. The pavements are a combination of concrete flags and brick with concrete curb stones. Street markings along Far Gosford Street are at times over sized and inappropriate. To the south of All Saints' church yard there is a large speed limit sign marked onto the road, and large arrows indicating routes. Although these measures may be deemed necessary, there needs to be a synthesis between traffic management and appropriate design.



The street furniture also varies in style. To Binley Road there are two types of bollards lining the pavement to the north and south sides of the road: aluminium bollards and metal bollards that have been painted black. Along Far Gosford Street itself, there are also various bollards, some are black with decorative metal bands to the top and others are plain black. The street lamps are a combination of modern aluminium (to open space on Binley Road) and more historic styled street lamps. This combination of styles of street furniture does not unify the character of the historic landscape.

Boundary treatments throughout the Conservation Area vary. Due to the commercial nature of Far Gosford Street, there are very few defined boundary treatments in this area. There is an historic

stone wall to the south of the former All Saints' church yard. There are also defined boundaries to the residential properties along Binley Road. These are all modern and include plain brick walls, brick walls with railings and brick walls decorative brick work.



Bollards of Different Styles, Road Markings



***Historic Stone Wall
At the Former All Saints Churchyard***

Uses/Former Uses

The street was formerly part of one of the main arteries of the City, and an exit route for travellers towards the east. There has been a heavy commercial and industrial presence since the 19th century and many of the buildings along the road were constructed for commercial purposes with accommodation above. Other buildings in the Conservation Area were at one time residential and have now been converted for commercial or mixed use. There are a variety of commercial uses along the street including shops, public houses, restaurants and office blocks. Residential use of the area is becoming more common, with several buildings converted or newly built for residential use.

Open Space, Parks and Gardens and Trees

Although there are no formal parks within Far Gosford Conservation Area, there are two landscaped open areas. To the northeast of Binley Road, on the site of the former St Margaret's Chapel, there is an area of landscaped open space. This area has grassed areas with mature trees, the pavement is of herringbone brick and there are brushed aluminium bollards throughout the area. The former All Saints' churchyard is situated to the north side of Far Gosford Street. This open area is bounded by a stone wall of historic character and the former church yard is landscaped with grass, mature trees and a central path. Further open space along Far Gosford Street include the Gosford Industrial Estate which consists of numerous industrial buildings in a large open area to the south and east of numbers 114-115, and the car park to the west of this.



Character and Interrelationships of Spaces

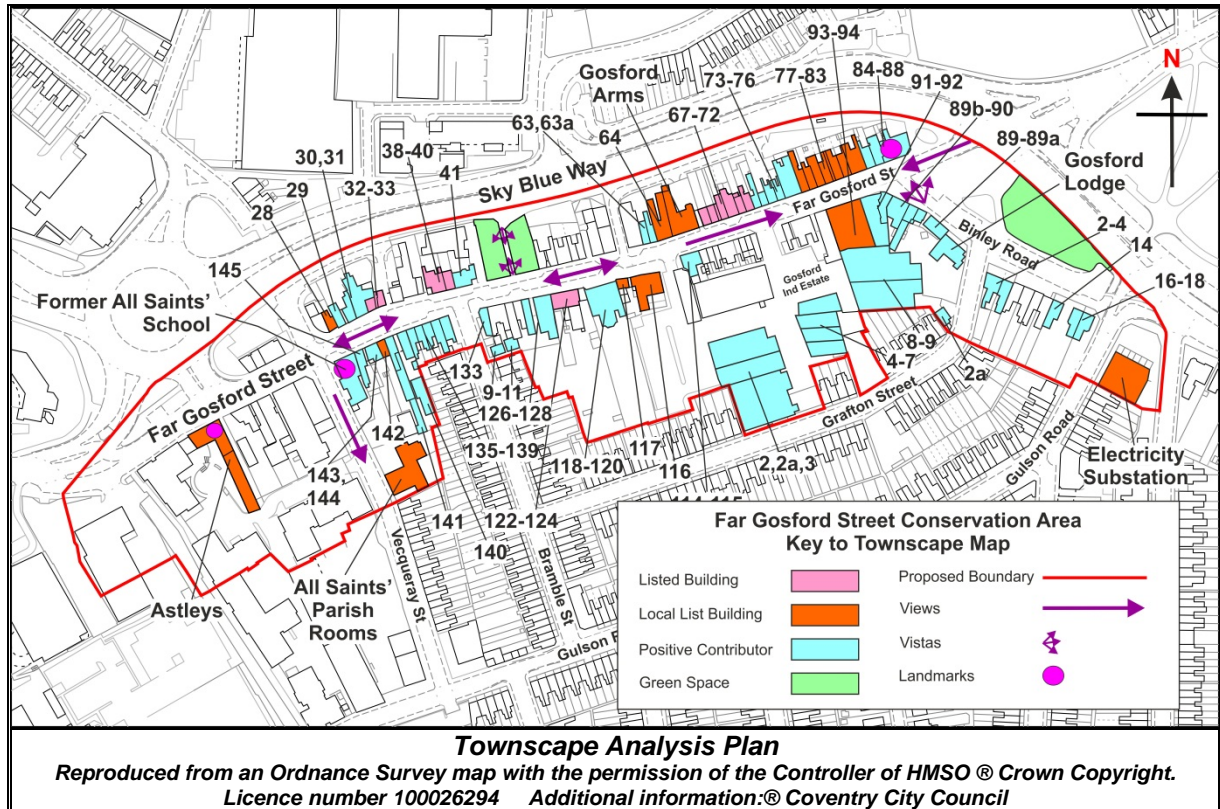
The current Conservation Area is linear in plan form, encompassing Far Gosford Street (a busy thoroughfare that runs on an east west axis) and sections of the minor streets leading to the north and south of this. The majority of the Conservation Area is comprised of commercial premises, creating a bustling high street with a heavy flow of traffic. This creates a corridor effect for a large part of the Conservation Area. The only relief from the continuous commercial street line along Far Gosford Street is the former All Saints' church yard. This is situated to the north side of the road, and provides an open green space, bounded by a stone wall of a high level of historic character. To the northeast of Binley Road there is an open landscaped area, with grassed area and mature trees. The landscape opens up at this point, and the landscaped area provides a green buffer between the Conservation Area and the busy Sky Blue Way. To the rear of numbers 96-115 is the Gosford Industrial Estate, an open space with numerous industrial/ warehouse buildings. There are only very limited views of this area from Far Gosford Street, so it does not have a significant effect on the character of the Conservation Area. Car parking to the west of the industrial estate is also classed as an area of open space. This space is of tarmac, with areas of planting that have become overgrown.

