

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council  
**Nuneaton Town Centre  
Conservation Area Appraisal  
and Management Plan**  
Supplementary Planning Document 2022





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## 1. Statement of Special Interest

1.1 This section provides a concise summary of the special architectural and historic interest of the Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area. The area's character and appearance are deemed desirable to preserve or enhance and so the following assets and features will need to be considered when assessing new development proposals within the Conservation Area. More detailed information is available within this document.

1.2 The features which contribute positively towards the Conservation Area:

- Grade I listed Church of St Nicolas
- Grade II Listed buildings and structures: Old Boys of Vicarage Street School War Memorial, Chest Tomb 20 metres SE of St Nicolas, Chest Tomb 30 metres S of St Nicolas, 31 Bridge Street/35 Newdegate Street, 39 Newdegate Street, 20 Newdegate Street, King Edward VI College, Old Vicarage, Old Grammar School, Nuneaton Boer War Memorial, 7 Market Place.

- Locally Listed Buildings: 11, 21, 24, 25, 26, 26-27, 28-30 Market Place, 1-5 Abbey Street, George Eliot Hotel, 37 Newdegate Street (frontage only),, 121-122 Abbey Street, George Eliot Buildings Coventry Street, Town Hall, 9 Coventry Street (frontage only), Nuneaton United Reformed Church, Warwick House Coton Road, The Old Gaol, 2 Chapel street, 24 Coton Road, 23a Queens Road, Nuneaton Conservative Club.
- Evidence of plot layout within the town centre following historic boundaries, some of which denote former medieval burgage plots.
- Distinctive commercial and civic buildings dating from the late Victorian to Edwardian periods.
- Inter-war buildings typically more restrained usually adopting a form of 'stripped-down' Classicism.
- Original rectangular medieval marketplace later filled with a planned rectangular island block of tenements at its centre.
- Broad principal streets of irregular width which until the late 19th century narrowed markedly where they joined Market Place. Still discernible along Queens Road and Abbey Street.



- Surviving rows of pre-1939 buildings lining stretches of the principal streets.
- Late 19th / early 20th century bank buildings on prominent corner sites in and around Market Place.
- Good representation of Interwar buildings many of which retain original features typical of the period on their facades.
- Post-war redevelopment of the 1960s featuring design proposals by the Modernist architect and town planner Frederick Gibberd.
- Neo-Classical Council House designed by architects Peacock and Bewlay of Birmingham and built between 1931 and 1934.
- Late 19th century red brick and stone public buildings including the Congregational Chapel in Chapel Street, and the former police station, magistrates court, and gaol, at the corner of Chapel Street and Coton Road.
- Edwardian Riversley Park retaining much of its original layout.
- George Elliot Memorial Gardens linking Riversley Park to the town centre.

- Dempster Court designed by Frederick Gibberd with important trees in landscaped areas.
- Church and churchyard of St Nicholas.
- Mature trees and green spaces associated with the church.

### 1.3 The issues or vulnerabilities which affect the Conservation Area's character:

- Full height glazing used in some historic commercial buildings which negatively impacts the character of the Conservation Area.
- Solid bar shutters in use in commercial buildings contributing towards a hostile street scene.
- Unsympathetic signage which is not in character with the building design and the wider setting.
- Improvised street screening and pavement displays have a negative impact on the Conservation Area and the wider street scene.
- Unmanaged trees which obscure the views of key buildings in the Conservation Area.
- Street signage and bollards presenting a cluttered street scene at entry key points of the Conservation Area.

1.4 The appraisal identifies five character zones in the Conservation Area. The details are set out in the relevant sections.

- Character Area 1: Market Place and Historic Commercial Core.
- Character Area 2: Civic and Administrative Area.
- Character Area 3 Riversley Park, George Elliot gardens, and Coton Road.
- Character Area 4: Park Fringe.
- Character Area 5: The Church, Vicarage, and Grammar schools.

## 2. Introduction

The Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1979 and extended in 1987. A review of the Conservation Area was undertaken in 2008-2009 and an updated review completed in 2021. It is one of five conservation areas managed by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.

