

WITHAM TOWN CENTRE Newland Street

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



Front cover. Newland Street c.1905 and 2007.

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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	PLANNING POLICIES	1
3.	HERITAGE, CONSERVATION AREA AND OTHER DESIGNATIONS	3
4.	CHARACTER STATEMENT	3
5.	ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT	4
	<i>Cartographic evidence</i>	9
6.	TOPOGRAPHY AND STREET PLAN	13
7.	TOWNSCAPE AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS	14
8.	AGE OF BUILDINGS	23
9.	MATERIALS AND DETAILING	24
10.	USES OF BUILDINGS	28
11.	CHARACTER ZONES	33
12.	AREA ANALYSIS	34
	<i>Newland Street north-west side</i>	34
	<i>Newland Street south-east side</i>	43
	<i>Bridge Street</i>	51
	<i>Guithavon Street</i>	52
	<i>Collingwood Road</i>	55
	<i>Maldon Road</i>	56
13.	EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA	57
14.	PRESSURE FOR CHANGE IN THE CONSERVATION AREA	58
15.	MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS	62
	<i>Boundary changes</i>	62
	<i>Streetscape and public realm</i>	66
	<i>Surface treatments</i>	68
	<i>Car parks</i>	68
	<i>Shop fronts and advertising</i>	69
	<i>Boundary treatments</i>	69
	<i>Trees and planting</i>	69
	<i>Backland development/development areas</i>	70
	<i>Maintenance</i>	70
	<i>Local listing</i>	70
	<i>Additional planning controls</i>	71
16.	SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	72
17.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	74

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1. INTRODUCTION

Braintree District Council commissioned Essex County Council to prepare the Conservation Area Appraisal and Review in September 2007. The research and fieldwork were carried out in October and November 2007.

Conservation areas are 'Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). They were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. Local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas, to formulate policies for their preservation and enhancement, and to keep them under review.

Designation of a Conservation Area extends planning controls over certain types of development, principally the demolition of unlisted buildings and works to trees. Local authorities will also formulate policies in their local plans or local development documents to preserve the character of their conservation areas. However, designation does not prevent any change within conservation areas, and they will be subject to many different pressures (good and bad) that will affect their character and appearance.

Government Planning Policy Guidance 15, *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG 15), emphasises that the character of conservation areas derives not simply from the quality of individual buildings, but also depends on 'the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; on a particular "mix" of uses; on characteristic materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of space between buildings' (para. 4.2).

2. PLANNING POLICIES

The Braintree District Local Plan Review was adopted in July 2005 and covers the period to 2011. Work has begun on local development documents as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which will replace the Local Plan.

There are 37 conservation areas within the District, and these make an important contribution to the high quality of its built environment. Witham town includes two conservation areas, one along Newland Street and another around Chipping Hill.

In accordance with its obligations under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and PPG 15, the District Council is resolved to make use of its additional statutory powers in conservation areas to protect their special character and architectural and historic interest. The Local Plan Review includes a comprehensive set of policies to try and ensure that where development takes place in a conservation area, it will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area (Policies RLP 95-98).

The Local Plan Review also contains policies to preserve the character, historic interest and setting of listed buildings (Policies RLP 99-102).

The crucial role of advertisements in affecting the appearance of town centres is recognised in the Local Plan Review. Particular attention is drawn to the need for advertising control in conservation areas 'where details of the siting, design and means of

any illumination can exert a considerable influence on their character and appearance' (Local Plan Review para. 8.41). The Local Plan Review contains Policy RLP 107 relating to the control of outdoor advertising, as well as specific policies relating to advertisements affecting conservation areas (RLP 108-109).

In addition, the Local Plan Review acknowledges the importance of shop front design in conservation areas. Policy RLP 117 sets out the Council's criteria for assessing applications for new shop fronts in conservation areas. Additional guidance is also available (Shop fronts – Conservation in Essex No. 5; Signs and Lettering – Conservation in Essex No. 6).

Chapter 9 of the Local Plan Review contains a range of policies intended to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the District's town centres. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (2001) identified Witham as a second rank shopping centre, being classed as a Principal Town Centre. The town primarily provides food and other convenience retailing for the local population, as well as other services such as pubs and restaurants, offices and industries. Its capacity for additional retailing is limited by its proximity to the larger sub-regional centres of Colchester and Chelmsford.

In 1973 a Witham Town Centre Plan was published by the County Planner. Its main objectives were 'to provide safe, convenient and pleasant conditions for persons working in and visiting the area', 'to separate ... the flows of vehicular traffic from those of pedestrian', 'to provide adequately for the loading and unloading of vehicles', 'to preserve the many buildings of architectural or historic interest', 'to limit the intensity of buildings', 'to provide for the grouping of new buildings', 'to retain substantial accommodation ... in residential use', to provide adequate car parking'. Since then, some of the aspirations have been achieved. There are traffic-free shopping areas, including the Newlands Precinct, which pre-dates the Plan but has since been extended, and the Grove Shopping Centre on redeveloped backlands to the south-east of Newland Street. Off-street parking is provided off Newlands Drive, the Grove, Mill Lane and Lockrams Lane, and provision is regarded as adequate in the town centre. There have been few losses of buildings of architectural or historic quality resulting directly from the Plan, although some had already been lost including Wilderness House (to make way for the Newlands Precinct) and an 18th-century shop with a fine Georgian bow shop front (no. 37 Newland Street, now the entrance to the Grove Centre). However there has been a significant amount of unsympathetic alteration of older properties in Newland Street, particularly with regard to shop fronts.

The Town Centre Plan also included road proposals and plans for a traffic management scheme, some of which have been implemented including improved links across the Grove from The Avenue to Maldon Road. Despite the A12 by-passing the town centre, Witham still provides the only direct link to the 'B' roads between Braintree and Maldon. The high level of traffic remains a cause for concern.

Some of the Town Centre Plan objectives of 1973 remain embodied in policies in the Local Plan Review of 2005, which sets out, amongst other things, to ensure accessibility to town centres, to conserve and enhance their historic character, and to enhance their environment (Local Plan Review para. 9.13). The mixed use character of the District's town centres will be encouraged through a sequential approach to development whereby the preference is for retail and other town centre uses to be located firstly within town centres themselves. Specific policies for Witham Town Centre are also included, which set out the Council's intention to achieve environmental improvements in Newland Street,

Newlands Drive Car Park and the Lockram Lane Car Park (Policy RLP 124), as well as encouragement for the refurbishment or redevelopment of the Newlands Precinct (RLP 125).

3. HERITAGE, CONSERVATION AREA AND OTHER DESIGNATIONS (FIG. 1)

The Witham town centre conservation area was first designated in December 1968. The boundary was extended in January 1984 to take in properties in Bridge Street and Mill Lane, Guithavon Street and Collingwood Road, as well as the war memorial and gardens at the junction between The Avenue and Newland Street. The conservation area has a high quality historic built environment, with 56 entries on the statutory list of listed buildings, seven of which are listed Grade II*, the others at Grade II.

There are a number of trees or groups of trees within the conservation area that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). These include trees around the churchyard of Holy Family and All Saint's Church, and in the vicinity of the Essex Health Authority offices on Collingwood Road. The TPOs are indicated on Fig. 1. Other trees within the conservation area enjoy protection inasmuch as anyone carrying out works to a tree in a conservation area must give written notification to the local planning department at least six weeks beforehand.

There is one public right of way indicated on the Definitive Map heading south-east along the River Brain from the bridge, and another running along the northern boundary of the churchyard of the Holy Family and All Saint's Church along Lockram Lane. The public right of way along the river continues to the north of Mill House along Guithavon Valley, and the stretch between is used as a footpath.

4. CHARACTER STATEMENT

The conservation area is an important example of a medieval planned settlement relocated to the London to Colchester road (Newland Street) from its original focus on Chipping Hill. Some of the medieval half-acre plot boundaries from this time can still be recognised. The medieval marketplace is a recognisable feature of the streetscape where Newland Street broadens. As well as preserving the medieval street plan, the conservation area also takes in key elements of the Victorian expansion of the town. There is a high quality historic built environment reflecting this long history and the periods of the town's prosperity. The sheer variety of periods represented makes this a remarkably rich historic townscape. Many buildings have survived from the medieval and early modern period, but it is the Georgian period that has the greatest visual impact. Many older timber-framed buildings were refaced in brick and graced with elegant sash windows and classical details, whilst retaining variety in rooflines that adds interest to the street scene. The Georgian façades in Newland Street, create a sense of grandeur which is exceptional in the county. In backland areas, the old yards, outbuildings and cottages that have survived are evidence of the historic infilling of the medieval plots. Red brick boundary walls and iron railings contribute to the handsome appearance of parts of the conservation area. Trees in rear gardens, backlands and in long views soften the townscape, creating a green backdrop. There are long views along Newland Street and beyond the town into the wider countryside, serving as a reminder of the rural setting of the settlement. The river and its green margins provide open views and visual contrast with the closely built-up Newland Street.

5. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT¹

Witham is situated at the junction of the deeply cut valley of the river Brain with the wider valley of the Blackwater, of which it is a tributary. It is at this point that the Roman road from London to Colchester crosses the Brain. In parts of its route through Essex, this road has been identified as cutting through an earlier rectilinear field pattern of Iron Age date. Fields of this type surround Witham, being identified on the tithe and other old maps. The origins of Witham as a place are, however, much older. At Chipping Hill, to the west of the modern town and the highest point in the area, located on the 30m contour, there was a circular earthwork or hillfort which has been shown by excavation to be of Early Iron Age or late Bronze Age date. The railway cut through this feature in 1844, and it has been eroded to some extent by subsequent development. However it can still be recognised in the contours of the landscape and from the circular pattern of roads round its perimeter.

No Roman town has been discovered at Witham, though excavations during the 1960s and 1970s at Ivy Chimneys identified a religious site on the south side of the town. Further evidence of domestic occupation during the Roman period was found during excavations at Maltings Lane (Medlycott 2001). The strategic importance of Witham's position on the main road and at the river crossing is evident from its role in the early 10th-century warfare against the Vikings. In 912, at the beginning of campaigns which were to see the Danes driven out of Essex, Edward the Elder erected a *burh* or fortification at Witham prior to building another at Maldon. It has always been assumed that the Chipping Hill earthwork was the site of the Anglo-Saxon *burh*. Excavation has failed to confirm this, the only Anglo-Saxon finds being a coin and a handful of pottery. It has been speculated that the *burh* might have been located at other sites outside the town. However, not all Anglo-Saxon *burhs* were settlement centres, and for the present the identification of Chipping Hill as the *burh* is the most reasonable hypothesis. It was certainly at Chipping Hill that the medieval settlement developed, the church of St. Nicholas being located close to the earthwork.

At the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, there were five manors in what became Witham parish, some divided up. In total they had about 140 tenants attached to them, with a total population of about 750. Most of the main manor belonged to the King, with 90 tenants including an unusually large number of freeholders (57).

A new chapter in the settlement's history began with the donation by Stephen in 1147 of the manor to the Knights Templar. They founded a market on the main road, obtaining a charter for the market in 1212. In effect, they founded a new roadside town, with planned burgage plots of uniform size known as the *halfacres*. The new town was referred to as *La Neweland* (Reaney 1935). The medieval town was essentially confined to ribbon development along the main road, though its success is evident from its extent, 15th- and 16th-century buildings being present along the full length of Newland Street.

¹ The historical information in this report draws extensively on comments and published sources by Janet Gyford, and the archaeological information is based on the work of Warwick Rodwell. In addition acknowledgement is made to the contribution of research by Mike Wadhams and the Witham Archaeological Research Group. Further information is contained in Maria Medlycott's *Origins of Witham*, 2001.

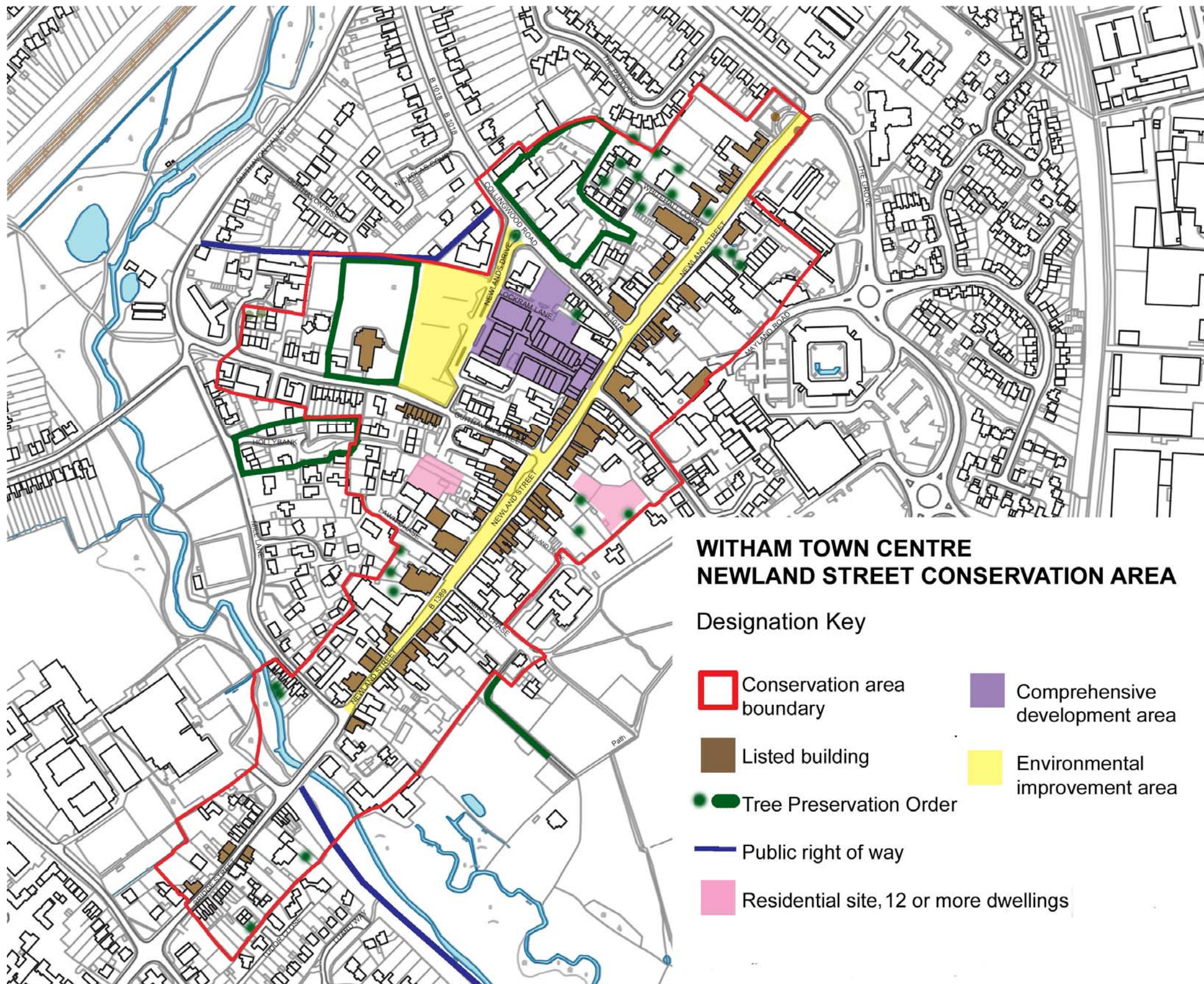


Fig. 1 Witham town centre showing conservation area boundary and other statutory and local designations.

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Although cloth manufacture was important at Witham, it was never as significant as in other towns such as Coggeshall or Bocking. Instead, its late and post-medieval economy was more diversified, based on its market function and importance as a stopping place on the main road. Its role as a coaching post is reflected in the large number of imposing brick fronted houses built in the 18th-century (*Fig. 2*). One local family, the Patissons, were particularly influential in shaping Witham's appearance from the mid-1700s, funding the refronting or rebuilding of older properties in brick. A spa briefly made Witham a place of fashionable resort.



Fig. 2 Newland Street, 1832. Avenue House is on the right and High House on the left. Drawn by G.B. Campion, engraved by W. Watkins (ERO 1/Mp410/1/24).

The coming of the railway which followed the line of the road, and led to an expansion of residential housing, only added to the town's importance. Guithavon Street was built in 1841 providing access to the new church and National School there (*Fig. 3*). Built in 1869, Collingwood Road provided a direct link between Newland Street, the railway station and Chipping Hill. New suburban housing began to appear in Collingwood Road and Avenue Road prior to the First World War. In the inter-war years further housing was added and The Avenue was developed (the latter was previously a private drive to a mansion house in Newland Street called the Grove). The opening of the new Crittall's factory in 1919-20 was an important event in Witham's development. The factory was to produce the standard metal windows for which the company became renowned.



Fig. 3 Guithavon Street photographed in 1976 with the National School on the right and the church beyond.



Fig. 4 Newland Street c. 1905.

Until the 1960s Witham grew slowly, remaining as a small market town with a steady but unremarkable growth in population, housing and industry. In the mid-1960s the Town Expansion Scheme was introduced in conjunction with London County Council to provide London overspill housing, following the provisions of the Town Development Act 1952. New residential areas were created west of the town centre and new offices and shops provided employment and services to the expanding population. Industrial estates were developed to the north of the centre, with their workforce. The town centre was by-passed in 1964, the A12 being moved to the east. The railway branch line to Maldon closed in the

1960s. Today, Witham is the second largest town in Braintree District with a population of approximately 24,000.

Cartographic Evidence

The Chapman and André map of 1777 shows the town as a discrete linear cluster of houses along the Colchester road, quite distinct from Chipping Hill to the north-west (Fig. 5). The site of the prehistoric camp is recognisable from the sub-circular pattern of roads enclosing it. The only link between the town and Chipping Hill was a road to the north of the settlement area (now Avenue Road). Immediately south of this was a tree-lined avenue which provided a short-cut to the Grove (now The Avenue). By the time of the tithe map of 1839, Mill Lane provided a link from the town to Chipping Hill, following the Brain valley (Fig. 6a-b).