Key Views and Vistas

Key views within the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area are looking northeast and southwest along the line of the street. This incorporates the numerous historic structures. A key vista is looking to the north from the entrance to the All Saints' church yard. This vista encompasses the green open space of the church yard, as well as the historic boundary treatments. There is an attractive view into the Conservation Area from the northern boundary of this space. From the corner of Binley Road looking into the Conservation Area there is an attractive view that incorporates number 84-88, a building with landmark quality. From the far west end of the conservation area looking eastwards, is a view encompassing the Astley's building, an attractive Victorian building with landmark quality.

Landmark Buildings

Architectural Landmarks within the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area include Astley's on Far Gosford Street, the former All Saints' School and number 84-88 Far Gosford Street. Harnell Way providing access to Far Gosford Street from the north is an historic route (retaining its cobblestones and stone curbs). This historic floorscapes to this route should be preserved and considered as a positive contributor.



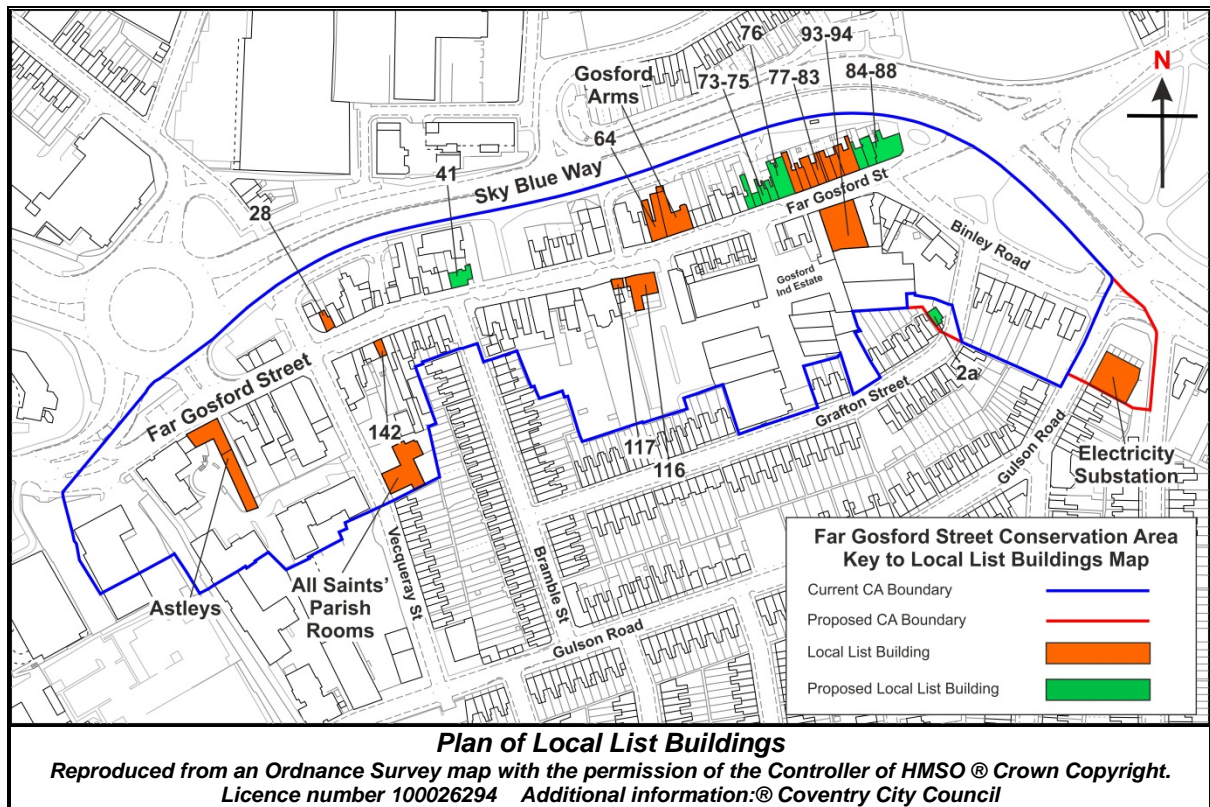
Locally Listed Buildings

In addition to the national and statutory designations, local authorities may formally identify heritage assets that are important to the area, for example through local listing. The following buildings have been identified as being of local importance and have been placed on the Local List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