### 2.1 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1.1 Conservation areas are governed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>2</sup> (2021) sets out the overarching requirement for local planning authorities to identify and protect areas of special interest (Section 16).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

2 2

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf)

- 2.1.3 Planning Practice Guidance<sup>3</sup> provides further guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

- 2.1.4 The Nuneaton and Bedworth Council Borough Plan<sup>4</sup> sets out the policies for guiding development within the Borough, including that within conservation areas.

- 2.1.5 The Council has produced Supplementary Planning Documents<sup>5</sup> in support of the Borough Plan which should be referenced in relation to applications in the Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area.

- 2.1.6 General guidance relating to conservation areas is published by Historic England and has been used in the preparation of this document.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/1788/d11\\_-\\_borough\\_plan\\_2011\\_-\\_2031\\_publication\\_2017](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/1788/d11_-_borough_plan_2011_-_2031_publication_2017)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/21055/adopted\\_borough\\_plan](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/21055/adopted_borough_plan)

## 2.2 What is a Conservation Area?

- 2.2.1 A conservation area is defined as “area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is it desirable to preserve or enhance”<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.2.2 Conservation areas recognise the unique quality of an area and protect and manage the special architecture and historic interest of a place.
- 2.2.3 The quality of an area includes (but not limited to) individual buildings, monuments, topography, materials, detailing thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces and landscaping, overall scale, and massing.

## 2.3 Purpose of Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

- 2.3.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that all local planning authorities “formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and

enhancement” of conservation areas within their jurisdiction, and that these proposals are reviewed from time to time<sup>7</sup>.

- 2.3.2 Time to time is not defined in legislation, however Historic England recommend every five years as ‘ideal’<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.3.3 The proposals are normally published in a conservation area appraisal document which defines the special interest of the area. An accompanying management plan sets out the framework for the protection and enhancement of the area.
- 2.3.4 Over time, the special interest may evolve and see a decline in the qualities which make an area special. Conversely, well thought out design may have improved an area. Wider social and economic changes may also impact upon the Conservation Area. It is therefore necessary to undertake a review to ascertain if the character of an area remains special and that the management proposals are appropriate.

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<sup>6</sup> Section 69 (1), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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<sup>7</sup> Section 71 (1), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<sup>8</sup> [conservation-area-appraisal-designation-and-management.jpg \(220x311\)](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-and-management.jpg) ([historicengland.org.uk](https://www.historicengland.org.uk))

- 2.3.5 To provide a framework to the review of Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area the following questions were asked of the appraisal:
- What has happened to the Conservation Area since the last review?
  - How effective have the Conservation Area documents been in guiding development?
  - What are the current issues in the area and do the current documents provide a reasonable base for either exploiting positive opportunities or resisting dramatic or erosive change?
  - What issues are not addressed in wider policy areas and will need to be dealt with through reviewed documentation for the Conservation Area?

Explicit answers are not provided to these questions; rather they were used to guide the research and formulation of the management plan.

- 2.3.6 The review has involved:
- Individual building evaluation
  - Review of the setting
  - Review of planning applications
  - Historic photographs

- 2.3.7 The omission of any building, structure, feature, or space in this review does not imply that it is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest.

## 2.4 Consultation

- 2.4.1 It is a statutory requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for conservation area guidance produced by or on behalf of Local Authorities to be subject to public consultation, including a public meeting, and for the local authority to have regard to any views expressed by consultees.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.4.2 A draft of the Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal was subject to public and stakeholder consultation from 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

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<sup>9</sup> Section 71 (1), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990