The First Edition OS map of 1876 shows Guithavon Street providing access to the church and school, built-up on the south side with cottages, a chapel and police station (Fig. 7). Collingwood Road was newly constructed, and is marked as New Road. It was largely undeveloped at that time, but accommodated a new red brick water tower erected as part of the improvements to the town's drainage. This was demolished in 1935 and the health authority offices now stand on the site. The 1922 OS map shows the gradual expansion of the town, with development extending further south along Maldon Road, new suburban housing along Collingwood Road, and west of the river Brain on Guithavon Road (Fig. 8). The rural setting of the town is still evident with open fields and gardens surrounding it. The recreation of the local population was well provided for with the park and cricket ground laid out on the south-east side of Newland Street.

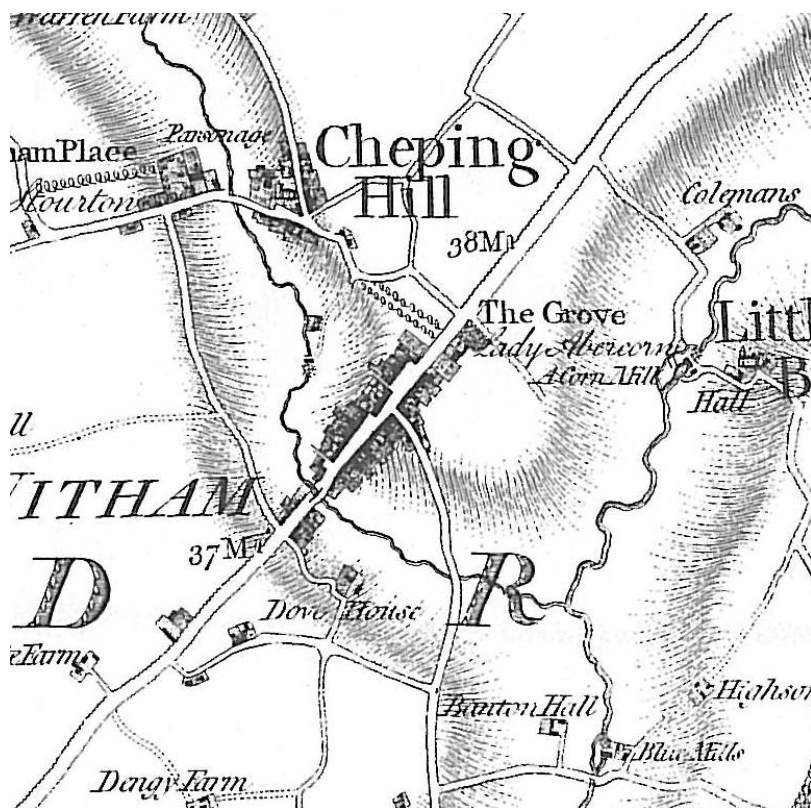


Fig. 5 Chapman and André map of Essex, 1777.



Figs 6a-b Tithe map of Witham showing Chipping Hill (top) and Newland Street (below), 1839.

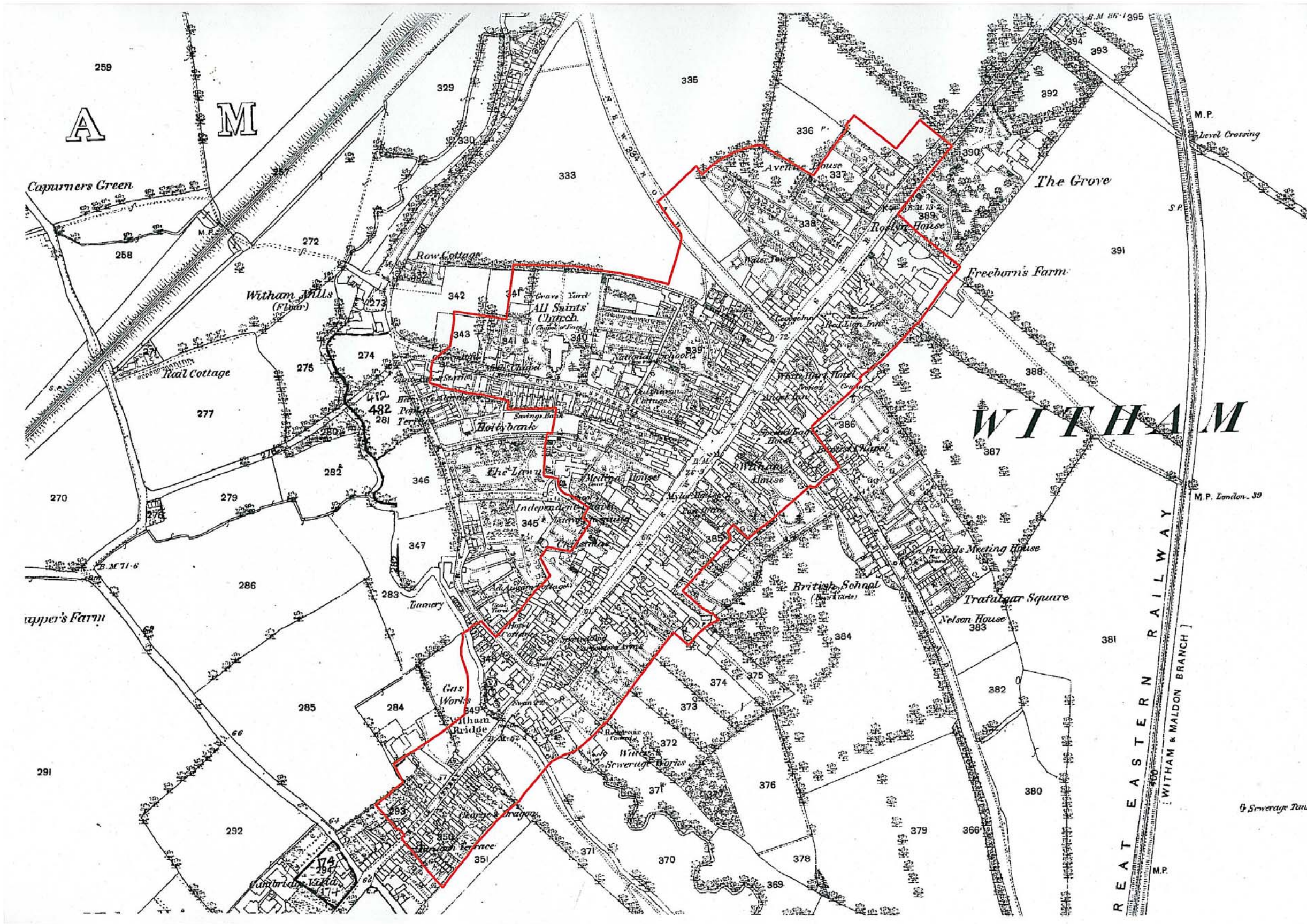


Fig. 7 First edition OS map, 1876.

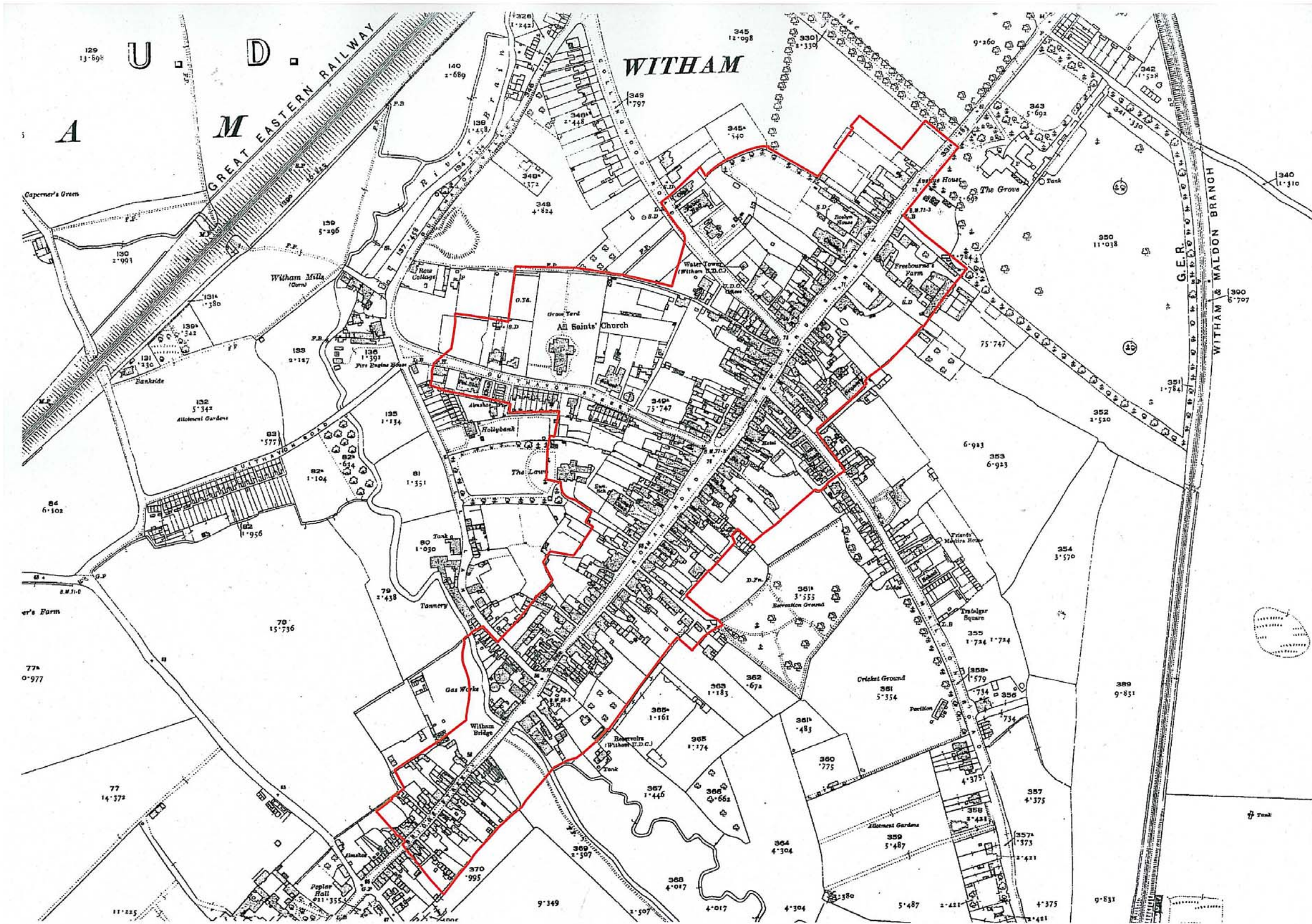


Fig. 8 Third edition OS map, 1922.

6. TOPOGRAPHY AND STREET PLAN

The highest point in the town is Chipping Hill, but the town is not visually prominent from the surrounding landscape. The natural subsoil comprises glacial clays and gravel. Newland Street is located at the point where the River Brain is crossed by the London to Colchester road. The river and its banks are important features in the landscape character of the conservation area along its western edge, providing contrast with the more built-up Newland Street.

The conservation area preserves the medieval street plan, essentially Newland Street and Maldon Road. With its Roman origins, Newland Street is a long straight route, with long views in both directions, but the gentle slope of the land uphill away from the river adds visual drama to the street scene, emphasised by the building line and the height of buildings. The street widens to around 25 metres at the crest of the hill indicating the site of the medieval marketplace. The fact that the original half-acre plots can be recognised in old and modern maps is remarkable. Some have been merged and subdivided over time, and back areas infilled with yards, outbuildings and cottages within the framework of the older boundaries. The conservation area boundary largely follows the back edge of these historic plots. These backland areas define the historic grain of the settlement, but are vulnerable to unsympathetic modern development and uses which destroy their small scale and historic character. Witham has retained some historic backland spaces and yards which have remained open and undeveloped. These include walled gardens, and yards now used for car parking and servicing. A few historic backland buildings have survived, including the tiny cottage and cider vault at no. 123 Newland Street, and brick outbuildings off Coach House Way. The Town Hall exhibits the imaginative use of a backland plot with the creation of a walled medieval garden. Some backlands have been developed since the town expansion scheme in the 1960s with varying degrees of success. Freebournes Court is a reasonably successful development of the 1980s built around Freebournes Farmhouse. The most significant developments over backland space within the conservation area are the Newlands precinct and the Grove precinct, the former of which is the least successful.

From Newland Street there is a broad open junction with Maldon Road, which curves south-east down to Saul's Bridge. Maldon Road falls away to the south allowing long views out to the countryside beyond the town, serving as a reminder of its wider rural setting. The tithe map of 1839 shows a back lane on the south-east side of Newlands Road north of Maldon Road, and this survives to some extent providing access between Maldon Road and the Grove Centre.

Lockram Lane is a narrow alleyway off Newland Street and an important element in the historic street plan, with medieval origins but built up in the 17th-century. It is flanked for a short length by both historic and modern buildings which successfully enclose it before its route is lost as it emerges into car parking. It continues as a footpath passing north of the main car park and the churchyard to reach Mill Lane.

Guithavon Street and Collingwood Road were both constructed during the Victorian period. Guithavon Street retains a strong Victorian character, with many properties built between the 1840s and 1860s. Collingwood Road has more mixed development, with a more suburban character outside the conservation area. Trees and hedges make a valuable contribution in long views north up the road and around the junction with Newlands Drive leading to the Collingwood Road car park. At Newland Street the

Collingwood Road junction is narrow and set back, so that the built-up character of the main road appears continuous.

The regular layout of the medieval town along the straight road (Newland Street) contrasts with the more varied pattern of streets linking it to the roads enclosing the prehistoric camp and Chipping Hill.

7. TOWNSCAPE AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS (Fig. 27)

Although Newland Street is essentially a long, straight street it has a varied townscape character which changes along its length in accordance with its width and gradient. This is emphasised by the changing relationship between the building line and height.

In the north-east of the conservation area Newland Street has well-spaced properties mainly of residential and office use. Rear gardens contribute to the spacious character in this area, and the war memorial gardens provide a small but attractive amenity space. Looking north-east beyond the war memorial the road climbs as it passes over the railway line, and trees concentrate the view (*Fig. 9*). The road edge is enclosed by walls and railings, and garden trees and planting contribute to the scene. The historic boundary wall of the Grove is a significant feature along the road edge, and tall trees behind the wall are particularly important in long views from the south-west along Newland Street.



Fig. 9 Newland Street looking north-east.

The modern development at Freebournes Court around Freebournes Farmhouse successfully maintains a sense of enclosure whilst creating a small-scale and intimate space off the main road. It is enclosed by buildings of appropriate scale, low walls and planting. The provision of benches would enhance the amenity value of this area.

Approaching the Collingwood Road junction the buildings become smaller scale and more closely built up. Collingwood Road continues the built up character for only a short distance, giving way to a more spacious and informal character with trees and well-spaced buildings (*Fig. 10*). The Lockram Lane car park is used for the Saturday market, and currently creates a poor break in the streetscape with unattractive views to the Newlands Precinct buildings over a low broken wall. The entrance to Newlands Drive is well landscaped making good use of traditional red brick walls, trees and planting (*Fig. 11*). The car park itself is the biggest open space within the conservation area. It is partially enclosed by the boundary wall of the churchyard, with the trees in the churchyard creating a strong backdrop. Planting within the car park helps to break up the space to some extent, but more could be done to improve this area, using a different surface treatment for example and with more screening to reduce the visual impact of the parking. Where

Lockram Lane continues as a narrow footpath north of the car park it is tightly enclosed for part of its length by the churchyard boundary, including important and attractive iron railings by Davey, Paxman and Davey, and by dilapidated fence panels many of which have collapsed.



Fig. 10 Collingwood Road looking north-west, Noel Pelly House on the left.



Fig. 11 Newlands Drive junction with Collingwood Road.

The character of Newland Street changes abruptly as it narrows at no. 40, Lisa Marie, which projects forward (Fig. 13). This spatial character is of historic as well as townscape importance, deriving from late medieval and subsequent encroachment on the medieval street. Lockram Lane forms a narrow opening in the building line, but its neglected appearance does not invite progression (Fig. 12). The narrowness and the commercial bustle in Newland Street places pedestrians in close proximity with the busy traffic, which impedes movement between the two shopping precincts (Newlands and the Grove Centre). The intensity of the street is emphasised by the continuous building line, generally with small-scale frontages of varied design, the exception being the Newlands Precinct which is set back and of large mass.



Fig. 12 Lockram Lane from Newland Street.



Fig. 13 Newland Street looking south-west with no. 40, Lisa Marie, projecting forward on the line of encroachment on the medieval market place.

Within the Newlands Precinct, its intimate scale is more in keeping with that of the historic street (Fig. 14). Less satisfactory is the space to the rear of the precinct (Fig. 15). Although Pantile House has interest in its rear elevation with dormers and a pantiled roof, the other buildings have inactive expanses of brick walling, air conditioning units, bins and other features associated with service areas. This is the dominant view for visitors arriving in the town at the car park, who must pass through narrow breaks in this unwelcoming block of buildings to find their way through to Newland Street (Fig. 16). Lockram Lane could potentially provide an interesting pedestrian connection to Newland Street, but its entrance is difficult to find from this approach, and its appearance is off-putting.



Fig. 14 Newlands Precinct looking towards Newland Street.



Figs 15 & 16 Service area to the rear of Newlands Precinct (above) and pedestrian access (right).

The entrance to the Grove Centre is well integrated into the small-scale frontages on Newland Street so that it has little impact on the street, despite the overall scale of the development behind. The small shop units within are informally arranged creating intimate pedestrian thoroughfares, with a clock tower providing focus for the development (*Fig. 17*). However there are poor views towards expanses of flat roofs and car parking to the rear of properties in Newland Street, although trees and red brick walls to some extent mitigate the adverse effect.

The built-up commercial character of Newland Street continues for a short distance along Maldon Road before it is broken by the car park at the rear of the White Hart and by the large flanking walls of buildings in the Grove Centre (*Fig. 18*). Although these have been detailed to address their blank appearance they are nonetheless out-of-scale in this historic setting. The builders' yard is outside the conservation area but provides a poor setting for the listed White Hart and generally for the historic townscape. The large Holm oak tree at the entrance to what was The Retreat is an important townscape feature beyond the conservation area. The Newlands Precinct closes the view looking back along Maldon Road, creating a poor approach to the historic town centre, and making this an important site should it ever be redeveloped.