- 28 Far Gosford Street
- 64 and 64A Far Gosford Street
- 65 and 66 (Gosford Arms, formerly Pitt's Head P.H.) Far Gosford Street
- 77 to 83 (Ashville Terrace) Far Gosford Street
- 93 Far Gosford Street
- 94 Far Gosford Street
- 116 (Palms Bar) Far Gosford Street
- 117 Far Gosford Street
- 142 Far Gosford Street
- Astley's, Far Gosford Street
- Former All Saints Parish Rooms
- Electricity Substation, Gulson Road

In addition it is proposed that five additional properties are added to the Local List:

- 41 Far Gosford Street
- 74-75 Far Gosford Street
- 76 Far Gosford Street
- 84-88 Far Gosford Street
- 2a Grafton Street



5. Assessment of Condition

5.1. General Condition

The general condition of the Conservation Area is poor, due to several factors which diminish the historic character of the Conservation Area. The main issues are vacancy on the upper floors of shops, the poor condition of many structures, the vinyl advertisements covering entire shop windows, the number of inappropriate alterations and the inappropriate shop fronts of varying designs and modern materials outnumber the historically accurate shop fronts.

5.2. Intrusion and Negative Factors

Individual Structures

There are examples of inappropriate alterations to some structures that have had a negative effect on the character of the Conservation Area. These include the loss of original elements and the insertion of modern UPVC windows and doors, inappropriate additions such as the awning to the side elevation of number 135, Satellite dishes on front elevations, insertion of roof lights to terraces, visible wiring, CCTV cameras, painted brickwork, inappropriate signage, illuminated box signs projecting from elevations, inappropriate modern design and alterations (such as the buildings comprising 149-152).



Rooflights and Wiring



Awning to Number 135

There are many examples of inappropriate, poor quality shop front designs along Far Gosford Street. As identified in the 2004 appraisal;

'Most owners and occupiers are small businesses with borderline viability. Enforcement of planning controls against unauthorized and inappropriate changes to buildings in the street has largely broken down, due to the inability to offer financial incentives and the understandable reluctance of

the City Council to carry the risk of taking over the burden of maintaining these buildings without funding. Inability to enforce has created an environment of decline. Local owners have little knowledge or understanding of the history and architecture of their buildings, or of the heritage aims of the local authority, so they tend to replicate previous damage and destruction.'

There has been significant progress made since 2004 as the Council is now willing to take enforcement actions and the investment and educational programs aimed at owners and professional advisers have made a difference. However, the effects of the inappropriate alterations still exist.

Many shop fronts do not reflect the character of the Conservation Area. Inappropriate materials and illumination are used for signage; fascias are too deep; the colour and design of signage to individual shops along terraces is often bright and contrasting creating an inharmonious effect; some of the advertisements do not respect the form of the façade. Another issue is that under used upper floors result in a lack of maintenance and deterioration of the structural fabric, which degrades the overall appearance of the street scene.



Boxed roller shutters result in dead unattractive frontages and canopies of modern materials and styles do not reflect the historic character of the Conservation Area and obscure detailing of the shop front. Buildings with painted brickwork are also negative factors within the Conservation Area. There are several examples of inappropriate low quality boundary treatments including modern brick walls, concrete block walls and concrete panel fence to the rears of some properties.

Historic structures that have been identified as being of local importance should be restored. Many are currently in a state of disrepair, with peeling paint work, signs of water ingress and inappropriate windows, doors and boundary treatments. These include 28-30, 31-33, 73-76 and 93-95 Far Gosford Street, 9 and 11 Bramble Street and 2a Grafton Street.



Heritage at Risk: 2a Grafton Street



Heritage at Risk: 32 and 33 Far Gosford Street

Open Spaces and Areas

The use of a mixture of highway surfacing materials gives the area a confused and haphazard appearance. Some of the street furniture such as A-boards results in a hazard for pedestrians particularly those with visual impairment and erodes the character of the Conservation Area. The street furniture is of a variety of styles, the street lamps vary from modern brushed aluminium to metal. Bollards also vary in style, creating a street scene that has a lack of unity.

Generally the open spaces within the Conservation Area are in good condition. There are some issues with the quality of the public realm. Poor quality reinstatement by utility companies has resulted in unsympathetic repairs involving the introduction of inappropriate tarmac patches. Cracked and badly dented tarmac to roads is also an issue. Some road markings within the area are too thick and are unnecessary. The street furniture in a mixture of styles creates an inharmonious street scene, without a strong identity. There is a gap site at number 36-37 that is having a negative effect on the character of the area, due to the unsightly hoardings and areas of overgrown planting. The area to the rear of numbers 33-34 (Harnall Row) is in a state of disrepair. There are examples of graffiti, and inappropriate extensions to structures. There has been a problem of fly tipping to the rear of some buildings. The court houses to the rear of number 31-33 suffered from a fire in recent years that has affected the character of the area. The access to the River Sherbourne and city gate site is currently poor. This is an area of great historic significance.