### 3. The Conservation Area Boundary

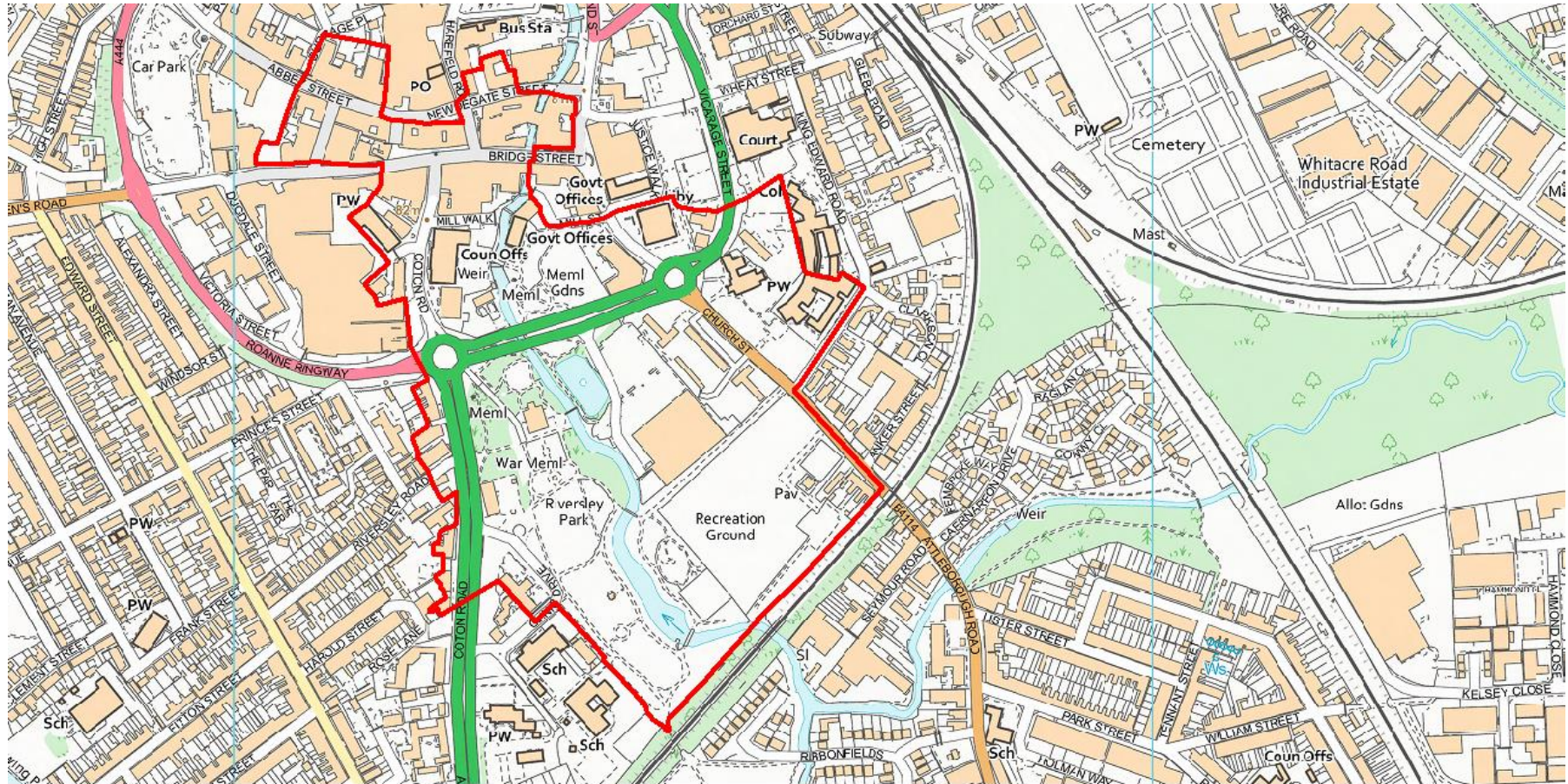


Figure 1: Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area Boundary. Scale 1:5000