Fig. 17 The Grove Centre.



Fig. 18 Maldon Road looking south, with the Holm oak in the distance.

Newland Street is at its broadest as it slopes south-west down to the river, and the visual drama of this open space is emphasised by the narrowness of the approach from both directions (*Fig. 19*). Viewed from the south-west, no. 64 is thrust into prominent view at the crest of the hill. The street is almost continuously built-up, with tall Georgian brick façades and many interesting and varied elevations. Narrow gaps and traditional carriage arches provide occasional glimpses of backland spaces of varying quality. Some are used for car parking or service areas which are not always attractive.



Fig. 19 Newland Street from the south-west.

Coach House Way is a narrow alley running behind nos 56-64 Newland Street, following the medieval street edge (Fig. 20). It invites investigation but is a dead end leading to untidy rear spaces and waste ground where a building has been demolished pending redevelopment. There are some interesting but rundown brick outbuildings forming part of a former coach yard here which should be retained. The route terminates in a disappointing view of the brick flanks of buildings in the Newlands Precinct. The alley is currently a confused space with unclear purpose and any redevelopment of this area should address the appearance of this approach and provide some enclosure to the street.



Fig. 20 Coach House Way.

The junction of Newland Street and Guithavon Street is narrow, emphasised by the building line enclosing the street edge. Guithavon Street gently winds along its length creating changing views of the varied Victorian buildings. The churchyard provides the largest green open space within the conservation area, now largely managed for wildlife. Looking back to Newland Street the view is closed by the handsome brick façade of no. 57, Witham House (Fig. 21). Beyond this the car park covers the site of the Victorian National School, demolished in the 1960s. This has created a gap in the streetscape that was formerly contained by the school buildings and brick walling, interrupting the flow of the street particularly at the open junction with the service road. Walls and trees could be better used here to restore the enclosure of the street and screen views to the car park.

The road slopes down as it approaches Guithavon valley, with a verdant rural outlook towards the trees and fields flanking the river.

Kings Chase is a disappointing mainly pedestrian route through to the recreation ground, visually uninviting despite the distant views of trees (*Fig. 22*). Behind the shops it opens out into a depressing and poorly maintained expanse of car parking and service areas. The Cottage is a surprising rural vernacular building here, alongside the small and inconspicuous gate into the park. The park itself, although outside the conservation area, is an important townscape feature. As well as providing amenity space the mature trees create a green backdrop to properties in Newland Street and off Maldon Road.



Figs. 21 & 22 Guithavon Street looking towards Newland Street with no. 57 closing the view (above), and Kings Chase (right).

From the south Bridge Street provides the entrance to the town. This is a narrow and small scale street, emphasised by the building line (*Fig. 23*). Plots are generally narrower than those on Newland Street. Overhead wires are visually intrusive. There is a bottle-neck here where traffic becomes congested, which does little to enhance the intimate character of the street. More recent development has regrettably fragmented the historic streetscape, being set back from the road edge. Approaching the bridge from the south there are long views up Newland Street, with its tiled roofscape. The river with trees and green space along its banks creates a strong boundary to the settlement, although blurred by suburban ribbon development, and provides valuable amenity space with riverside walks (*Fig. 24*). The car park on the corner of Mill Lane is a spatial weak point at the gateway to the town centre, which could be improved in the future by a sensitively designed building that would enclose the street and frame the view. Mill Lane itself provides an attractive tree-lined vista following the route of the river, with a neat terrace of 19th-century cottages enclosing the road edge (*Fig. 25*). The appearance of the lane would be improved by the undergrounding of overhead wires. Looking back to Newland Street along Mill Lane the view is closed by no. 149 Newland Street, a distinctive historic building with a long shop front.



Fig. 23 Bridge Street looking north-east.



Figs. 24 & 25 Green space alongside River Brain viewed from bridge (above), and Mill Lane looking north (right).

The setting of the crossroads at the southern end of Bridge Street does little to enhance the approach to the conservation area or views out of it. The spaces around it are a visual muddle, lacking enclosure or focus. Poplar Hall is an attractive 18th or 19th century red brick villa on the corner with Hatfield Road which is an appealing feature in views out, but otherwise there is little of note and it is an area which requires sensitive re-planning to enhance the approach to the town centre.

The aerial photograph illustrates the spatial relationship between houses, roads, gardens, trees and green boundaries (*Fig. 26*). The map (*Fig. 27*) provides an analysis of the main townscape features, including important views.



Fig. 26 Aerial photograph of Witham with conservation area boundary. © UK Perspectives

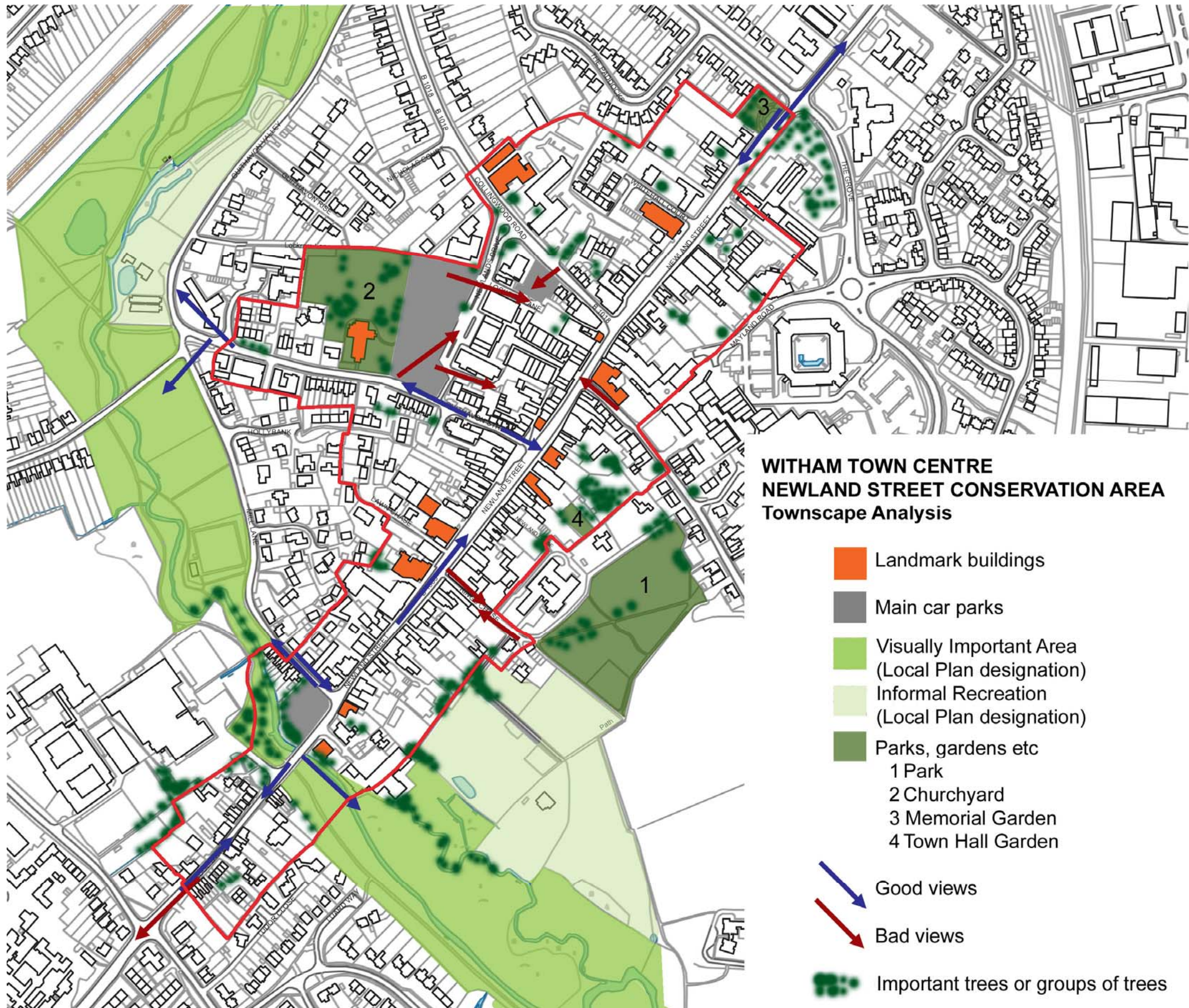


Fig. 27 Townscape analysis of conservation area.

8. AGE OF BUILDINGS (*Fig. 37*)

The approximate age of buildings is shown in Fig. 37. This is based on listed building descriptions, published sources and map evidence as well as external observation.

The Newland Street conservation area has a high quality historic built environment, reflecting its long history from its foundation as a medieval settlement along the Roman road and its past economic prosperity. There are 57 buildings within the conservation area that are included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historical Interest. The List for Witham was originally compiled in 1973, and the list descriptions are brief and not always reliable. Interiors and rear elevations were not always investigated so that older buildings behind more recent frontages were not always identified. Further research and investigation has made it possible to supplement the information contained in the list descriptions, and Witham has the advantage that it is relatively well documented for the medieval period and from the 17th-century onwards.

As many older buildings were re-fronted in the Georgian period, the current appearance of the conservation area masks the number of older timber-framed buildings that have survived, some of medieval date. Buildings of the 16th-century and earlier have survived throughout Newland Street and Bridge Street. One of the earliest surviving buildings is Highway Cottage, no. 118 Newland Street, a late 14th-century hall house with a cross-wing which has retained a largely medieval appearance. Survivals from the 15th-century include The Crotchet public house (now Spice Destiny and 19th-century in outward appearance), with the remains of a two-bay cross-wing and hall range, and no. 63 Newland Street. No. 126 Newland Street was only found to have 15th-century origins following works to the building in 1995, and was previously thought to be 18th-century. There are several substantial and prominent buildings from the 16th-century, reflecting Witham's prosperity as a market town located on an important route with a growing cloth industry. These include Avenue House (no. 4 Newland Street) and the coaching inns of the White Hart and the Spread Eagle. Battersford Court is an imposing building of 16th-century origin now with a three-storey brick façade. Perhaps the most striking of the 16th-century buildings is no. 23-27 Bridge Street, with its exposed framing and carved jetty brackets and beams. Buildings dating from the 17th-century include Nos 149-151 Newland Street, a substantial timber-framed and rendered house, and nos 29-33 Newland Street, also timber-framed and rendered.

Today the built environment has a strong Georgian character, particularly along Newland Street, with brick façades, parapets, sash windows and classical detailing much in evidence. As well as the re-fronting of older buildings at this time, new buildings included High House (no. 5), White Hall (no. 18, now the public library) and nos 72-78 Newland Street.

The Victorian period heralded a new phase of expansion and development in Witham, with the coming of the railway and the construction of new roads. The conservation area contains some fine Victorian buildings, including religious, public and domestic properties, mainly located in the newly built roads. Notable Victorian architecture includes All Saints Church in Guithavon Street (now Holy Family and All Saints church), Collingwood House (no. 15 Collingwood Road, now Noel Pelly House) and Colne House (no. 19 Guithavon Street). The conservation area includes some good small-scale Victorian terraces, mostly unlisted, which are vulnerable to unsympathetic alterations which undermine their coherent architectural character.

Along Newland Street are some good examples of purpose built commercial buildings from the first half of the 20th-century, including banks and shops. These have generally been well integrated into the more historic streetscape, respecting the scale, materials and detailing of older neighbours. They include the former post office (1939, part of no. 5), banks at no. 99 (1910) and no. 59 (1939), and the Co-op building at no. 115 (1930). Nos 155-157 Newland Street form an Edwardian building with an important place in the history of Witham, built around 1911 as a motorworks where Ginetta later made their iconic sports cars. Commercial buildings of the 1960s in Newland Street were generally in a pared-down neo-Georgian style, well integrated in terms of scale and form but lacking the finesse of their Georgian counterparts, as demonstrated by nos 38 (Wimpy) and 95 (NatWest bank) Newland Street. These could be improved by more sympathetic windows and shop fronts. The most striking modern intervention within the conservation area is the Newlands Precinct of the late 1960s, constructed of brown brick and concrete, by Wimpey. Although this provides a good variety of small-scale shops from within the pedestrian precinct, from Newland Street it is excessively large and alien in the historic streetscape.

9. MATERIALS AND DETAILING

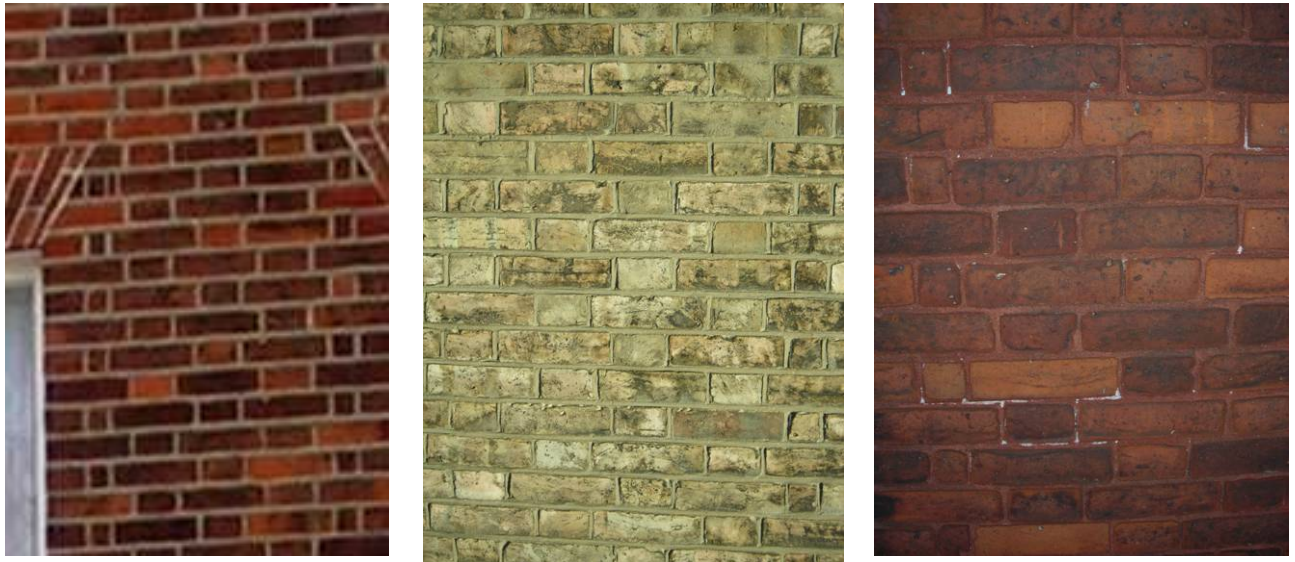
The palette of materials used in the construction of the historic buildings in the conservation area makes a strong contribution to its special character, lending colour and texture to the built environment. Decorative embellishment and detail adds further interest to the street scene.

The conservation area includes some medieval timber-framed buildings that have retained their vernacular appearance, such as Highway Cottage at no. 118 Newland Street, whilst others now have polite Georgian brick façades on their main elevations. Exposed timber framing is not typically seen, a notable exception being nos 23-27 Bridge Street. Elsewhere Victorian applied timbers are used to decorative effect, on the White Hart for example. Where they are not faced in brick, timber-framed buildings tend to be fully rendered and painted in pale colours, generally off-white. There is a limited amount of decorative pargetting but it is not widely seen in the conservation area. Render generally has a smooth finish although rough render has a pleasing textured appearance on more vernacular buildings. Hard cement render is bland by comparison with traditional lime render.

Featheredged weatherboard is a traditional material in Essex but is not typically seen on primary elevations in Witham town centre. However it is occasionally visible on flank walls (on Croft House at no. 10 Bridge Street, and in Lockram Lane for example).

The principal walling material is exposed brickwork, which makes a strong visual impact on the appearance of the conservation area (*Figs 28a-b*). There is some high quality Georgian and Victorian brickwork, with fine jointing, and rubbed and gauged brickwork exhibiting skilled craftsmanship. Older timber-framed buildings were sometimes refaced in brick to present a more fashionable and gentrified appearance. Good facing brickwork is not traditionally painted. The traditional bond is Flemish bond, but other techniques are seen including header bond. Warm dark red brick is common, but buff-coloured and white gault brick is also used, particularly on the north-west side of Newland Street at the north-east end. Yellow stock brick is occasionally seen on Victorian buildings. Flared headers are sometimes used on earlier brick buildings and façades, either in panels with red brick dressings as on no. 72 Newland Street, or to create a chequerboard pattern as on the side

elevation of Roslyn House (no. 16 Newland Street). They are also sometimes randomly incorporated into the brickwork. Later Victorian and early 20th-century buildings make use of red brick with white brick, stucco or stone dressings and string courses, as shown by no. 14 Newland Street. The brickwork of 20th-century commercial buildings in Newlands Street has generally been well chosen to blend with historic brickwork. This has been an important contributory factor in preserving the integrity of the historic built environment of the town centre, avoiding the often incongruous and overly bland appearance of modern brickwork despite the use of monotonous stretcher bond.



Figs 28 a-c Examples of traditional brickwork in Newland Street, including 18th-century bricks (a), gault bricks (b) and early 19th-century brick with remains of tuck pointing (mortar coloured to match the brick with white lines to suggest fine jointing).

Good quality rubbed and gauged brick window arches contribute to the fine appearance of many of the brick buildings (*Fig. 29*). Georgian windows typically have flat gauged brick arches, with stone sills. In older buildings or re-fronted timber-framed buildings the windows may be flush mounted or slightly recessed. Later windows have segmental or flat arch windows, sometimes with keystone details, and the windows are set back. Other brick details include moulded string courses and moulded decorative panels and friezes. Rubbed brick round door arches are also seen in the conservation area, including a fine example at no. 129 Newland Street.

The most ubiquitous window form is the vertical sliding sash in painted timber, usually white. These windows typically have a strong vertical emphasis and are elegantly proportioned. Most are small-paned with fine glazing bars with ovolo moulding, whilst later sashes have fewer glazing bars. There is often a high proportion of window to wall surface, contributing to the light and delicate appearance of many of the Georgian facades in the conservation



Fig. 29 Gauged brick window head, sliding sash window with fine glazing bars. This window also has timber internal folding shutters.

area. Often modern replacement windows and those of new developments are less successful than these traditional windows. The introduction of unsympathetic UPVC and clumsily detailed window designs should be strongly resisted in the conservation area.