Harnall Row



The Junction

Intrusion

Inappropriate modern development that does not respect the historic character of the Conservation Area has had a negative effect on the character of the area. Examples include the mid 20th century structures such as numbers 52-57, the Future Fitness building (which occupies a former builders yard), the Junction young peoples' centre, number 149, Robertson Memorials, and The National Tyres and Autocare Centre.



5.3. Problems, Pressures and Capacity for Change

The Conservation Area faces a number of different pressures and problems. The commercial section faces the problem of businesses remaining economically viable in the current climate. There are also some vacant and partially vacant premises that are in a poor state of repair. Properties in a poor state of repair tend to attract poor quality tenants, which leads to a cycle of decline.

Due to the number of commercial premises, there is a pressure from loading and delivery as traffic is often held up by delivery vans due to cars using the designated loading spaces for parking.

The Fargo urban village development is a welcome solution to reusing these significant industrial structures and should also provide a positive impetus for commercial usage of other vacant buildings in the Conservation Area by creative retailers. However, the intensive usage of the site may put pressure on the Conservation Area in terms of additional traffic and parking pressures.

The gradual shift in uses from retail to uses aimed more at the student population, such as take aways, bars and nightclubs, may create a pressure for damaging alterations such as ventilation systems, but may also be an opportunity to address previous poor quality and inappropriate alterations.

The increasing demand for student accommodation in the area could be viewed as a potential pressure point but alternatively could offer the opportunity for the viable re-use of the upper floors of some commercial premises. However care must be taken to avoid historic properties being used for short periods by occupants who are not responsible for the upkeep of the structure which could accelerate the deterioration of some properties.

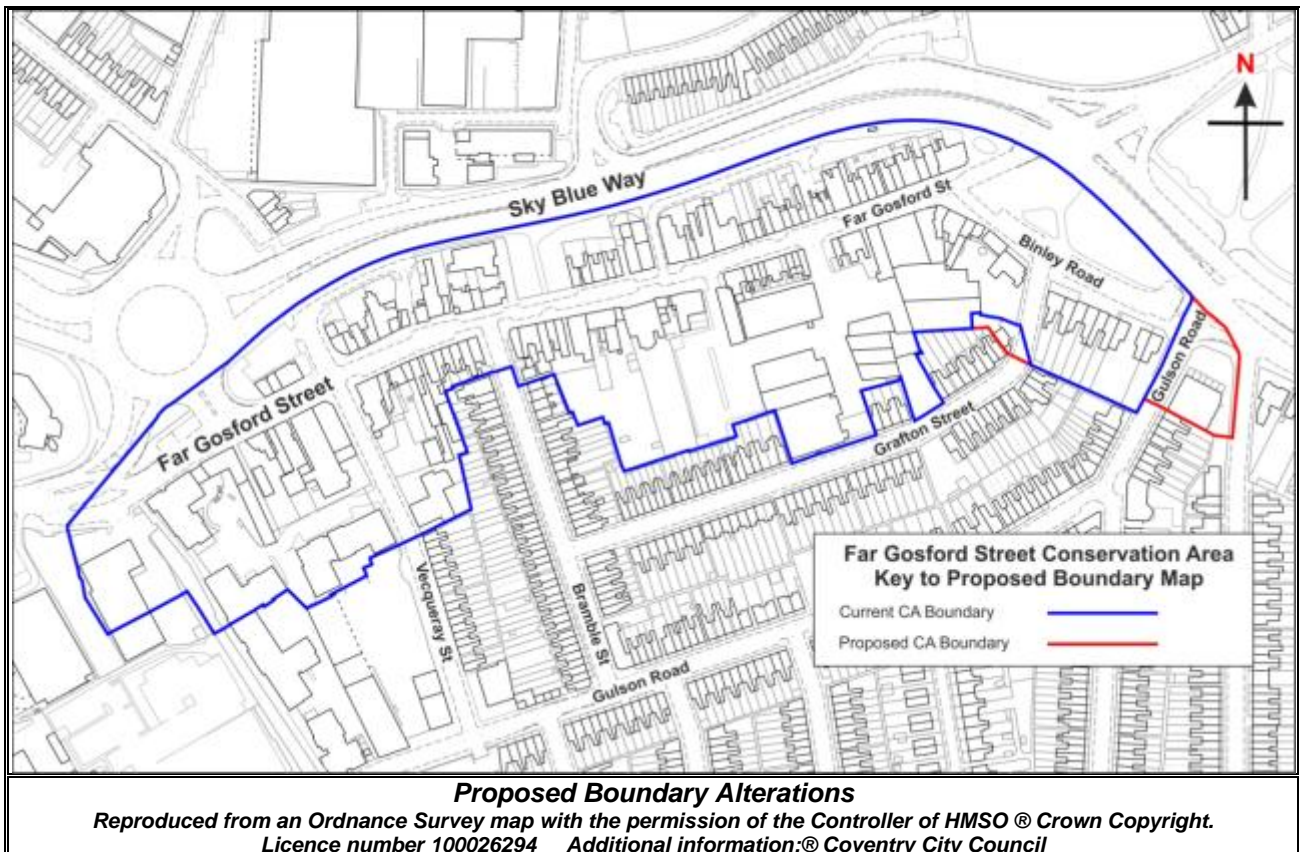
Although there is some capacity for change and redevelopment within areas of the Conservation Area, examples of mid to late 20th century development have been highlighted within the appraisal as being of an inappropriate design for the Conservation Area. Any proposed new development within the area should be designed in context with the historic character of the surrounding buildings.