## 4. Historic Development

### 4.1 Medieval Period

- 4.1.1 Nuneaton is first recorded as Eaton from the Anglo-Saxon elements 'ea' referring to water (the river), and 'tun' meaning farmstead. A nucleated settlement was probably in existence by the ninth century in the vicinity of St Nicholas Church to the east of the later medieval town. It has been suggested<sup>10</sup> that it lay along a principal street - Church Street and Bond End -, with Vicarage Street and Back Street comprising its back lanes. The Domesday survey of 1086 indicates the settlement had a population of 120-150 people, mostly tenant farmers, and a mill is recorded though not a church.
- 4.1.2 Moves towards urbanization began soon after the title of Lord of the Manor passed to the French abbey of Fontevrault in or about 1155. The mother abbey founded Nuneaton Priory, a Benedictine nunnery whose remains lie in Manor Court Road half-a-mile to the north west of the town centre. It was one of only four in England. From this foundation the developing settlement became known as

Nuneaton. As the abbey's largest endowment in Britain, the manor's economic exploitation was important, and this is strongly reflected in the Priory's plan for the new town.

- 4.1.3 Shortly after obtaining rights from the King to hold markets around 1160, the priory set about the radical re-planning and extension of the existing settlement. This comprised principally of laying out the marketplace on the opposite (west) bank of the River Anker to the Saxon area of occupation and establishing Abbey Street as the main street of the new town. The latter supplanted Church Street and, as its name suggests, it led directly to the Abbey, from where it went on to Atherstone. Along it and around the marketplace were laid out a very regular series of burgage plots each 50 feet wide and around 150 deep, and to their rear, on the north side of the street, ran the long back lane still known as Burgage Walk marking the northern boundary of the town and the start of the open fields beyond.
- 4.1.4 This 12th century layout thus shifted the focus of the town away from the area around Church Street to the new market square lying at the confluence of all major through routes. It was a plan that remained remarkably little altered over the next eight centuries until the 20th century.

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<sup>10</sup> E. A. Veasey Nuneaton A History p3



4.1.5 While the late Victorian period saw rapid expansion beyond Nuneaton's medieval extent from the 1880s along with much intensification and rebuilding within it, this largely respected the ancient pattern of streets and plots.

## 4.2 Seventeenth – Nineteenth Century

4.2.1 The economy of Nuneaton had a significant base in agriculture up to the mid-17th century. While half the recorded working population at this time comprised of trades and craftsman, one third were still engaged in agriculture. During the 18th century, though, industrialization was in the ascendancy. With enclosure first of the open fields in 1733 and then the commons in 1801, there was a consequent need for those dispossessed of their rights to the land to earn a living by alternative means. By 1851 only five per cent of the recorded workforce still earned a living from farming, while nearly half were engaged in the town's principal industry - silk ribbon weaving. Other cottage scale industries included hatting (spreading from Atherstone), leather working, and needle production.

4.2.2 There are records of silk ribbon weaving in Nuneaton from the mid-17th century moving out from the main centre of

production in Coventry. It had developed to become a sizeable local industry by the end of the 18th century but was very much subject to the vagaries of market forces and went through a number of slumps in the 19th century. The industry finally collapsed because of cheap foreign imports in the 1860s, and much of Nuneaton's industrial workforce, (along with those in neighbouring Coventry, Bedworth and Bulkington) consequently suffered much hardship. Between 1861 and 1871 there was a fall in population at a time when nationally it was growing rapidly.



Figure 2: Nuneaton Mill, Mill Walk<sup>11</sup>

4.2.3 Despite a rising population up to the mid-19th century, the town had not expanded to any great extent physically beyond its late 16th century boundaries until the late 19th century . Many of the poorest workers were housed in

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<sup>11</sup> . Reproduced from the “Our Warwickshire” website © Warwickshire County Council

appalling cramped and insanitary conditions in courts behind houses concentrated particularly along Abbey Street. It was not until the later 19th century that the Local Board of Health (established in the 1848) acquired powers sufficient to begin tackling the problem. Only by the mid-1930s was satisfactory replacement housing made available, and not until the 1950s that the last of the courts were finally removed.

4.2.4 Coal had been exploited in the Nuneaton area for many centuries previously, for as documentary sources record, it was being mined from as early as the 13th century, though on a very small scale<sup>12</sup> . It began to increase from the late 16th century with improved methods of extraction, and the industry may have contributed to the town’s slow rise in population over the next two centuries. However, the 1851 census records only twenty-five miners living in the town demonstrating that its contribution to the local economy was still modest even as late as the mid-19th century.