The most common roofing material is plain clay handmade peg tiles (*Fig. 30*). These double-cambered tiles with their varied natural colour tones contribute to the attractive roofscapes of the town centre. Slacker pitched roofs of later buildings are more typically of natural slate. Brick chimney stacks enliven the roofscape, and are not traditionally painted or rendered. There is a great variety of roof forms, including pitched and mansard, gables and hips. Georgian façades often have brick parapets with stone coping, which sometimes conceal an earlier clay tile roof behind. Gable ends sometimes have raised parapets, and moulded eaves cornices add further interest (nos. 3-17 Guithavon Street for example). Dormers are not common; where they occur they are typically small scale and occupy only a small proportion of the roof plane, with cat-slide or pitched roofs.



Fig. 30 Clay peg tile roof.

The most common style of door in the conservation area is the painted timber six-panelled door. Treatment of doorways often reflects classical influences, including decorative fanlights (no. 129 Newlands Street for example), and pediments (nos 8-10 Newland Street) (*Figs 31-32*). Some of the buildings in Newland Street have stone steps up to the door, and these are flanked with simple and elegant iron railings. Some nice iron boot scrapers have also survived.



*Figs 31 & 32
Panelled door
with ornate iron
fanlight and fine
gauged brick arch
(left), and
pedimented
doorcase with
simple
rectangular
fanlights (right).*

Many of the shop fronts in the conservation area are unsympathetic through poor design or signage. However there are some survivals of older timber shop fronts and well-designed modern examples (*Fig. 33*). These include small-paned Georgian bow windows, and late 19th and early 20th-century frontages with timber fascias and recessed doorways. Good examples of traditional frontages are the southern part of no. 66 Newland Street, with a small-scale early 20th-century timber shop front, and no. 63 Newland Street which

retains a double-fronted 18th-century shop front with fluted Doric pilasters flanking the doorway.



Fig. 33 Georgian-style bow shop front with small panes and ornamental cornice.

Boundary treatments make a significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Red brick boundary walls with soldier courses are particularly important, defining backland boundaries in Newland Street for example, as well as around the churchyard and elsewhere (*Fig. 34*). In addition, there is a good survival of traditional fine spearhead iron railings (*Figs 35-36*). Some of these are by Davey, Paxman and Davey of Colchester.



Fig. 34 Brick boundary walls in Spread Eagle yard.



Figs 35 & 36 Georgian handrail and bootscraper (left), and Victorian railings (right).

10.

USES OF BUILDINGS (Fig. 38)

The mixed uses of buildings are an important element in the distinctive character of the conservation area, contributing to a well used town centre that provides valuable local services and employment. Uses of buildings are shown in a simplified way in *Fig. 38*. The variety of colours is indicative of the mix of uses within the conservation area; this is an important factor in creating a lively and interesting environment for the local community and for visitors to the town.

Commercial uses are centred on Newlands Precinct, the Grove Centre, and in Newland Street between Collingwood Road and Guithavon Street. These areas provide a wide variety of retail and professional services. The shops are a mix of branches of multiples and independent stores. Independents are important to maintaining a sense of individuality and distinctiveness to any town centre. Multiples tend to demand bland corporate fascias which undermine any unique sense of place. The presence of professional offices and commercial uses which do not require modern shop fronts has helped to preserve the historic character of some of the buildings. A good number of historic pubs have survived, and the town centre is well provided with a variety of eating and drinking establishments which help to maintain activity and use at different times of day.

Office use is found at the north-east end of the conservation area, in Freebournes Court for example, and in the Collingwood Road. Other large office buildings are located just outside the conservation area boundary including Grove House, and other office units are found elsewhere within the conservation area boundary.

The conservation area becomes rather more residential in character away from the central area, and includes a variety of housing types serving different needs, including substantial detached houses and sheltered housing such as Whitehall Court, behind 18 Newland Street. There is some residential accommodation above shops and offices within the central area, helping to maintain presence and activity in the centre at all times (Newland Court for example, at 102-116 Newland Street). Where upper floors are vacant or under-used, there is potential to increase this residential use. There has been a good deal of residential development in open plots and infilling backland areas since the 1960s, including small estates such as Ben Sainty Court and in mixed use developments such as Freebournes Court and Penhaligon Court.

Public, community and religious buildings are all represented within the conservation area, mostly outside the central area. Most of these are notable landmark buildings, including the library (18 Newland Street), the public hall (12 Collingwood Road) and Holy Family and All Saints church (Guithavon Street).

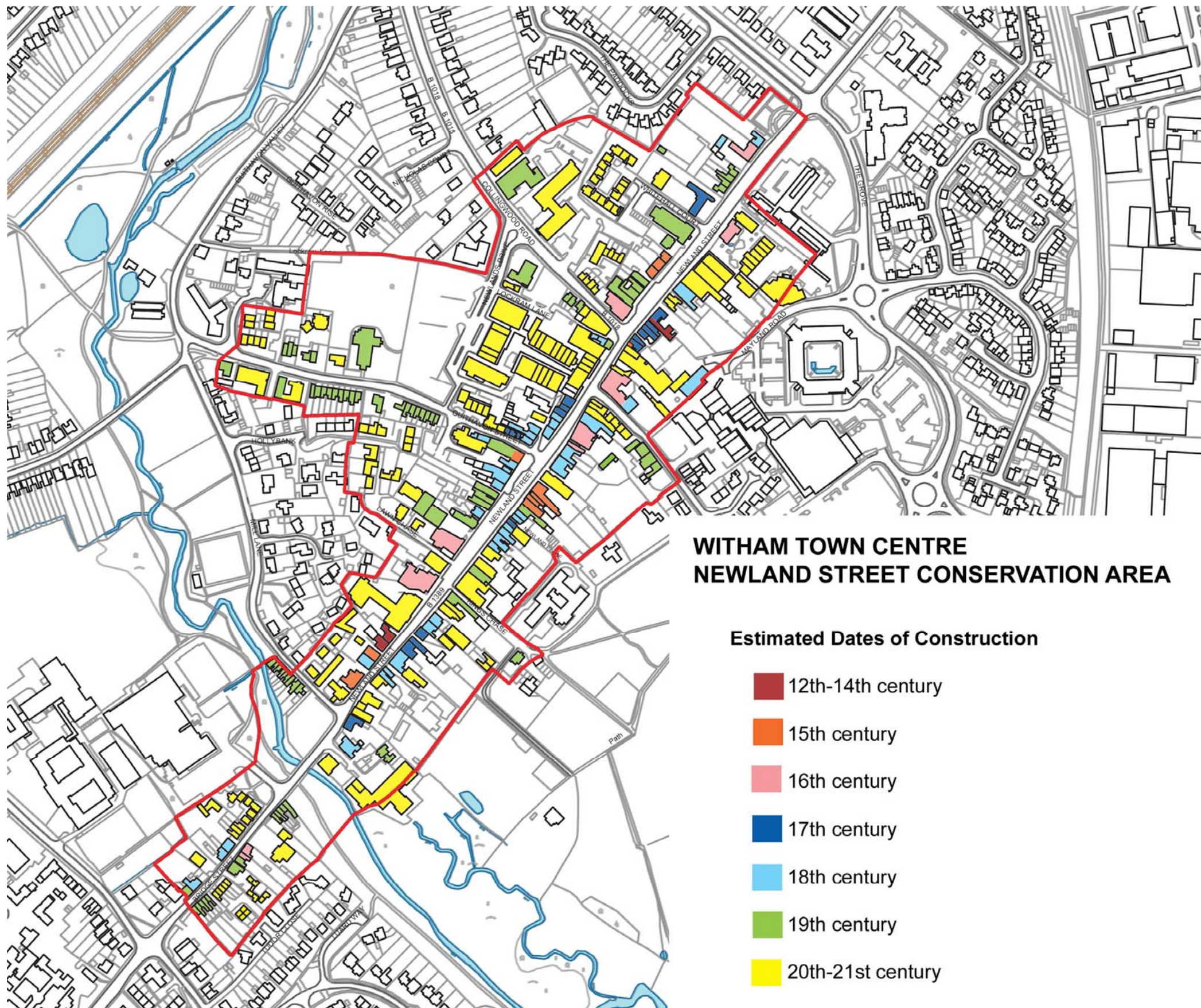


Fig. 37 Estimated date of construction of buildings in the conservation area.

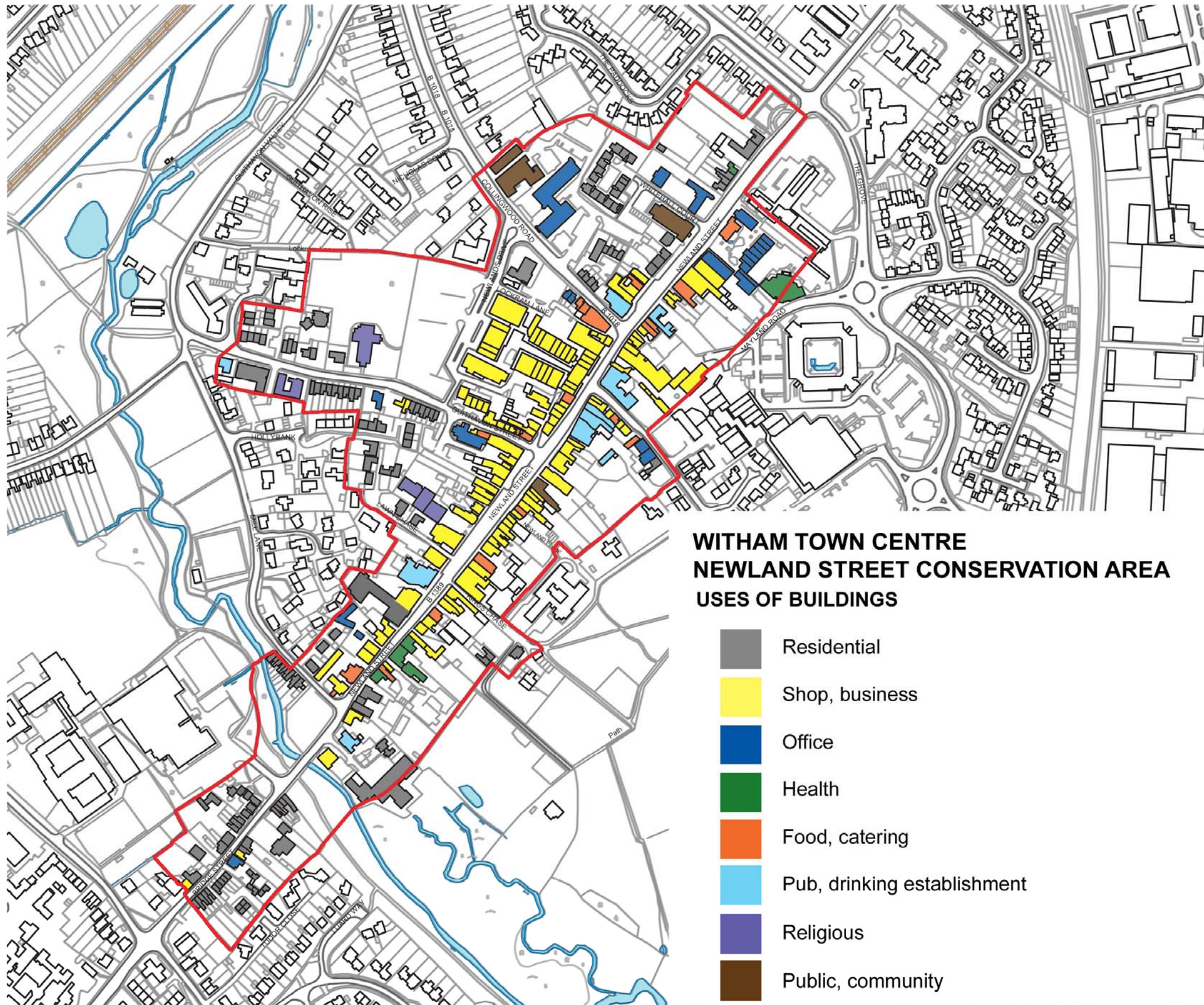


Fig. 38 Uses of buildings in the conservation area.

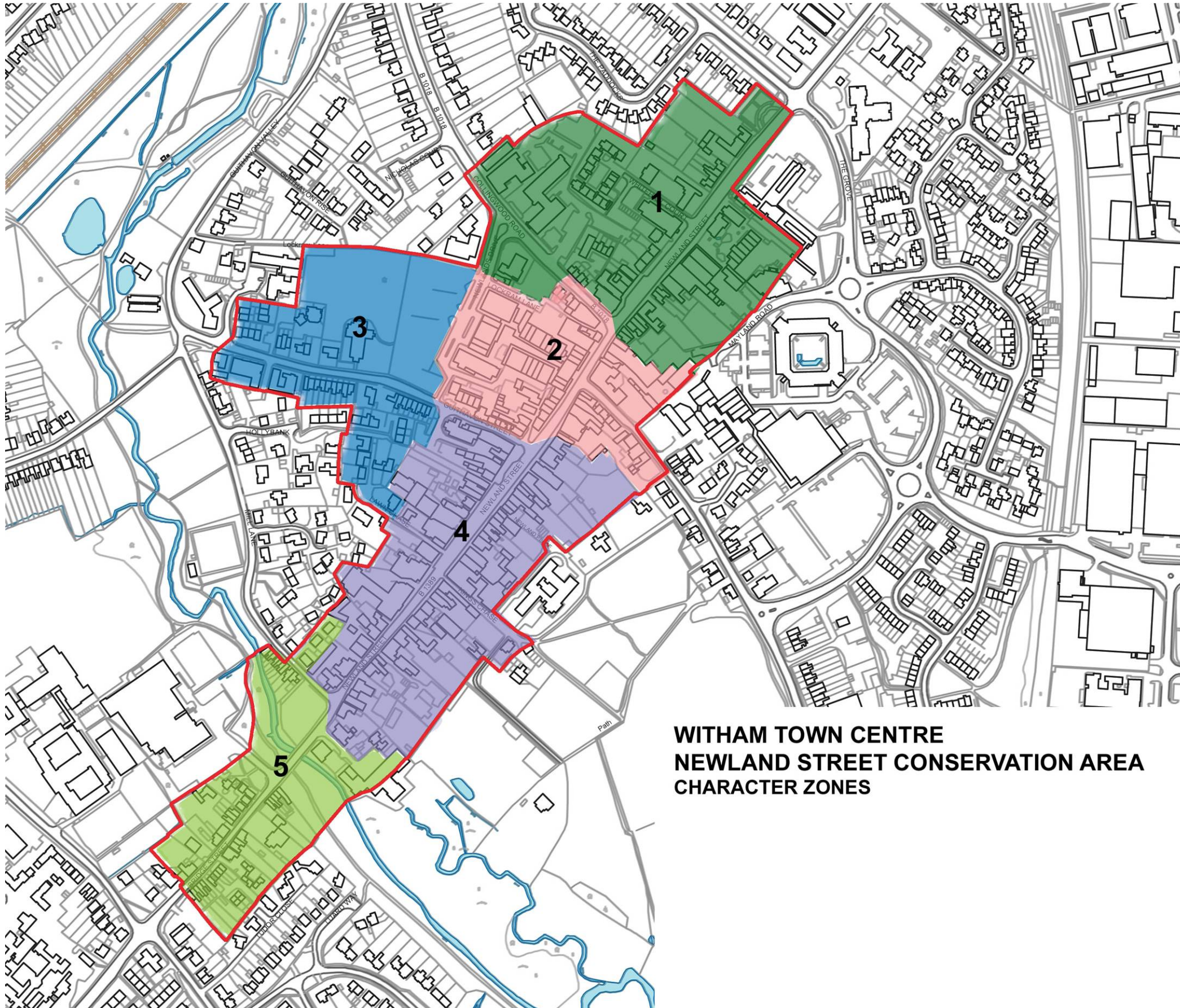


Fig. 39 Character zones in the conservation area.

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11. CHARACTER ZONES

The conservation area can be divided into character zones, on the basis of visually unifying factors arising from the degree of open space or character and density of the built environment, combined with the age, uses and appearance of buildings. The boundaries are somewhat arbitrary, but reflect visible characteristics which give each of the zones a separate identity and which should be taken into account when development proposals are considered.

The following character zones are identified on Fig. 39.

- 1. Newland Street between The Avenue and Collingwood Road, and Collingwood Road.**
Less intensely built-up and less urban, well-detailed Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings of varying scale. More red brick Victorian and Edwardian character to the buildings in Collingwood Road, more Georgian in Newland Street with gault brick. Includes large houses in gardens as well as short terraces. Trees in gardens and in views north-east are important. Walls and railings provide enclosure. Mixed use residential, office and public with more commercial buildings towards Collingwood Road junction with Newland Street.
- 2. The narrow part of Newland Street at the Maldon Road/Newlands Precinct junction.**
Commercial uses. Closely built-up with continuous frontages and strong sense of enclosure, varied design, more small scale buildings than in Zones 1 and 3, varied roof heights.
- 3. Guithavon Street.**
Well-spaced mainly Victorian buildings, well detailed and of strong architectural character, dominated by church and churchyard, varying scale including rows of cottages and detached villas, trees important, rural outlook beyond west end. Suburban bordering on rural in character. Mainly residential.
- 4. The broad section of Newland Street southwards to Mill Lane junction.**
Wide street, almost continuously built-up with narrow gaps giving access and views of backlands, strong red brick Georgian character particularly on north-west side, varied in scale but higher proportion of more imposing buildings, varied details and roof heights, two to three-storeys, commercial uses.
- 5. Bridge Street, Mill Lane and the river crossing.**
Trees and river views important, small-scale buildings in short, broken rows, built-up to street edge, generally more domestic, varied detailing and age, small plots.