6. Identifying the Boundary

The NPPF and best practice guidance produced English Heritage states that the boundaries of existing conservation areas should be kept under review. Parts which are no longer special should be excluded. Where drawn too tightly, the conservation area should be extended to include more recent phases or plots associated with buildings of historic interest.

It is now recognised that conservation area boundaries need to be seen within a wider context of urban development. Designated areas should provide protection to buildings that were perhaps not previously considered to be of architectural merit and to the spaces between buildings, such as streets and neutral areas. It is also the case that further information can come to light about the historic importance of buildings and spaces.

It is proposed that the Conservation Area boundary be extended to include the Electricity Substation on Gulson Road. This is an historic structure of a high level of architectural quality; it is already included on the local list. The second proposed extension is to include number 2a Grafton Street. This is an historic structure that was extant in 1850, and is thought to have originally been an agricultural building and used as a workshop later. This building has historic significance and documents the evolution of this part of the Conservation Area.



7. A Plan for Further Action

The issues and pressures within the Conservation Area that will be addressed in the management plan and the design guidance are summarised as follows.

- Under-used upper floors are an issue within the Conservation Area and result in a lack of maintenance and deterioration of the structural fabric. Creative solutions for encouraging use of upper floors should be considered.
- An issue within the Conservation Area that needs to be addressed is a lack of maintenance of historic structures such as the 'topshops' and timber framed structures. Numerous buildings display minor signs of dereliction and decay such as peeling paintwork or spalling brickwork. This is having a negative effect on the character of the individual structure and a cumulative effect on the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- Inappropriate modern alterations and additions within the Conservation Area have a negative effect on the individual structures and a cumulative effect on the character of the Conservation Area and should be addressed. These include wiring to the fronts of buildings, UPVC windows and doors, CCTV cameras, plastic rainwater goods, inappropriate signage, and poor quality additions to the rears of properties, satellite dishes to properties and inappropriately painted and rendered brickwork. Methods for monitoring and preventing these alterations should be considered, as should methods for re-instating traditional windows and doors where possible.
- Mid 20th to 21st century shop fronts of an inappropriate design, scale and material have a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area. Guidance on appropriate shop fronts needs to be made accessible to existing and new occupants in the area.
- Some of the shop fronts within the Conservation Area display inappropriate signage and do not reflect the character of the Conservation Area. This is especially an issue in the case of listed buildings or highly visible buildings that form part of the approach to the Conservation Area. Inappropriate materials, design, layout and size of signage to shop fronts have a negative impact on the Conservation Area.
- There is an issue of low quality boundary treatments, particularly to the rears of properties along Sky Blue Way. This needs to be addressed as these have a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area.
- The quality of the public realm within the Conservation Area needs to be addressed. Many of the surface treatments within the Conservation Area are in need of repair. Poor quality reinstatement by utility companies has resulted in unsympathetic repairs involving the introduction of inappropriate tarmac patch repairs. There are examples of mixtures of surface treatments, surface treatments in need of repair, unkempt areas and examples of graffiti.
- Another negative element of the street scene is street clutter. There is an unnecessary amount of road signage and inappropriate 21st century metal bollards in a mixture of styles.
- Many areas of the street are plagued by litter and fly tipping.

Opportunities for Enhancement

Below is a summary of specific considerations for opportunities to enhance the Conservation Area.

- Consider an Article 4 direction for the Conservation Area to prohibit permitted development rights and stop inappropriate alterations to buildings.
- Restore the Listed timber-framed buildings at Nos 32-33 and the 'topshops' at Nos 73-76 and 93-94 that are in need of repair.
- Infill the gap site at numbers 36-37 with a structure of an appropriate design and viable use.
- Reinstate appropriate windows, doors and shop fronts to buildings that have undergone inappropriate alterations (e.g., numbers 28-31, 63a, 77-81, 128-132, 136, 138-140, 142-145)
- Improve modern shop fronts that are of an inappropriate design and reinstate traditional shop fronts, specifically those that are located at the entrance to the Conservation Area or those that are on Listed and Locally Listed buildings.
- Improve access to the River Sherbourne and the City Gate site.
- Improve inappropriate signage to historic buildings, such as the former All Saints' School building.
- Undertake minor improvements to elevations along Far Gosford Street. Address issues such as satellite dishes, untidy wires, bird roosting, spalling brick work, gravel-dashed walls and peeling paint.
- Improve the archway area to number 73.
- Restore the elevation of the former cinema at No 150 in a style appropriate to the Conservation Area.
- Improve or redevelop the buildings at numbers 151-153 as they are having a negative effect on a key location within the Conservation Area.
- Restore number 2a Grafton Street, an unusual historic property.
- Restore numbers 9 and 11 Bramble Street, small historic workshops.
- Remove street clutter and improve street furniture.