12. AREA ANALYSIS

The conservation area essentially follows the medieval core of the town, tightly built-up along Newland Street and for a short length of Maldon Road. In addition, lengths of Guithavon Street and Collingwood Road are included, running north-west from Newland Street, and the southern end of Mill Lane. Witham retains a remarkable amount of green open space, including that along the banks of the river and the park. In places these provide a well-defined boundary between the built-up area and its environs, and the historic settlement edge is still visible. The conservation area boundary attempts to follow historic rear plot boundaries, but in places these have been obscured by backland development.

The Area Analysis begins at the north-east end of Newland Street, and proceeds south-west along each side and then along neighbouring roads.

Newland Street, north-west side

The **war memorial** is located on the corner of The Avenue in attractive and well-maintained gardens (*Fig. 40*). The gardens appear to be well used, even if mainly as a walk-through to cut off the corner. The benches enhance the amenity value of this space providing a welcome breather from the busy main road. The memorial itself is a good example of its kind, dated 1920 but with additions for WWII, and is Grade II listed. It is by Sir Charles Nicholson with a fine plaque by Gilbert Ledward (Bettleby and Pevsner 2007).



Fig. 40 War memorial.

Avenue House has a fine Georgian brick front elevation of seven bays with a distinctive shell-hood doorcase (which is of a pre-Georgian style). The timber-framed house dates from the 16th-century, but was re-cased in brick in the early 18th-century. It was re-fronted again in the 1757 with a brick parapet (the date is on the rain hopper). **Newbury House** was a late 18th-century addition, and together they form a highly attractive pair, Grade II* listed, with good front boundaries including spearhead railings and red brick walling (*Fig. 41*). The listing includes the two-storey red brick coach house and stables to the rear of Avenue House.



Fig. 41 Avenue House and Newbury House.

Nos 6-12, Grove Terrace, are a row of cottages with a well balanced façade and classical detailing, good panelled doors and doorcases with rectangular fanlights, constructed of

buff gault brick and with spearhead railings along the front boundary (*Fig. 42*). To the rear of these in a separate garden plot is **no. 14**, perhaps built as accommodation for the groom of Avenue House, a charming small red brick Victorian house with gault brick dressings, well preserved and well detailed (*Fig. 43*). The garden has a good traditional brick wall forming part of its boundary, but less satisfactory close boarded timber fencing with concrete posts along the left hand side.



Figs 42 & 43 Grove Terrace (above), and no. 14 Newland Street (right).

No. 16 (Roslyn House) is a substantial timber-framed 17th-century house, re-fronted probably in 1813, with gault brick and a parapet with stone coping (*Fig. 44*). There is an extraordinary large Victorian conservatory projecting at the north-east end at the front. A 17th-century wing to the rear has exposed timber framing bearing carpenter's marks. To the rear is **Beechen House**, a modern office development constructed in a traditional style with brick and tile and relatively well hidden from the street.



Fig. 44 Roslyn House.

The public library, no. 18, is housed in what was originally built as a private house called White Hall in the early 19th-century (*Fig. 45*). This was converted to a cinema in 1928 with an auditorium added to the rear. It has been a library since 1981, and was restored by Essex County Council, at which time the classical portico was added. The restoration received a Civic Trust Award in 1982. To the rear is a development of sheltered housing, **Whitehall Court** (1986), small scale and using a white brick that reflects the gault brickwork of the historic buildings in the vicinity. Adjacent to this is **No. 20, Tiptree Villa**, dated 1876, which is faced in gault brick to blend with its neighbours although it is red brick at the rear. This is another well preserved Victorian house, in a neo-Tudor style, which has

kept its iron railings to the front boundary. Some of the front garden has been lost to provide car parking although this has been achieved sympathetically, retaining planting.



Fig. 45 No. 18, the library.



Fig. 46 Nos 22-26, Dorothy Sayers Cottages.

Nos 22-26 are another attractive terrace. Nos 22 and 24 were once the home of novelist Dorothy Sayers (*Fig. 46*). Although 15th-century in origin, each was re-fronted at different times in the early 19th-century to achieve a more fashionable appearance. Whilst each is slightly different the six-panelled doors and Georgian semi-circular fanlights as well as the Victorian iron railings of the front boundary provide cohesion to the group. This handsome terrace was at one time under threat of demolition, but was restored by the County Architect's Department in 1975.

Nos 28-34 are basically a good row of 19th-century houses, but spoilt by poor modern shop fronts at ground level and some unsympathetic replacement windows on the first-floor (*Fig. 47*). Improvements to these frontages would reinforce the high quality architectural character of the area at this point.

Fig. 47 Nos 30-34 Newland Street.



Occupying an important position at the corner of Collingwood Road is **The George**, a 17th-century building that later became an inn, remodelled with gables fronting the street. The yard was lost when Collingwood Road was built. The 1960s development at **no. 38, Wimpy**, on the other side of Collingwood Road is set back on the medieval road line, and although of modern materials and design is of appropriate scale. **No. 40, Lisa Marie**, projects forward, giving it great prominence in the street scene (*Fig. 48*). It is too brightly painted for such an important position, and would benefit from some repair and maintenance to the frontage.



Fig. 48 No. 38, Wimpy, and no. 40, Lisa Marie. Lockram Lane runs between the two.

Lockram Lane is an ancient route, with a curving alignment that follows the boundary of the half-acre plots (*Fig. 49*). It has an early 20th-century enamelled street sign at the entrance which should be preserved. Along this lane to the rear of no. 40 is one of the few remaining weatherboarded buildings in the town centre, a former warehouse. The modern flanking walls of the Wimpy building and of the Newlands Precinct maintain the building scale and enclosure of the lane at this point. The rear elevations and plots of the Victorian houses on Collingwood Road are in a dilapidated state where the lane emerges into the car park, and contribute to an uninviting and depressing appearance at this point (*Fig. 50*).



Figs 49 & 50 Lockram Lane.

The buildings forming the **Newlands Precinct** are set back on the line of the old medieval road, although the historic buildings they replaced encroached further forward (*Fig. 51*). The three-storey development is overly dominant in the street scene, constructed of alien materials and details that do not harmonise well with the historic environment. The precinct is designated in the Local Plan as a Comprehensive Development Area, creating the opportunity for a more sympathetic approach to development in this sensitive historic context. The service area to the back of the precinct is predictably depressing as already mentioned. The design of Pantile House is a better attempt at integrating a large retail premises into the historic streetscape, with a hipped and pantile roof, but its massing is still too large.



Fig. 51 Newlands Precinct.

Nos 56, 58 and 58A are small scale houses of 17th or 18th-century origin but with later frontages. The modern shop fronts could be much improved with a more traditional design and better proportioned timber fascia boards. **Nos 60 and 62** are both three-storey red brick Georgian houses with parapets, now with 20th-century shop fronts (*Fig. 52*). **No 64** is another 18th-century building, with a mansard roof and dormers, in a very prominent position at the end of the row on the crest of the hill. It is now rendered and painted white where historically the brickwork was exposed.



Fig. 52 Nos 60-64 Newland Street.

At this point Newland Street opens out in the area of the medieval market place. Along **Coach House Way** the rear elevations of properties in Newland Street are untidy. There are some good traditional timber-frame and brick outbuildings that have survived in this area, which should be kept and re-used where possible to retain the historic backland character. **No. 66** is a late 18th-century red brick house with mansard roof by local builder Samuel Humphreys, with a good traditional 20th-century shop front on the left. It is set

back on the old medieval street line. The adjacent property, **no. 68**, is an 18th-century house that was substantially rebuilt around 2000 having fallen into a state of dereliction (*Fig. 53*). The house previously had the appearance of having been truncated when Guithavon Street was constructed in 1841, but the front elevation was re-balanced on rebuilding. **No. 70** has 15th-century origins, and is in a prominent corner position fronting onto a wide pavement area. The brick ranges flanking Guithavon Street appear neglected in views off Newland Street, with boarded up windows. The frontage too would benefit from repairs and maintenance (*Fig. 54*).



Fig. 53 Nos. 66-68 Newland Street, and no. 64 to the right.



Fig. 54 No. 70 Newland Street at the Guithavon Street junction.

Nos 72-78 form a good group of 18th-century houses, no. 72 being the earliest with flared headers arranged in panels. The modern shop fronts of **no. 72** and **no. 76** should be more sympathetic to the historic character of the buildings, but **no. 78, London House**, has attractive bow-fronted shop windows with an ornamental cornice.

Nos 80-84, Medina Villas, are three-storey late Victorian houses, set back from the road edge but with long shop extensions projecting forward (*Fig. 55*). The shop at no. 80 is later than the others and was built after about 1960 leaving a narrow pedestrian passage between the shops. The modern shop fronts could be improved, and the overhead wires are visually intrusive. No. 84 for example is too garish, using reflective plastic materials and with a large undivided sheet glass window. Satellite dishes and an air conditioning unit clutter the front elevation above.



Fig. 55 Nos 80-84 Newland Street, Medina Villas.

Nos 86-88 are 18th-century buildings. No. 86 is timber-framed with a two-storey red brick façade and open carriage arch. **No. 88** has been altered in the 20th-century and was once

taller with a modillion eaves cornice and decorative ironwork above the projecting shop front. Its appearance could be improved with some more traditionally detailed first-floor windows. Adjacent to this there is now a gap in the building line where the Constitutional Club burnt down in 1910. This gave open views to the handsome **United Reformed Church** by James Fenton, built in 1840 (*Fig. 56*).



Fig. 56 United Reformed Church.

Nos 90-92 contribute a grand late 18th-century brick façade to the street, of three-storeys and seven bays. Concealed within are two 16th-century timber-framed houses. They now form one shop, Byfords (*Fig. 57*).

No. 94, Lawn Cottage, stands out from its Georgian neighbours with its resolutely Gothic design. Built in 1865, it has ornate bargeboards to the gables and other Victorian detailing, but has unfortunately lost the intricate terracotta ridge tiles, and has had its brickwork painted. It stands on the corner of **Lawn Chase**. This was originally the driveway to Lawn House, a large late Georgian property with gardens that were sometimes opened to the public. It was demolished around 1970 and developed with an informal arrangement of new houses. The Chase is well landscaped with attractive verge and garden planting, although the entrance from Newland Street is rather anonymous and could be better landscaped.

Nos 96-98, Christmas House, was built in the 1960s replacing a house of the same name, and now forms two shops. Overall the scale, design and materials of the building integrate reasonably well into the Georgian street scene although lacking the fine detailing of the historic buildings, and the modern shop fronts could be improved. **No. 100, Battesford Court** pub, is a massive early 18th-century brick façade masking an older timber-framed building. It appears to be of three-storeys, but the top storey windows are false (*Fig. 58*). To the rear is an 18th-century brick outbuilding, probably a stable and an important survival.



Fig. 57 Nos. 90-92 Newland Street, Byfords.



Fig. 58 No 100 Newland Street, Battersford Court.

Nos 102-116, Newland Court, is a late 1980s development of shops and flats, built on the site of a caravan sales park. It integrates reasonably well into the historic setting in terms of overall design, enclosing the street, but the detailing is bland, lacking the visual intricacy of older buildings (*Fig. 59*). **Highway Cottage, no. 118**, is one of the oldest buildings in the conservation area, timber-framed and rendered, and partly dating from the 14th-century. It has retained its humble vernacular appearance (*Fig. 61*) Part of the original medieval house is now incorporated into **no. 124**. In contrast with its modest neighbour, this provides a flourish of Victoriana, with gables, applied timbers and decorative brickwork and terracotta. Both these buildings require some maintenance. A new office development at **nos 120-122** to the rear of no. 124 is reasonably hidden from view but rather cramped on the site. **Nos 126 and 128** see a return to Georgian brick façades. They are of two-storeys with parapets, sash windows, and a six-panelled door with good Georgian doorcase (no. 126). No. 128 has a late 18th or early 19th-century shop front with pilasters and cornice and double-fronted windows. These two buildings were at one time the Blue Posts coaching inn. The adjacent building, **The Crotchet public house** (now Spice Destiny restaurant), is 19th-century in appearance, and was the Blue Post's tap room. The single storey extension was formerly a blacksmith's forge. Despite their later appearance, nos 126, 128 and The Crotchet pub are an important group of medieval buildings with internal features datable to the 15th-century (*Fig. 60*). No. 126 requires some repair and maintenance to the brickwork and windows.



Fig. 59 Newland Court.

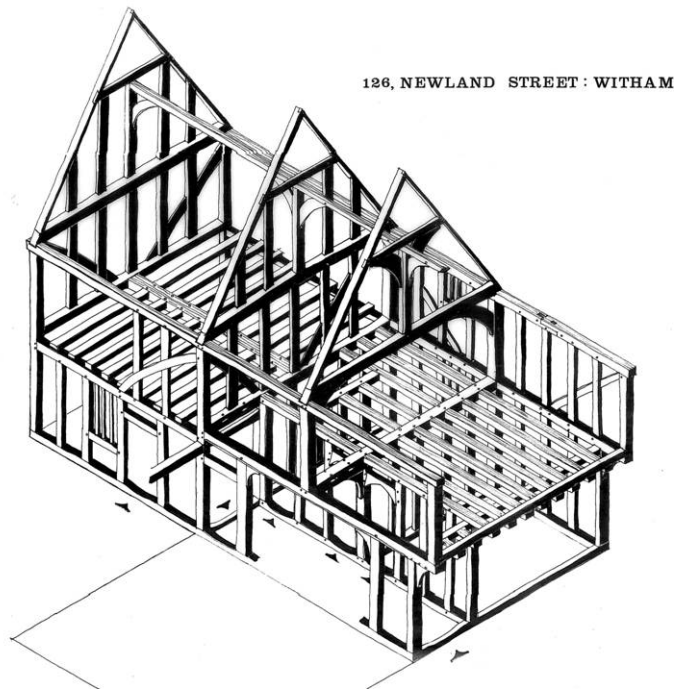


Fig. 60 Drawing of no. 126 Newland Street, a three bay cross-wing with undershot cross entry leading to a rear bay parlour. The front bay may have served as a shop. This early timber frame is now concealed by a Georgian brick façade .Drawing by Brenda Watkin.



Fig. 61 No. 118 (Highway Cottage) and no. 124 Newland Street. Nos 126-128 and the old Crotchet pub are beyond these.

No. 132 is a 20th-century shop on the site of the Globe. On the corner of Mill Lane is a new building which is not entirely successful for such a prominent and important corner site (*Fig. 62*). Although the brickwork is of traditional Flemish bond, the development is poorly detailed for this sensitive location and the signage should be more sympathetic.

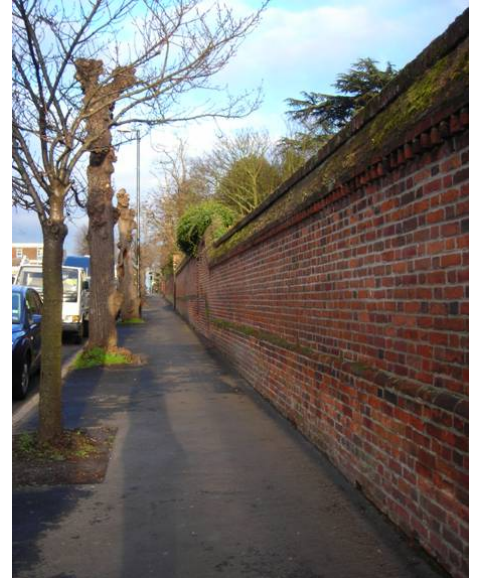


Fig. 62 No. 2 Mill Lane.

Newland Street, south-east side

The tall red brick garden wall of the Grove encloses the road at the north-east end, and is well preserved, dating mainly from the early 18th-century (*Fig. 63*). It provides screening from the 1970s office development, Grove House (outside the conservation area). The wall continues on the other side of Grove Road, an opening made in the 1970s.

Fig. 63 Boundary wall of The Grove.



Freebournes Court is a 1980s mixed use development built around **no. 3, Freebournes**, a 16th-century timber-framed and rendered building which was a farmhouse until as recently as the 1960s. It is Grade II* listed, and was restored in 1989. The new development around it is small-scale with pitched tiled roofs, and is respectful of the listed building. The development incorporates a statue of Dorothy Sayers, by John Doubleday. The modern **health centre** is to the rear of this development, and although large scale it has a low profile, softened by planting, and has little visual impact on the conservation area. **Nos 2-5 Freebournes Court** are a pair of 1960s commercial premises which front the street, creating enclosure. Although of modern design and materials they are of small scale with a good vertical rhythm reflecting the grain of the street. The **former Post Office** is a good example of its kind, neo-classical in style with tall round-headed windows, which sits well in the street scene. It was built in 1939 with a well-integrated later extension to the right hand side.

No. 5, High House, is a stately Georgian house, its name referring to a time when it had a third storey (*Fig. 64*). The façade of the house is based on a design from Abraham Swan's *Collection of Designs in Architecture* of 1757. It has a handsome white stucco frontispiece. Although now a restaurant it has retained its residential character. Adjacent to this, **nos 5a and 5b** are two small shops in a building dating from 1934. The building is constructed of red brick with a slate-hung mansard roof with pedimented dormers, original first-floor windows and shop fronts. This is a good example of an inter-war building, by a local architect William John Redhead (Gyford 2005, 168).



Fig. 64 High House, Newland Street.

The Red Lion, no. 7, is one of many traditional inns to have survived in Newland Street. The main block is 17th-century, but it has a late 14th-century cross-wing, and it has exposed timber framing on the first-floor. Adjacent to this **nos 9-13** are a row of picturesque 17th-century shops, with applied decorative timbers added in the 19th-century (*Fig. 65*). These were probably intended to be painted black on white painted render as was the Victorian fashion. There are good small scale 20th-century shop fronts on



Fig. 65 Nos 9-13 Newland Street.

the ground floor although the signage of the central shop could be improved. First-floor advertising detracts from the appearance of the building and the joinery at this level requires repair. **Nos 29-33** are largely a 17th-century timber-framed house, but no. 33 has a 15th century cross-wing (Watkin in Medlycott 1998). This group was restored in the late 1980s, and has good small-scale 20th-century shops on the ground floor and 19th or 20th-century pargetting above.