8. Sources

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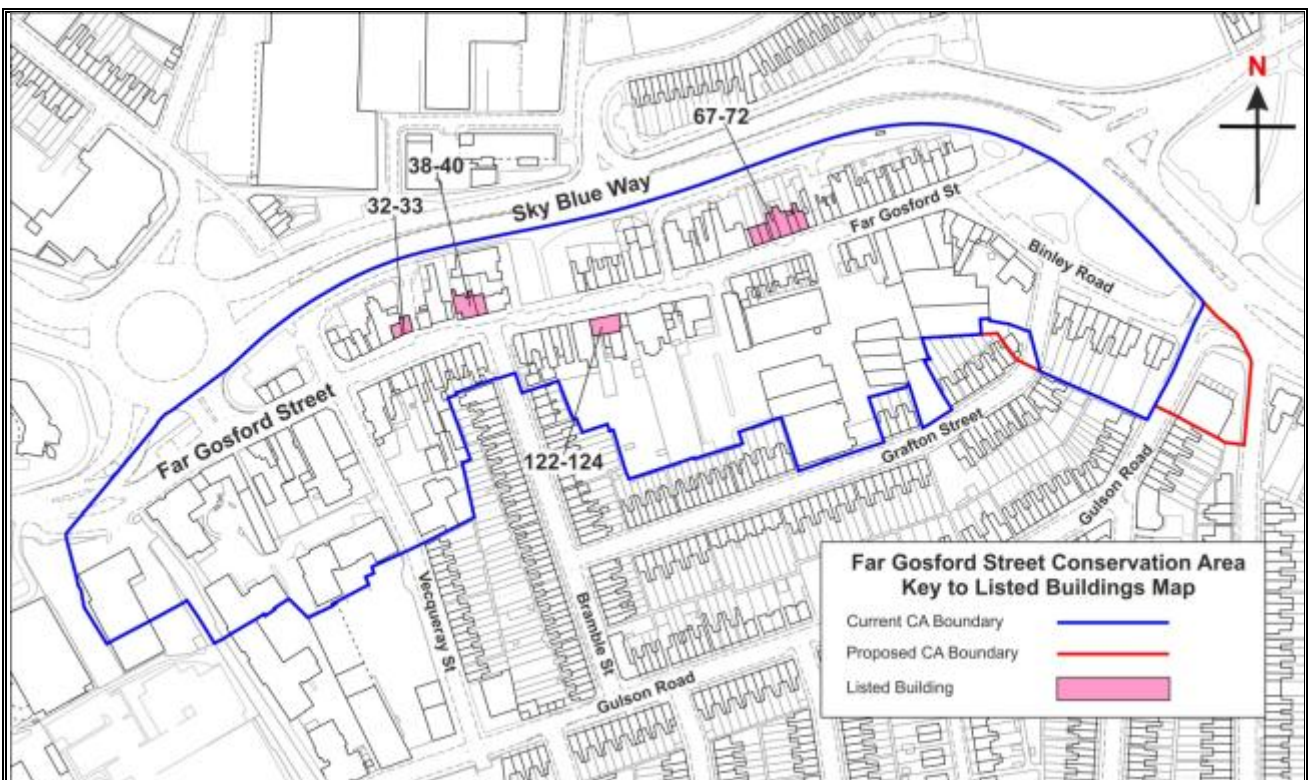
Appendix 1: Audit of Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

A listed building is a building that has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. There are 4 listed building entries, which include 14 structures in the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area.

Listed Buildings	Listing Description	Condition
	<p>32 and 33 Far Gosford Street.</p> <p>Grade II. Listed Building No.: 1342928. C15 or C16. Timber frame, whitewashed brick nogging, corrugated roof. 2 storeys with 1st floor oversailing. Shop windows, 1st floor casements</p>	<p>Poor</p>
	<p>38 and 40 Far Gosford Street</p> <p>Grade II. Listed Building No.: 1115599. C16 or earlier. Timber frame, faced in colour washed roughcast. Corrugated roof. 2 storeys with 1st floor oversailing. Modern shop window. Note: 38 and 40 have now been repaired and restored.</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>67-72 Far Gosford Street</p> <p>Grade II. Listed Building No.: 1226785. Terrace row with 'topshops' to upper storey, now used as shops. Nos 67-70 are early C19, and Nos 71-72 are c.1840. Flemish bond brick; gabled plain tile roofs with concrete tiles to Nos 67 and 72; brick ridge and end stacks. Double- depth plan. 3 storeys; 6-window range. Late C19 shop front with bracketed architrave and plate-glass windows to No 67; other shop fronts replaced in C20. Note: 67-72 have now been repaired and restored.</p>	<p>Good</p>

	<p>122-124 Far Gosford Street</p> <p>Grade II. Listed Building No.: 1320353. C16 or C17, refaced. Stucco road front, tiled roofs. 2 storeys, modern shop windows, boarded 1st floor windows.</p> <p>Note: 122-124 have now been repaired and restored.</p>	<p>Good</p>
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Plan of Listed Buildings

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Positive Contributors

Buildings classed as positive contributors relate to the historic development and special architectural character of the area under consideration. They have a positive effect on the environment. A single building, group or landmark can be classed as a positive contributor.