Woolworths, no. 35, is an inter-war commercial building which overall fits well in the historic street scene, although its original shop front has been replaced with a less sympathetic modern design which should be improved or replaced. The adjacent building, **no. 37**, now forms part of the Grove Centre, the signage of which could be improved. **The Grove shopping centre** was constructed in the 1980s and is sympathetically designed, including small shop units built in an Essex Design Guide style of brick with tiled pitched roofs in an informal arrangement. In the 18th-century there was a maltings here; one of the buildings (**no. 12**) has survived and is incorporated in the development. It is an important example of historic backland infill, unfortunately over-restored.

The White Hart is another of the coaching inns, on a prominent corner site at the junction with Maldon Road (*Fig. 66*). It dates from the 16th-century, but was extended to the south-east in the 18th-century to link with an 18th-century house which retains its residential character (*Fig. 67*). The main street frontage was altered in the 19th-century with applied timber framing and arcading similar to that of nos 9-13. This frontage is now over-cluttered with signage. The rear view of the White Hart is attractive, but the appearance of the car park could be improved with a different surface treatment such as bound gravel and better landscaping.



Fig. 66 The White Hart.



Fig. 67 Rear of White Hart on Maldon Road.

On the opposite corner of Maldon Road and also in a prominent corner position are **Central Buildings, nos 39-41**. This is a three-storey commercial building of 1927, and a good foil for the White Hart, enclosing the corner. However it has poor signage that dominates the corner, which is too garish and of unsympathetic materials. The building retains some good 20th-century shop fronts on Newland Street and Maldon Road. The shop fronts of both **Coral (no. 41)** and **Fabs (no. 43)** could be improved. No. 41 is basically of good design but the signage could be better. No. 43 requires a more sympathetically designed shop front and signage as well as repair of the first-floor windows.

No. 47 is a three-storey 18th-century building with bow windows rising through two-storeys, with a good ornamental doorcase. The building requires some repair and maintenance, particularly to the render. This building forms a group with the adjacent **Spread Eagle Hotel** (now Elements), a timber-framed building of the 16th century which was always a coaching inn (*Fig. 68*). Victorian ornate bargeboards give a picturesque appearance to the building. The rear yard links with Maldon Road, and contains some traditional outbuildings and red brick boundary walling. **No. 51, Sue Ryder**, was originally part of the inn and has the figure of an eagle on its ornate Dutch gable. The shop front is basically of good design but is now rather shabby and could be improved to incorporate better signage to enhance the appearance of this important group.



Fig. 68 The Spread Eagle.

Nos 53-55 are a pair of Georgian red brick houses with parapets, of three-storeys with panelled doors and tall doorcases with rectangular fanlights. **No 53** has a small 20th-century shop front. The adjacent **no. 57**, known as Witham House, is a handsome 18th-century red brick house with a parapet and moulded brick cornice, of three-storeys with basement and seven bays and iron railings on the front boundary. It was built for the Patisson family. Looking south down Guithavon Street, this building creates a fine closure to the view, as was probably intended. The town park to the rear was once part of the grounds of the house.

No. 59, Barclays, is a purpose-built bank building constructed in 1939, of neo-classical design that integrates well into the older street scene. **No. 61**, now the **Town Hall**, has a fine early 19th-century brick exterior, concealing a 15th-century timber-framed building behind (*Fig. 69*). It was originally part of the George Inn. There is a 16th-century timber-frame range at the back. The building has been well restored and creates a landmark civic building for the town centre. The rear plot, now with a delightful 'medieval' garden, preserves one of the historic half-acre plots along with that of no. 59, both retaining good traditional brick garden walling (*Fig. 70*).

No. 63 provides contrast with no. 61, being of a more domestic vernacular character (*Fig. 69*). It was originally an early 15th-century hall house altered in the 16th-century, and has a good 18th-century shop front which once extended across to **no. 63A**. The latter at one time had a curious crenellated parapet and decorative bargeboard on the dormer, both of which have been lost.



Fig. 69 Town Hall (left) and nos 63-63A Newland Street.



Fig. 70 Reconstruction of medieval garden at rear of Town Hall.

Nos 65-67 form a pair of 19th-century gault brick buildings. **No. 67** was largely rebuilt in the 1960s and the top storey removed. **No. 83** is a 17th-century timber-framed house with a carriage arch and a small 19th-century shop front. **Nos. 85-93** are all 18th-century. **No. 85** has a sympathetic 20th-century shop front. **No. 87** is another Samuel Humphreys house with mansard roof, well-preserved with good front railings and handrails on the front steps. **Nos 89-93** are of a more vernacular character, timber-framed with rendered fronts. They require some maintenance mainly to the first-floor windows.

No. 95 is a purpose-built bank building of the 1960s, of appropriate scale but with poor metal-framed windows. **No. 99** is another purpose-built bank, this time dating from 1910,

and a good example of its type with high quality materials and rich detailing. Between the two banks is a yard, now a redundant plot, where old backland buildings were demolished over the last few years.

Nos 101-115 form a group of shops on either side of Kings Chase, mostly of the first half of the 20th-century except for no. 113 which dates from 1840 (*Figs 71-72*). **Nos 103-115** were at one time all part of the Witham Co-operative Wholesale Society store. **No. 115** retains the 'WCS' on the parapet, whilst **no. 113** has a pelican figure on the parapet, the emblem of the former owners, the Patissons (Gyford 2005, 163). Although this group is generally of good scale and simple neo-classical details appropriate to the historic context, the group is mutilated by poor shop fronts. Some of the first-floor windows are blocked, in poor condition or have unsympathetic replacements. The wrap-around frontage of **nos 105-107** is particularly prominent on the corner of Kings Chase and is out of context in the historic setting.



Fig. 71 Nos 105-107 Newland Street.



Fig. 72 Nos 113-115 Newland Street.

Kings Chase provides pedestrian access to the park. It presents an uninviting view from Newland Street, despite the trees beyond. To the rear are shabby car parks (*Fig. 74*). Two 20th-century brick cottages, **Wynngate** and **Waveney** are not prominent features in this backland space. **The Cottage** is a rather charming and surprising find in this unpromising area, although it is spoilt by UPVC windows (*Fig. 73*). At this point the area abruptly takes on a more rural character which is in marked contrast to the dense urban development of Newland Street. This effect is reinforced by the leafy path leading away to Gimsons, the trees in the park and by backland trees.



Fig. 73 The Cottage.



Fig. 74 Kings Chase looking back towards Newland Street.

Another imposing Georgian façade is created by the pair of houses at **nos. 117-119**, of five bays each, and constructed of flared brick with red brick dressings (*Fig. 75*). According to Mike Wadhams (1972) ‘the detailing, mouldings and fully exposed window frames etc. make this an extremely fine example of early 18th-century housing’. **No. 121** is an early 19th-century brick frontage on a 17th-century building. Across the side access **nos. 125-127, The Gables**, are also of 17th-century origin with a distinctive Victorian porch with cast iron barley twist columns and ornamental bargeboards. Between the two is an important view to a rear yard that has retained a small, single storey backland cottage dating from around 1700 (**no. 123**). The cottage is timber-framed and rendered, and has a cider vault in the basement (Gyford 1996). This humble cottage is an important survival and should be considered for listing (*Fig. 76*). It should certainly be preserved as it is historically and visually significant to the backland character of the conservation area.



Fig. 75 Nos 117-119 and no. 121 Newland Street.



Fig. 76 No. 123 Newland Street.

No. 129, Fern House, is a Georgian brick façade on an earlier timber-framed building, with a particularly fine semi-circular fanlight over the panelled door and ornamental hand rails (*Fig. 77*). **Nos 137-139** are a timber-framed, rendered and tiled building, now two shops, perhaps from the early 1700s but altered in the 19th and 20th centuries (*Fig. 78*). Between no. 137 and Fern House is an opening to a rear yard with a brick building that appears to be early 18th-century in date and is now in a dilapidated condition. Restored this would make a valuable contribution to the historic backland character of the conservation area. The yard itself is vacant, and the brick structure should be retained in any redevelopment of this area. Both no. 137 and no. 139 are in a poor state, but are prominent as the street reaches its narrowest point here. The shop fronts are of an appropriate scale and design, but spoilt by signage and poor maintenance. There are unsympathetic replacement windows in the first-floor of no. 139. With care and repair this neglected vernacular pair could make an attractive contribution to the street scene. The adjacent building, **no. 141**, is a neat brick and tile house built in 1913 with a simple classical doorcase. Beyond Barnfield Place a row of new houses, **Barnfield Mews**, have been sympathetically designed to fit in the street scene, of appropriate scale and with varied façades. They maintain the enclosure of the street, and have railings and hedging to the front which is in keeping with the historic boundary treatments seen elsewhere.



Fig. 77 No. 129, Fern House.



Fig. 78 Nos 137-139 Newland Street.

In a prominent position at the junction with Mill Lane, **nos. 149-151** form a long building with a continuous shop frontage, dating from the early 17th-century (*Fig. 79*). At the time of writing this building was being renovated. **The Swan** pub was built in 1790. In the later 19th-century there was a waterworks in the area to the rear, and two cottages, **Waterworks Cottages**, are a reminder of this in the backland space. **Moorfield Court** is a substantial recent backland development, prominent in views along the river and off Bridge Street. Despite the size and mass of the development it is well set back and does not detract from the overall character of the street. Constructed in white



Fig. 79 Nos 149-151 Newland Street.

weatherboard in a style that evokes Essex watermills the development sits comfortably in riverside views (Fig. 80).



Fig. 80 Moorfield Court viewed from the bridge.



Fig. 81 Former Ginetta works at nos 155-157 Newland Street.

Positioned at a prominent location as the road changes direction, **nos. 155-157**, form an important building in the town centre, given added exposure by the open space of the car park opposite (Fig. 81). The former Ginetta motorworks was mostly built in 1911 by Witham architect Harry W. Mann (Gyford 2005). The bridge itself was built around 1900, and from here there are long views south-east across green open space by the riverside.

Mill Lane follows the river, and appears as a quiet rural lane, with trees contributing to the green outlook. Included in the conservation area are **nos 5-7**, a pair of gault brick cottages probably from the first half of the 19th-century, with a tall chimney, spoilt to some extent by poor replacement windows. Also included is a row of red brick cottages from the late 19th-century, **Avon Terrace** (Fig. 82). Overall this has retained its neat uniform appearance but with the original timber sashes almost entirely lost to UPVC replacements. On the other side of Mill Lane a sympathetic modern development of small cottages is partially included in the conservation area.



Fig. 82 Avon Terrace, Mill Lane.

Bridge Street

The car park on the corner of Mill Lane occupies the site of an old gas works. Its backdrop of mature trees with railings and hanging planters improve the appearance of this otherwise featureless site.



Fig. 83 Nos 4-8 Bridge Street and Bridge Court.



Fig. 84 No. 12 and no. 10 (Croft House) Bridge Street.

The approach to the Bramston Sports Centre is fairly well landscaped and planted. The large 1970s building is well set back so that it is not prominent in the historic streetscape. Modern cottages forming the **Bridge Court** development are of good traditional design and scale. They fit well alongside the attractive Edwardian cottages at **nos. 4-8** and maintain the enclosure of the street (*Fig. 83*). Nos 4-8 have some unsympathetic replacement windows, but have retained small front gardens which enhance their appearance. **Little Newmans** is a house in what was the yard of Newmans dairy (now Croft House) and is not visible from the street. **Croft House (no. 10)** is a late 18th or early 19th-century timber-framed and rendered house, the render lined out to resemble ashlar stonework, with weatherboard on the right hand side. **No. 12** is an 18th-century house which is partly timber-framed and rendered and partly of red brick. It has become very overgrown with a creeper which needs to be brought under control, and the roof has modern interlocking tiles where handmade clay tiles would be more in keeping (*Fig. 84*). **Elmy House** is a modern house set back from the road edge, breaking the sense of enclosure of the historic street but not intrusive on the historic environment. Adjacent to this **no. 28 (Bridge House)** is a good 18th-century timber-framed house on the street edge, with a single storey extension to the south-west. The motorcycle centre on the corner is a long-established feature of the town centre, but visually does little to enhance the setting of the listed house.

On the opposite side beyond the bridge **nos 1-9**, including Alfred Cottages, form a row of Victorian cottages. **Alfred Cottages** (dated 1891) would be improved by reinstating traditional timber windows and doors where they have been lost. **Nos 11-13** are large detached 20th-century houses set far back from the road edge with front gardens. Although they are well maintained architecture of their time they are incongruous in this generally small-scale street. Higher front boundaries would restore some of the enclosure of the street. **Nos 23-27** are notable buildings in the conservation area, comprising early 16th-century wings at each end with a 17th-century build inserted between, all jettied (*Fig.*

85). They form a picturesque row with some fine carpentry including carved jetty brackets and beams and carvings by the door. There is a small 19th-century shop attached at **no. 27A** with a traditional shop front. This would benefit from some repair and maintenance, and the black paintwork is rather overbearing. The former **George and Dragon pub, no 29**, was rebuilt in 1889, and its rear yard is now infilled with a small development, St George's Court. Further houses built in the 1980s fronting the street are of sympathetic scale but with less sympathetic windows. **Faragon Terrace, nos 59-67**, form a distinctive row of Victorian cottages with wide open arched entrances and decorative red and black brickwork. They have good Victorian iron railings by Davey, Paxman and Davey of Colchester at the front. This attractive group is spoilt by some poor replacement windows.



Fig. 85 Nos 23-27A Bridge Street.

Guithavon Street

Beyond the Newland Street junction Guithavon Street becomes more quiet and rural in character with a mixture of larger buildings and terraced housing. It is predominantly Victorian dating from the 1840s-1860s with some modern infill. Nearer the Newland Street junction the street has some commercial buildings, which are of earlier date.

On the south side, **No. 1** is a brick house of late 18th-century or early 19th-century date, with a small 19th-century shop front that has a wooden doorcase with pilasters and cornice. There is an untidy yard area outside the taxi office at the rear which could be better landscaped. **Guithavon House** is a large modern development to the rear with an entrance on the street which is in a traditional design that does not compromise the listed building. **Nos 3-17** are a good listed terrace of well-detailed red brick houses of 1843, with parapets and a stuccoed eaves cornice, and panelled doors. The railings along the front boundary are an important feature.

No. 19, Colne House, is a tall and distinctive building in a Neo-Tudor style with stone dressings (*Fig. 86*). It retains a good low brick boundary wall. Now offices, it is notable for having been purpose built as a savings bank in 1850, and makes a valuable contribution to the body of Victorian architecture in the street as well as adding visual interest to the scene. **Nos 21-37** form another Victorian terrace, dating from 1861, that makes a strong contribution to the architectural character and enclosure of the street (*Fig. 87*). They are a highly attractive group, with iron railings and planting along the front boundary. Although they are not listed they are well preserved with a good survival of timber sash windows but some unsympathetic replacement doors.



Fig. 86 No. 19 Guithavon Street, Colne House.



*Fig. 87 Nos 21-37
Guithavon Street.*

The **church hall** was built as a Methodist church in 1864 by Charles Pertwee of Chelmsford with a school room added to the rear in the 1930s. The polychromatic brickwork and lively Gothic detailing create visual interest. Adjacent to this is the **Methodist church** of 1961, very much stylistic architecture of its time but nonetheless of appropriate scale and a good visual foil for the Victorian church, fitting well in the street scene (*Fig. 88*).



Fig. 88 Methodist church and church hall, Guithavon Street.

Mill Vale Lodge was built in the late 1980s on the site of the old police station. Although overall it is of large massing with overly dominant dormers, it effectively encloses the street. The development has a good traditional red brick boundary along the road edge. **The Crown** pub was built 1860, and again is an important element in the Victorian character of the street. It is of simple form, well preserved despite its unlisted status, constructed of yellow stock brick with gault brick dressings and retaining timber sash

windows. The untidy asphalt parking area to the side could be much improved with better landscaping and surfacing, which would enhance the building and the overall street scene at this prominent corner site.

On the north side, adjoining no. 68 Newland Street, the tall white building at **nos 2-6** dates from the 17th-century or earlier, and may have been a clothier's warehouse (Gyford 2005). It requires some maintenance and repair, and its appearance is not improved by the number of external fixtures including satellite dishes. **Penhaligon Court** is a mixed use development of shops and flats of 1989, of appropriate scale. It is of three-storeys in brick, slate and tile. Beyond this the **car park** covers the site of the Victorian National School.

The church of the Holy Family and All Saints is a notable 19th-century church, constructed of knapped flint and gault brick in the lancet style by John Brown of Norwich, 1840-2 (*Fig. 89*). It was built as a chapel of ease to St Nicholas on Chipping Hill. Brown also designed the school, now sadly demolished. Built as an Anglican church, it closed in 1969 but was reopened as a Catholic church following refurbishment by Plater Inkpen, 1987-9, at which time the adjacent **presbytery** was also built. The cast iron railings and red brick boundary wall are important features. Mature trees and planting in the churchyard also contribute to the green outlook along the street and soften the setting of the car park. The churchyard is an important green space within the conservation area, accessed via Guithavon Street or by a small gate in Lockram Lane. Its amenity value could be more actively promoted within the community, which need not conflict with the wildlife management of the site. Associated with the church is the old buff brick and tile parsonage house of c.1849 (**no. 14**) which now forms the focus for a small development of the late 1980s, **Old Parsonage Court**. This is a good small scale development which has little impact on the street, and is well landscaped with walls and hedging and trees. **No. 16, Woodhams**, is another attractive Victorian house in a Gothic style, forming a pair with no. 14, built around 1860 (*Fig. 90*). Both of these are valuable elements in the Victorian architectural character of the street. **Guithavon Court** is a development of red brick single storey sheltered housing replacing traditional red brick Victorian cottages. Whilst these do not reflect the local architectural character they are nonetheless discreet and small-scale.



Fig. 89 Modern Presbytery and Holy Family and All Saints church.



Fig. 90 Nos. 14-16 Guithavon Street.

Collingwood Road

Although constructed in 1869, Collingwood Road was built up over a long period but with mostly Victorian and Edwardian buildings within the conservation area boundary. **Ben Sainty Court** is a new housing development including a short terrace of houses of distinctive design in white brick with semi-circular porch canopies and iron railings along the front boundary on the road. These draw more on the Georgian character of Newland Street than on the red brick Victorian character of Collingwood Road.