These elements have been assessed with reference to English Heritage criteria set out in their document *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*. The guidance suggests that if an element has one of the following criteria it should be considered for positive contribution:

- It contributes to the character of the area
- The element is the work of a particular architect or designer
- The element has landmark qualities
- It reflects the characteristics of other elements within the Conservation Area
- It relates to an adjacent designated heritage asset and contributes positively to the setting of this asset
- The element contributes to the quality of a space
- It is associated with a designed landscape
- It (singularly or as part of a group) illustrates the historic development of the area
- It is associated with an historic landscape feature
- It has an association with a significant local person
- It is associated with a prominent industry in the area

Positive Contributors	Address	Condition
	28, 29 & 30 Far Gosford Street	Fair
	31 Far Gosford Street	Poor

	<p>41 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>63 & 63a Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>64 and 64a Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>

	<p>65 and 66 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>73 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Fair</p>
	<p>74-75 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Poor</p>

	<p>76 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Poor</p>
	<p>77 – 83 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Fair</p>
	<p>84-88 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Fair</p>

	<p>89-89a Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>89b-89c Far Gosford Street</p>	
	<p>90 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>

	<p>91-92 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>93-94 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Poor</p>
	<p>95 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Fair</p>

	<p>96-97 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>98-101 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>99-100 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>

	<p>101 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>114-115 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>2, 2a & 3 Gosford Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Fair</p>

	<p>4, 5 & 6 Gosford Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Fair</p>
	<p>7 Gosford Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>8 & 9 Gosford Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Good</p>

	<p>116 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>117 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>118-120 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>

	126 & 127 Far Gosford Street	Good
	133 Far Gosford Street	Good
	9 & 11 Bramble Street	Poor

	<p>135-137 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>138 & 139 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>140 & 141 Far Gosford Street</p>	<p>Good</p>

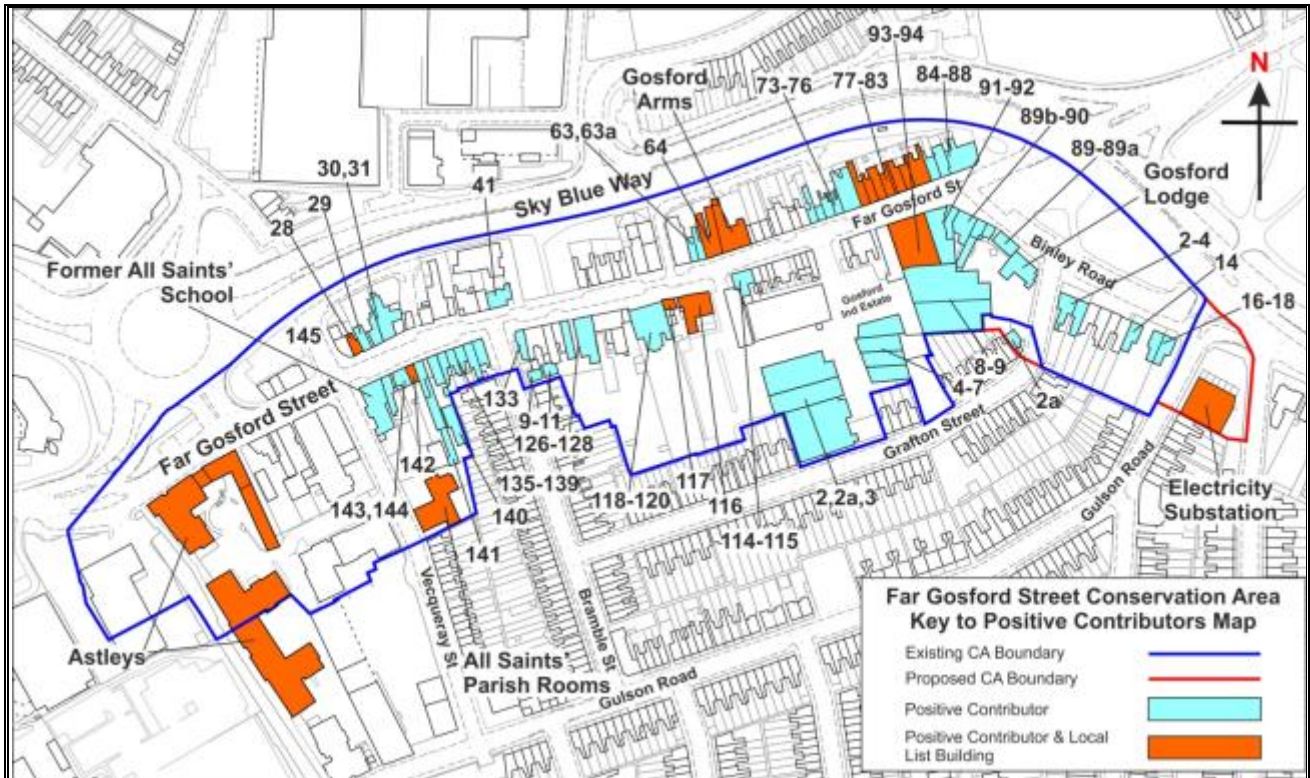
 A photograph of a two-story building with a dark, possibly black or dark grey, facade. The building has a gabled roof with a brick chimney. A red car is parked on the street in front of the building. The ground floor appears to be a shop or business with a sign that is partially visible.	142 Far Gosford Street	Good
 A photograph of a two-story building with a light-colored, possibly cream or beige, facade. The building has a gabled roof. A red car is parked on the street in front of the building. The ground floor has a sign that reads "Chinese Kitchen".	143 & 144 Far Gosford Street	Good