North of this is a large office development which formed part of the town expansion scheme of the 1970s providing office accommodation for the local health authority. Although of large scale and mass, it is well landscaped with mature trees providing screening and is not overly intrusive in the street scene.

The **public hall** is a flamboyant Victorian red brick building by E.J. Dampier, 1893-4, with stone dressings and a balcony at the front (*Fig. 91*). Together with the Edwardian **Constitutional Club** (1910) next door these are a notable pair and landmarks in the conservation area.

Fig. 91 Public Hall, Collingwood Road.



Opposite this the junction with Newlands Drive has been well landscaped making use of brick boundary walls and trees. On the corner of the service road **no. 15 (Noel Pelly House)** is an imposing Victorian villa, built around 1880 with good brick and terracotta detailing and a red brick boundary wall that successfully encloses the road. South of this **nos 5-9** are small Victorian buildings, **nos 7-9** of residential character with good period details but requiring maintenance. **No. 5** is spoilt by a poor shop front but again has original details including first-floor timber sash windows. **No. 5a** is a single storey extension to no. 5 which should have more sympathetic signage. **Nos 1-3** form part of the Wimpy building facing onto Newland Street. Whilst the building is of appropriate scale the first floor windows and shop fronts are poor for the historic setting (*Fig. 92*)



Fig. 92 Nos 1-3 Collingwood Road and no. 38 Newland Street.

Maldon Road

Maldon Road is a medieval route, but within the boundary of the conservation area the buildings are mainly of 19th and 20th-century date. The exception to this is the rear range of the White Hart which encloses the north-east side of the street. Generally this stretch of Maldon Road is quite uninviting, but nonetheless there are some good historic buildings along the road, both within and beyond the conservation area boundary.

The two 20th-century buildings behind Central Buildings including **no. 2C** are of appropriate scale, but the shop fronts could be improved. The shop with two gables at **no. 2B** is 20th-century, and originated as public toilets built in 1929 (Gyford 2005).

No. 2A is a detached two-storey 19th-century building with gable end to the street, which again could be improved with maintenance and a more traditional shop front (*Fig. 93*). Its appearance suggests it may have originated as a coach house. The forecourt area requires resurfacing, and the untidy car parking and servicing area to the side improved with better landscaping and surfacing.

No. 2 is a red brick detached Victorian house of 1889, which has kept some of its period detailing including first-floor sash windows, but has large undivided sheet glass windows at ground floor level. **The Baptist Chapel**, built 1828 with later additions, has a simple brick pedimented front, and was originally unpainted (*Fig. 94*). There is a badly positioned street light directly outside. It requires some maintenance and has a poor replacement glazed door in a good timber doorcase. **No. 4** is a small 19th-century cottage, weatherboarded on the side elevation, with a well preserved early 19th-century double-fronted shop front. It has unsympathetic replacement windows on the first-floor and interlocking roof tiles (*Fig. 95*). Clay roof tiles and traditional timber windows would greatly improve the appearance of this cottage. The garden plot to the side would benefit from a stronger boundary treatment such as hedging or a wall. Alongside is the entrance to the car park of the Spread Eagle.



Fig. 93 No. 2A Maldon Road.



*Fig. 94 Former Baptist chapel,
Maldon Road.*



Fig. 95 No. 4 Maldon Road.

13. EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

A map showing an assessment of the contribution of individual buildings to the special character and appearance of the conservation area is shown in *Fig. 97*. Although to some extent this is a subjective judgment, it can be helpful to inform the planning process. Buildings have been graded on a scale of one to five according to the following criteria:

1. Negative, buildings of indifferent design or detailing, or unsuited to the character of the conservation area.
2. Buildings which have a neutral presence in the conservation area, fitting satisfactorily into it.
3. Positive contribution through design, age, materials or detailing.
4. Positive, listed buildings or landmark buildings.

Witham has few real 'eyesores', although the Newlands Precinct stands out as an alien element in the historic streetscape. The large office blocks of the 1970s are out of scale in the historic context, but not overly intrusive and softened and screened by mature trees. Some 20th century buildings are of appropriate scale and generally integrate into the conservation area but are let down by poor shop fronts and windows that could be improved. Also some older buildings currently have an adverse effect due to their poor condition or unsympathetic shop fronts but otherwise make a positive contribution through their age, design and materials. Unsympathetic alterations or 'improvements' might have the effect of moving a building down a grade. Similarly reversal of such alterations could restore its original character and move it up a grade.

14. PRESSURES FOR CHANGE IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Maintenance

Photographic evidence suggests there has been significant improvement in the condition of historic buildings over the last 30 years. The County Council itself was involved in some restoration projects in the 1970s through its Revolving Funding Programme. However maintenance and repair continues to be an issue, particularly in Newland Street. This is often evident at first-floor level, where joinery may need of repair. Traditional timber sash windows are an important feature of the conservation area and require regular maintenance. Out-of-date and shabby shop fronts create an impression of economic decline, undermining the vitality of the town centre. Poorly maintained buildings and thoroughfares are also unwelcoming. If left unchecked the cumulative effect of poor maintenance will create an impression of neglect which undermines the quality of the conservation area.

Shop fronts and advertising

By far the most planning applications received for Witham town centre relate to changes to shop fronts and signage. Too many shop fronts are of poor and unsympathetic design, which often fails to relate to the architecture of the elevation above. These include metal-framed sheet glass windows, large undivided expanses of glass, flat-fronted shops, fascias out of proportion to the scale of the building, garish plastic fascias and other uses of shiny reflective materials that are not appropriate in a conservation area (*Fig. 96*). In addition Dutch blinds are generally not suitable for historic town centres; sloping canvas blinds are more appropriate if they are necessary. The effect of unsympathetic shop fronts and signage is to undermine the special character of the otherwise fine historic townscape in Witham.



Fig. 96 Shiny, reflective materials are unsympathetic in conservation areas.

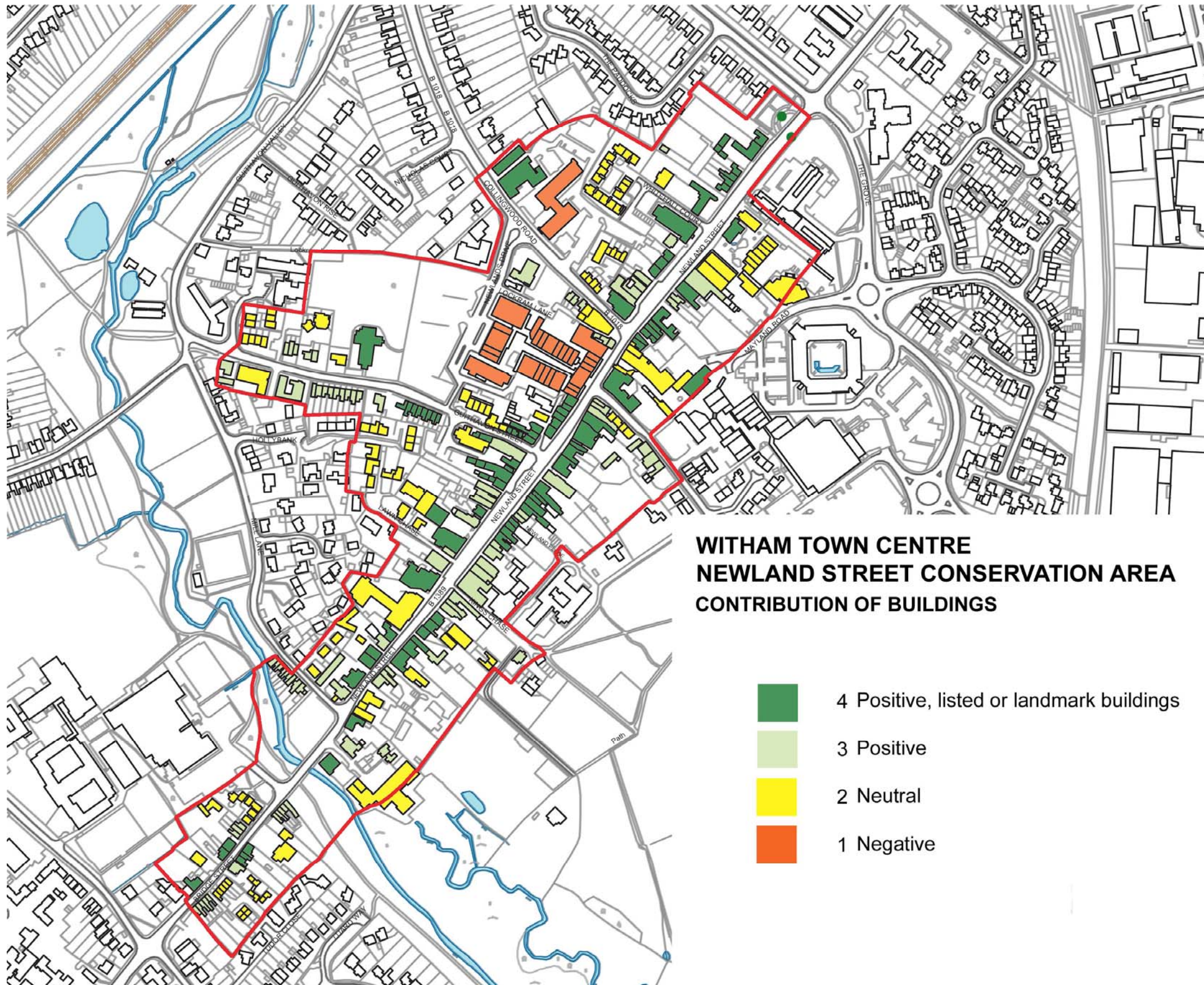


Fig. 97 Contribution of buildings to the character of the conservation area.

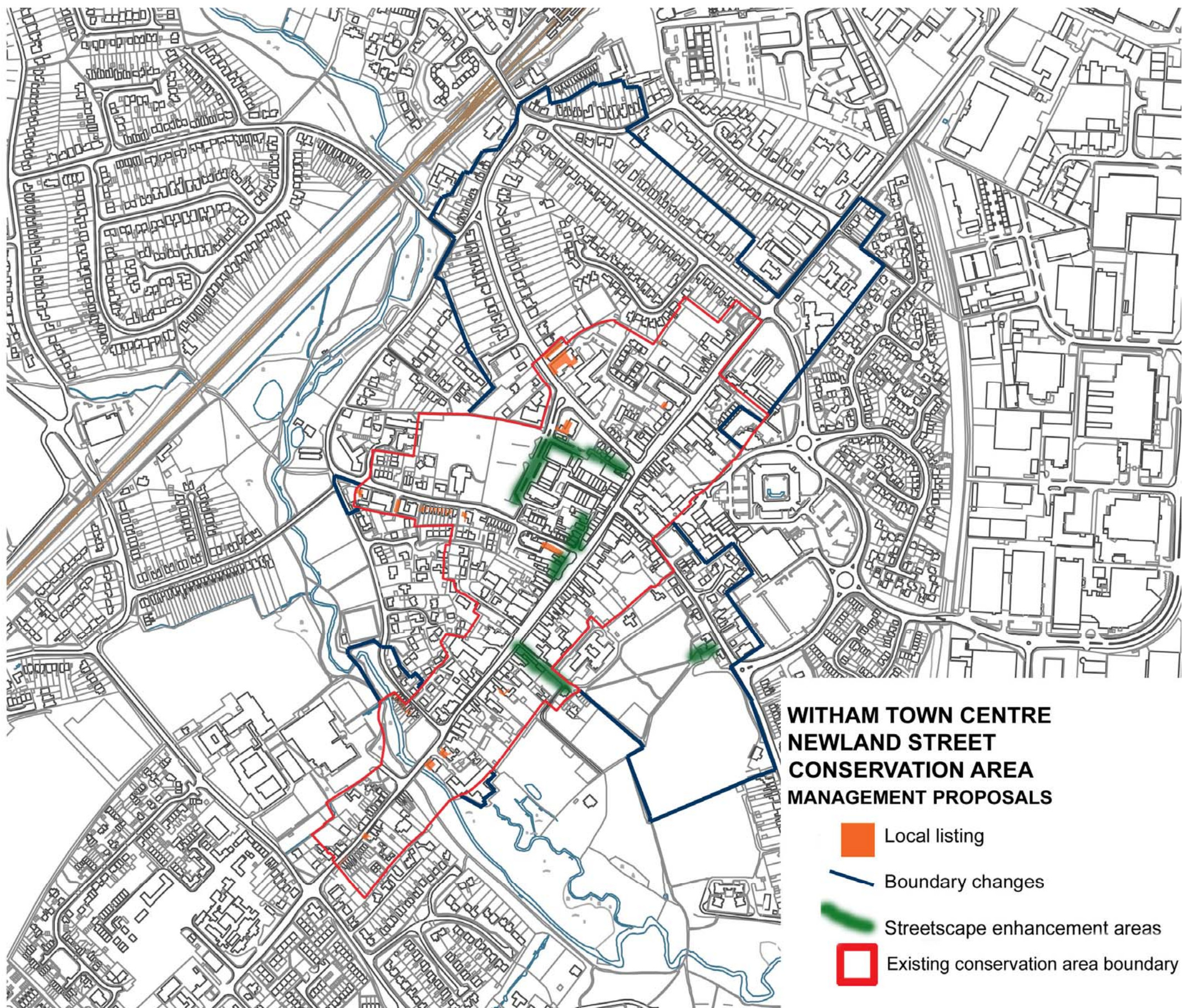


Fig. 98 Management proposals for the conservation area.

Backland development

Since the town expansion scheme was introduced there have been a significant number of new housing and other developments within the conservation area boundary, often in backlands. There continues to be pressure on backland areas particularly for residential development. Two further areas for residential development have been identified in backlands off Newland Street in the Local Plan, both of which will impact on the setting of listed buildings. Most modern infilling has been small scale and does not impact on the appearance of the street frontages. There are few places where rear views are prominent from public areas, although they are often glimpsed through gaps in the building line. The neglected and vacant appearance of some of these spaces suggests they are likely to come under pressure for development in the future. However these backland spaces are an important element in the special character of the conservation area, particularly as the half acre plots of the planned town are still recognisable, and over-development must not be allowed. Long rear garden plots that have retained their walled boundaries are particularly precious (*Fig. 99*). Some good traditional historic brick buildings have survived in backlands, and further loss would be regrettable (*Fig. 100*).



Fig. 99 Backland parking behind the Red Lion retaining old brick boundary walls and trees that soften its appearance from Newland Street.



Fig.100 Brick building surviving behind no. 137 Newland Street.

Unsympathetic alteration

The conservation area has a high quality historic built environment and contains many listed buildings. However unlisted buildings also make an important contribution to the character of the area, in particular Victorian and Edwardian buildings. These can suffer from unsympathetic and uncontrolled alteration as a result of permitted development, including replacement of traditional timber windows and doors and modern interlocking roof tiles replacing traditional clay tiles and natural slates (*Fig. 101*). The effect is particularly noticeable on some of the 19th-century terraces, where traditional timber

sashes have been replaced with UPVC windows. Unauthorised works to unlisted and to listed buildings can also be detrimental to the character of the conservation area, including the placing of satellite dishes and security cameras in prominent positions.

Traffic intrusion

Despite the by-pass and road improvements since the 1970s, the high level of traffic continues to have a negative influence on the environment of the town centre. This is particularly noticeable in Bridge Street and in the narrower stretches of Newland Street where the intensity of traffic has a detrimental effect on the pedestrian's experience of the town. On-street parking in Newland Street also has an adverse visual impact on the historic streetscape.



Fig. 101 Cottage in Mill Lane with unsympathetic replacement windows.

15. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS (Fig. 98)

Boundary changes

The existing conservation area boundary is generally logically drawn around historic rear boundaries, but there are some areas and buildings of significance, mainly relating to Victorian and later development, which are currently excluded and should be re-evaluated for inclusion. The following revisions to the conservation area boundary are therefore recommended and are indicated in *Fig. 98*.

At the north-east end of Newland Street, the boundary currently terminates at Grove Road, taking in part of the former boundary wall of the old mansion the Grove. Despite being cut through by Grove Road in the 1970s, the boundary of the Grove is still a strong feature on the ground and an important historic spatial element of the townscape. Stretches of the old brick boundary wall, dating from around 1700 and Grade II listed, survive not only on Newland Street but also along Chess Lane. Trees and planting also follow this boundary to the rear. Within this area many mature trees have survived which are relics of the former grounds of the mansion house and important in long views along Newland Street. Within the historic boundary Grove House offices and Foster Court are large modern developments of no particular architectural merit, but beyond Grove Road the police station is a substantial neo-Georgian brick building of 1937, with the magistrates' court behind (*Fig. 102*). It is a high quality public building in a well-landscaped plot with magnificent cedar trees at the front, and was designed by County Architect, J. Stuart (Bettley and Pevsner 2007). Across from Chess



Fig. 102 Police Station.

Lane, an ancient route that is medieval or earlier, are Grove Cottages, a picturesque row of 18th-century timber-framed cottages refronted in brick (*Fig. 103*). The grounds of the Grove, which include the police station, as well as Chess Lane, and Grove Cottages, are all worthy of inclusion in the conservation area.



Fig. 103 Grove Cottages.

The park and sports ground on the south-east side of Newland Street are currently excluded from the conservation area boundary, but are important elements in the townscape character of the town centre (*Fig. 104*). Originally the private gardens of Witham House (no. 57 Newland Street) laid out by W.H.E. Pattison in the 1840s, the park and grounds were opened to the public in 1900. There are some fine trees in the park, and it has a good boundary of iron railings, walls and trees. It features an ornamental wall-mounted drinking fountain by S. Gambier Parry dated 1913. It is recommended that the conservation area boundary is extended to include these important open spaces.



Fig. 104 The park.

From Newland Street a short length of Mill Lane is included in the boundary, taking in Avon Cottages. Beyond this terrace the green space and planting on the west side are important in views up from Newland Street. Opposite this nos 32 and 34 Mill Lane are attractive 19th-century cottages. No 32 is weatherboarded, and no. 34 has a good brick outbuilding at the rear and brick boundary wall (*Fig. 105*). These buildings contribute to the domestic and rural character of the Lane at this end. It is therefore recommended that the boundary be extended to include these elements of the street.