		145 Far Gosford Street	Good
		Former All Saints' , School, Far Gosford Street	Good
		Astley's Gosford Street	Good

 A three-story red brick building with a prominent gabled roof and a large arched window on the upper floor. The ground floor features a large arched doorway and several windows.	<p>Former All Saints Parish Rooms, Vecqueray Street</p>	<p>Good</p>
 A large, two-story red brick building with a prominent arched entrance and a circular window above it. The building is situated on a street with cars parked in front.	<p>Electricity Substation, Gulson Road</p>	<p>Fair</p>
 A small, two-story red brick building with a gabled roof and a small arched window. The building is surrounded by overgrown vegetation and appears to be in poor condition.	<p>Former Workshop/ Agricultural Building, 2a Grafton Street</p>	<p>Poor</p>

	<p>Gosford Lodge, Binley Road</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>2 & 4 Binley Road</p>	<p>Good</p>
	<p>14 Binley Road</p>	<p>Good</p>

	16 Binley Road	Good
	18 Binley Road	Good



Plan of Positive Contributors

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Appendix 2: Listed Buildings

Entries taken from the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

Grade	II		
Address	32 and 33 Far Gosford Street		
Postcode	CV1 5DZ	Location	SP 34311 78971
SMR Reference		Listed Building No.	1342928
Listing Description			
C15 or C16. Timber frame, whitewashed brick nogging, corrugated roof. 2 storeys with 1st floor oversailing. Shop windows, 1st floor casements.			

Grade	II		
Address	38 Far Gosford Street		
Postcode	CV1 5DZ	Location	SP 34345 78984
SMR Reference		Listed Building No.	1115599
Listing Description			
C16 or earlier. Timber frame, faced in colourwashed roughcast. Corrugated roof. 2 storeys with 1st floor oversailing. Modern shop window.			

Grade	II		
Address	67-72 Far Gosford Street		
Postcode	CV1 5DZ	Location	SP3450279019
SMR Reference		Listed Building No.	1226785
Listing Description			
Terrace row with 'topshops' to upper storey, now used as shops. Nos 67-70 are early C19, and Nos 71-72 are c.1840. Flemish bond brick; gabled plain tile roofs with concrete tiles to Nos 67 and 72; brick ridge and end stacks. Double- depth plan. 3 storeys; 6-window range. Late C19 shop front with bracketed architrave and plate-glass windows to No 67; other shop fronts replaced in C20. Semi-circular arched pedestrian through entry between Nos 68 and 69. Gauged brick flat arches over first-floor windows, with early C19 sixteen-pane sashes to Nos 67 and 68, late C19 four-pane sash to No 71 and C20 windows to others; flat header brick arches over second-floor 'topshop' windows, which retain C19 seven-light casements with horizontal glazing bars to Nos 67 and 68. Moulded wood cornice. Rear elevation has mid/late C19 extensions with slate roofs, segmental-arched 2-light C19 casements and C19 seven-light casements with glazing bars to 'topshops'. Interiors: retain original 'topshops' (purpose-built well-lit workshops), reached by winder stairs from first floor; probably used for weaving and ribbon-making.			

Grade	II		
Address	122-124 Far Gosford Street		
Postcode		Location	SP3441978971
SMR Reference	CV1 5DZ	Listed Building No.	1320353
Listing Description			
C16 or C17, refaced. Stucco road front, tiled roofs. 2 storeys, modern shop windows, boarded 1st floor windows.			

Appendix 3: Contacts

Coventry Council Contacts

General development control enquiries concerning Far Gosford Street Conservation Area should be referred to the Development Management Team. Telephone: 024 7683 1212

General enquiries concerning Far Gosford Street Conservation Area and listed buildings should be referred to the Local Authority's Conservation and Archaeology Officer.
Telephone: 024 7683 1271

Enquiries relating to trees within the Conservation Area should be addressed to the Local Authority's Arboricultural Officer. Telephone: 024 7683 1269

Enquiries relating to the Historic Environment Record should be addressed to the Historic Environment Record Officer. Telephone: 024 7683 2795

National Organisations

English Heritage

West Midlands Office, The Axis, 10 Holliday St, Birmingham, West Midlands B1 1TG
Tel: 0161 242 1400 www.english-heritage.org.uk
Email: [westmidlands @english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:westmidlands@english-heritage.org.uk)

Victorian Society

The Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens Bedford Park London W4 1TT
Telephone: 020 8994 1019 www.victorian-society.org.uk Email: admin@victorian-society.org.uk

Georgian Group

6 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 5DX
Telephone: 087 1750 2936 www.georgiangroup.org.uk Email: info@georgiangroup.org.uk

Twentieth Century Society

70 Cowcross Street London EC1M 6EJ
Telephone: 020 7250 3857 www.c20society.org.uk Email: coordinator@c20society.org.uk

Institute of Historic Building Conservation

Jubilee House, High Street, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6HA
Telephone: 01747 873133 www.ihbc.org.uk Email: admin@ihbc.org.uk