At the west end of Guithavon Street, approaching the junction with Mill Lane, the boundary terminates at the western edge of The Crown, excluding the plot to the side. This corner plot includes the small single storey brick building that was constructed as a fire station around 1850, as well as a length of brick wall with a Victorian post box. There is no logical reason to exclude this area and with its prominent position and it would benefit from enhancement. South of this in Mill Lane nos. 72 and 74 are older cottages that also contribute to the appearance of this junction (*Fig. 106*).



Fig. 105 Nos. 32 and 34 Mill Lane.



Fig.106 Nos 72-74 Mill Lane.

A short length of Maldon Road is included within the conservation area boundary, taking in varied 19th and 20th-century buildings. The historic streetscape of Maldon Road has been undermined to some extent by inappropriate modern infill, but it contains some good historic buildings and features and has potential for future enhancement. Just outside the current boundary, Freelands is a good quality Victorian villa of 1862 designed by eminent Essex architect Frederic Chancellor, and should certainly be included in the conservation area. Other notable buildings include the early 19th-century gault brick villa at no. 31, the former Friends Meeting House that is now the Masonic Hall (1801-2), no. 27 which is a small timber-framed, rendered and tiled Grade II listed cottage, and the Board School of 1895 (*Fig. 108*). This stretch of Maldon Road also includes the prominent Holm oak and brick pier marking the entrance to what was a large



Fig. 107 Main entrance to the park in Maldon Road.

asylum called The Retreat, now a small development of bungalows. Importantly, the main entrance to the park is also here, set back with large gate piers but not very visible (Fig. 107). The area around this entrance should be made more inviting and prominent to enhance the approach to the park. It is therefore recommended that the conservation area boundary should be extended south along Maldon Road to take in these important features and encourage enhancement of the area.



Fig. 108 The Old School House and Board school, now Parkside Youth Centre, Maldon Road.

Beyond the existing conservation area boundary, Collingwood Road has retained a strong suburban character which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, with houses set back in large established garden plots. The west side has fine early 20th century villas, generally well preserved but with some unsympathetic replacement windows and doors (Fig. 109). Street trees and hedged front boundaries create an attractive green outlook along the road. Although some front gardens have been lost to provide hardstanding for cars, the retention of front walls and hedges provides screening and preserves the suburban character of the road. At the north end is a distinctly rural enclave. The north side of the road is enclosed by attractive gault brick cottages called



Fig. 109 Collingwood Road.

Millfield Terrace (nos 57-67) from the early 19th century, two of which are Grade II listed, along with sympathetic modern infill houses. The Jubilee oak, planted for Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887, is an important and valued townscape feature. Other notable buildings at the north end of Collingwood Road include, Church House, built in 1909 by Essex architects Chancellor and Son, and Warwick House, a substantial Edwardian villa. It is recommended that Collingwood Road should be added to the conservation area to preserve its special character.

The Avenue is a significant and distinctive element in Witham's historic street plan, clearly visible on the Chapman and André map of 1777 as a row of trees (*Fig. 5*). These were planted by the Lord Abercorns to provide a grand approach to their mansion house, the Grove. With its straight alignment, wide green verges and street trees the road retains elements of the character of a private driveway which should be preserved. This is emphasised by the survival of one of the brick gate piers and a small lodge house by the eminent Essex architect George Sherrin at the north end. The houses in the street were largely developed in the 1920s and 1930s and are set in large established garden plots, many with hedge front boundaries, that contribute to the spacious green character of the road.

At the north end of Avenue Road are some handsome and well detailed late Victorian houses built as part of the Temples Estate on former farmland to provide convenient access to the railway. Of varied design and in established garden plots, many with hedged front boundaries, this group makes a valuable contribution to the good quality Victorian architecture of the town centre (*Fig. 110*).



Fig. 110 Avenue Road.

There are a couple of points at which the existing conservation area boundary bisects buildings that have been developed since designation, namely the Health Centre in Mayland Road and Moorfield Court. Generally it is better for the boundary to follow features that are visible on the ground rather than dissecting buildings or land ownership. The Health Centre does little to enhance the character of the conservation area and is only visible from Mayland Road itself. Neither does it follow any historic boundary. It is therefore recommended that the boundary should be redrawn to the rear of Freebournes Court. However Moorfield Court is prominent in views from the bridge and from Bridge Street. It is recommended that this should be fully encompassed within the conservation area. This would broadly follow the older boundary of the 19th-century waterworks on the site and adjacent stream.

Streetscape and Public Realm

Newland Street is identified in the Local Plan as an environmental improvement area. Some improvements have been carried out over the last five years, including installation of heritage street lamps, re-paving and undergrounding of overhead wires. However this is largely restricted to the central area and more improvements should be carried out along

the length of the historic street. In addition to Newland Street other areas of the conservation area would benefit from improvement and these are indicated on *Fig. 98*. The fine townscape of Witham merits a high quality public realm. Any schemes should take into account guidance on public realm improvements as provided by the English Heritage publication, *Streets for All* (2005) and draw on examples of excellence such as Bury St Edmunds.

Although heritage street lights have been installed in the central area overall a variety of designs are seen throughout the conservation area many of which are not appropriate in this sensitive historic setting. These should be replaced with a more appropriate design.

Comparison with historic photographs shows the extent to which modern street signage, road markings and clutter now detract from the appearance of the town centre. The increase in traffic control including car parking signage is particularly noticeable. Improvements should take into account the importance of removing unnecessary clutter and reducing the obtrusiveness of signage. This should include removing redundant signage, combining signs to reduce the number of poles, using smaller signage and mounting signage on buildings if appropriate.

Road markings should be kept to a minimum. Narrow yellow lines (which are permitted in conservation areas) to control parking have been used in Newland Street but should be brought in throughout the conservation area in preference to full width ones. Other opportunities to reduce or remove road markings should be identified.

Some street name signs need replacing and the style of replacements should be given careful consideration to avoid dull municipal signs.

Overhead wires detract from the appearance of the conservation area in many places and contribute to the visual clutter. Utilities companies should be encouraged to lay these underground where possible.

Some of the visual clutter is due to the excessive display of goods outside shop fronts, although a limited amount can contribute to the vitality of the street scene. The display of sandwich boards on pavements can also have an adverse effect and impede pedestrian movement.

Any improvements should take into account the need to make Newland Street more pedestrian friendly, with well designed paving schemes as well as spaces for rest and social interaction. This might include, for example, the provision of seating around the Dorothy L Sayers statue. There is a particular need to improve the constricted area of Newland Street between Collingwood Road and Maldon Road.

An earlier paving scheme in Newland Street created a wide area of pavement around the junction with Guithavon Street and south of no. 64 Newland Street. These spaces could be better landscaped and arranged with planting and benches to create a more inviting resting area and encourage social contact.

Lockram Lane is potentially a valuable pedestrian link between Newland Street and the Collingwood Road car park but its untidy appearance is unwelcoming. Better maintenance of properties, as well as improved surfacing and signage could enhance this route.

Kings Chase is an important pedestrian link between Newland Street and the park, but is a rather dismal and uninviting approach. Improved surface treatment, which is very poor at present, as well as better lighting and signage could enhance this route. Improvements should also be made to the untidy car parking at the rear of the Newland Street properties with better screening and landscaping.

Coach House Way presents an untidy and illegible view at an important point on Newland Street, at the top of the hill where the pavement widens and pedestrians linger. This would benefit from streetscape improvements. As well as better signage and surfacing, a clearer visual stop is required to terminate the alley. The rear elevations of properties in Newland Street should also be improved where possible, with better maintenance, removing or avoiding unnecessary clutter and other general improvements to their appearance.

Although Maldon Road has shops, cafes and some good historic buildings as well as the main entrance to the park, it feels neglected. The entrance to the park is not very visible. Any public realm improvements in Newland Street might be extended to this stretch of Maldon Road through paving schemes, lighting and signage. There is potential to increase pedestrian linkage between the Grove Centre, Maldon Road, the park, Kings Chase, and Newland Street.

Surface treatments

There is potential for improving surface treatments within the conservation area to enhance its appearance and subtly define different spaces. In places, particularly in side roads, the road and pavement surfaces are poor with ugly and untidy patch repairs, such as in Kings Chase for example. The blanket use of asphalt is not appropriate, as it creates a bland, uniform appearance. The use of stone detailing is important, providing the texture and quality of natural material. These include stone kerbstones, many of which have survived within the conservation area. Concrete is bland by comparison.

The use of bound gravel is an attractive and inexpensive alternative finish suitable for mainly pedestrian routes like Kings Chase, and might be used to define spaces such as backlands or as an alternative to asphalt for car parks. The use of natural materials for surfacing generally enhances the historic character of the streetscape, adding visual interest and texture.

Car parks

The Newlands Drive car park has been identified as an area for environmental improvement. Car parks require careful landscaping to minimise visual intrusion in the conservation area. This can be done using a softer, more natural surface treatment such as bound gravel to avoid the overly hard and bland appearance of asphalt, and also by using more subtle markings rather than bold white lines. There is already some planting to break up the large expanse of the car park, but more could be done to parcel it into smaller areas. The adverse effect of the



Fig. 111 Approach to Lockram Lane from Newlands Drive.

service area has already been mentioned, and consideration should be given to screening this from view. Better pedestrian links could be made through to Newland Street, including enhancing the approach to Lockram Lane from this direction (*Fig. 111*). Some improvements have already been made to this car parking area, with heritage lamps and undergrounding of overhead wires, and any further enhancements should take into account the use of this space for the Saturday market. Along with the existing trees, additional planting would further enhance the appearance of this area.

Small car parking areas in backlands can have a negative impact in views through gaps in the building line. With careful landscaping giving consideration to surface treatments and soft landscaping these areas need not have a damaging effect on the street scene.

Shop fronts and advertising

Many of the town centre shop fronts are of poor design, and some older traditional shop fronts are spoilt by poor signage. A more robust approach to controlling alterations to shop fronts and advertising is required, with rigorous application of existing policies and enforcement action taken where necessary (including policies RLP 107, RLP 108, RLP 109). A photographic shop front survey would be a good starting point in order to provide a basis for assessing problem areas and for monitoring change. Regular monitoring should be carried out.

Boundary treatments

Red brick walls in a traditional bond are a characteristic boundary treatment in the conservation area, featuring on street frontages and defining back plots and gardens. These should be preserved and repaired where necessary using traditional methods and materials. Iron railings are also important, sometimes backed by hedging. Any new development should respect existing historic boundaries. High quality new railings should be encouraged and traditional brick walls incorporated into new developments where possible.

Trees and planting

Witham is a surprisingly green town centre. There are few trees in Newland Street itself, so that the trees that exist such as those around Freebournes Farmhouse (3 Newland Street) and Grove House (currently outside the conservation area), are of great importance. Trees have survived in rear gardens and backlands behind Newland Street, and these are an important characteristic of the road providing a green backdrop to the built-up area. Trees and hedges frequently feature in long views as well as in views into backlands and along side roads. Mature trees and hedges must be retained in new developments wherever possible. If trees are lost for any reason replacements must be planted, and planting should be encouraged in new development and new spaces. Further opportunities for the planting of trees within Newland Street itself might be considered as part of environmental improvements to the street. Large areas of car parking should be softened with trees and planting, which can also be used to subdivide them into smaller scale units and provide screening. Native species are preferable.

Backland development/development areas

There is little opportunity for new development along Newland Street itself, which is fully built up with no infill sites available. Should any redevelopment take place in the future it must respect the subtle variations in building line and the relationship between building height and road width that provide a strong but varying experience of enclosure.

Backland areas are more vulnerable to development, and there are a number of areas that are currently used for car parking or are vacant. Sensitive redevelopment of sites such as these would not only enhance the appearance of the conservation area but could provide valuable uses that would contribute to the vitality of the town centre.

Any backland development must respect the small scale and intimacy of these spaces, preserving old boundaries. It should take into account the immediate local context, not just the overall character of the conservation area. Uncritical use of Essex Design Guide principles is not always appropriate. Backland areas have the potential for imaginative re-use, providing spaces for small independent retailers and businesses, pocket green spaces and gardens, attractive courtyards and mews-style housing. Existing traditional outbuildings should be retained and incorporated into new development where possible. Good landscaping, surface treatments and lighting can all contribute to the attractiveness of these areas. Sensitive re-use of the town's backland spaces has great potential to enhance Witham's sense of place and identity as well as its visual appeal.

Maintenance

The problem of poor general maintenance has already been mentioned, and some prominent sites have the appearance of neglect (along Lockram Lane for example, and to the rear of no. 70 Newland Street where it flanks Guithavon Street). Grant schemes would be one way to achieve an improvement in the overall condition of the area. Owners should be encouraged to maintain properties regularly, perhaps by introducing a guidance leaflet. General improvements in the streetscape and public realm might also serve as an incentive for individual owners to improve their properties.

Local listing

There are many good unlisted buildings in the conservation area that contribute to its special character. A Local List of buildings of local significance could be considered, and owners encouraged to avoid demolition or unsympathetic alteration or changes which would diminish their value in architectural, historic or townscape terms.

The following buildings within the current conservation area are recommended for inclusion on a Local List:

Bridge Street

- No. 1 (early-mid Victorian)
- Nos 3-9 (1891, by Edward Sayer of Tiptree)
- No. 29 (former George and Dragon pub, 1889)
- Nos 59-67 Faragon Terrace (1869)

Collingwood Road

- No. 15, Noel Pelly House (c.1880)

No. 12 Public Hall (c.1894)
No. 14 Constitutional Club (1910)

Guithavon Street

No. 19, Colne House (originally Witham Savings Bank, 1850)
Nos 21-37 (c.1861)
No. 14, Old Parsonage (1849)
No. 16, Woodhams (c.1850s)
The Crown (c.1860)
Church hall (originally Methodist church, 1864)

Kings Chase

The Cottage (rural vernacular backland cottage, pre-1839)

Maldon Road

No. 25 (adjoining listed building at no. 27)

Mill Lane

Nos 5-7 (early-mid 19th-century)
Nos 9-12, Avon Terrace (mid-Victorian)

Newland Street

No. 113, Pelican House (c.1840)
No. 123 (c. 1700 backland cottage, cider vault)
Nos 137-139 (early 18th-century, ruined brick building to rear)
No. 153, The Swan (c.1790)
Nos 155-157 (1911, former Ginetta motorworks)
No. 14 (1891, associated with Avenue House)
No. 20, Tiptree Villa (1876)
No. 56 (1886)
No. 70 (15th-century origins)

Additional planning controls

It is possible to introduce additional planning controls in a conservation area as a means of protecting it from unsympathetic alterations carried out as permitted development. This can be done through the use of an Article 4(2) direction under the Planning Act, which would require planning permission for certain categories of works normally regarded as permitted development. Consideration could be given in future to introducing an Article 4 Direction such that the following works would require planning permission:

- Alterations to a dwelling house affecting windows, doors or other openings, including the insertion of dormer or other windows in the roof and the change of roof materials.
- The application of render or cladding to the external walls of a dwelling house or the painting of brickwork.
- The erection or construction of a porch outside the front or side door of a dwelling house.
- The erection or construction of any fences, gates or other forms of enclosure to the front or sides of a dwelling house or the alteration of fences, walls or other forms of enclosure if they adjoin the highway.

- The construction of any fences, walls gates, or other forms of enclosure to the front or sides of a dwelling house.
- The painting of the exterior of any wall of a dwelling house with a different colour.
- The installation of solar panels and wind turbines.

16. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amend the Conservation Area boundary as follows:
Extend to include:
Along north-east of Newland Street up to Broomfield Cottage
Witham Park, Witham Cricket Ground, and properties on Maldon Road as far as the Community Centre
North along Mill Lane to include nos 32 and 34 and land between 21 Mill Lane as far as the bowling green
At junction between Guithavon Street and Mill Lane to include old fire station and nos 72 and 74 Mill Lane
Nos 17-67 and 16-50, Church House and Millfield House, Collingwood Road
Nos 2-8, Seacrest, and Prospect House, Guithavon Valley
Extend to include The Avenue and The Paddocks
North end of Avenue Road as far as no. 34 (north side) and no. 39 (south side).
Fully encompass Moorfield Court

Exclude the Health Centre on Mayland Road.
2. Undertake public realm improvements in Newland Street and neighbouring roads including improving the design, efficiency and environmental impact of street lighting, rationalising traffic and other signage and road markings, improving street furniture as opportunities arise, undergrounding of overhead wires and improved paving and landscaping schemes to improve pedestrian movement and encourage social interaction.
3. Promote use of sympathetic surface treatments, such as bound gravel for pedestrian routes.
4. Encourage occupiers on Newland Street to reduce clutter on street forecourts.
5. Carry out improvements to Lockram Lane including encouraging better maintenance of properties and streetscape improvements such as resurfacing.
6. Carry out streetscape improvements to Kings Chase and the park access including signage, landscaping and resurfacing.
7. Carry out streetscape improvements to Coach House Way including surface treatment and promoting better maintenance and improvements to rear elevations of Newland Street properties.
8. Carry out streetscape improvements on Maldon Road including enhancement of park entrance.

9. Carry out environmental enhancements to Collingwood Road car park and Lockram Lane car park including planting, surface treatments, screening of service areas and enhanced pedestrian linkage with Newland Street.
10. Promote better landscaping of backland parking areas visible from highway.
11. Promote sympathetic designs for shopfronts and robustly reinforce policies regarding shop design and advertising.
12. Promote sympathetic traditional boundary treatments including red brick walls, iron railings and hedging, and preserve existing examples.
13. Retain existing trees and hedging where possible and encourage further planting.
14. Resist overdevelopment of backlands and promote sensitive redevelopment which preserves backland character.
14. Encourage better maintenance of properties, particular those that have a strong negative impact including the rear of no. 70 Newland Street and properties backing onto Lockram Lane.
15. Consider future introduction of Local List of buildings of local significance to encourage owners to avoid unsympathetic alteration.
16. Consider future introduction of Article 4(2) Direction to provide additional planning control over unsympathetic development that might harm the special character of the area.

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