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<sup>12</sup> VCH Warws iv p165



Figure 2: Griff Colliery, Nuneaton. 1946. <sup>13</sup>

4.2.5 The picture changed radically with the coming of the railways and improved mining methods that allowed the discovery and exploitation of deeper lying coal measures after 1850. Owing to its strategic location on the national rail network, and to a new direct line to Birmingham in 1862, access to huge new markets was suddenly opened for coal, clay and its derivative manufactures - brick and tile. This

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<sup>13</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council

together with local entrepreneurship (particularly the lead shown by one Reginald Stanley), and increasing mechanization, led to the late-Victorian and Edwardian town 'boom' of the 1890s and 1900s.



Figure 3: Conservative Club Rooms. Corner of Newdegate Street and Bond Street. 1910s. <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



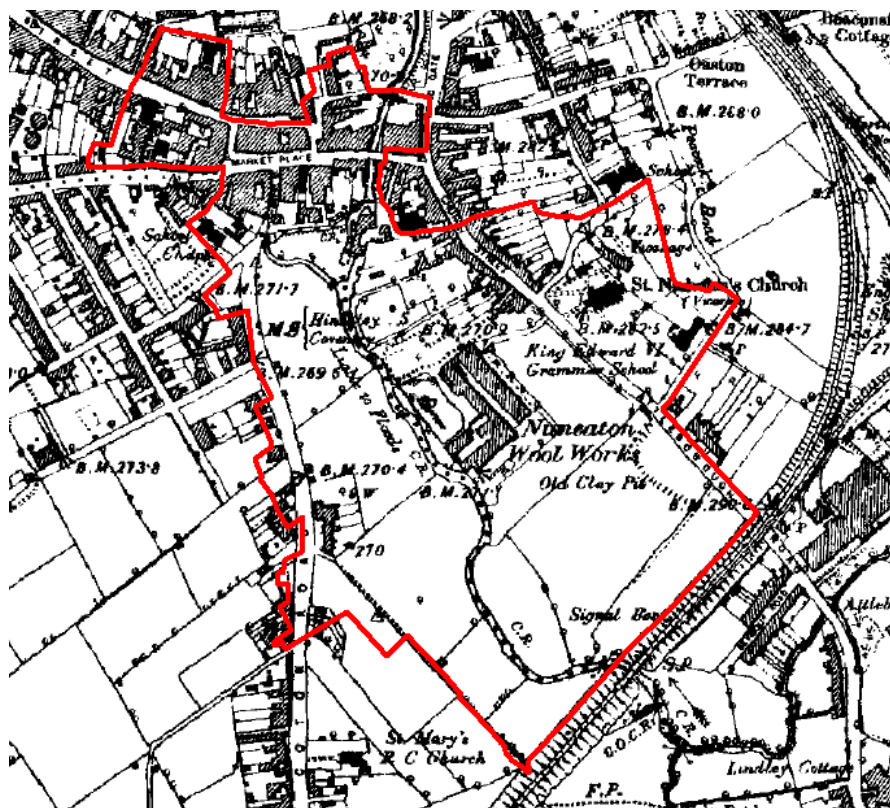


Figure 4 Nuneaton Town Centre 1888-1891

4.2.6 With the burgeoning extractive industries and new brick and tile works and their demand for more and more labour, housing provision for the working classes was a major concern for local government of the day. The imposition of Public Health Acts actively prevented private landlords from building more of the notorious squalid courts at the back of

houses fronting Abbey Street. Consequently, streets of red brick by-law terrace housing subsequently sprang up around the historic centre constructed in the main from materials locally won and worked, many from the brick factories of Reginald Stanley.



Figure 5: Nuneaton Market Place on market day. 1910s. <sup>15</sup>

### 4.3 Twentieth Century

4.3.1 Expansion around the historic core was accompanied by fast moving commercial redevelopment within it. By the 1930s the character of Nuneaton's historic heart had been almost completely transformed from a small, relatively poor,

<sup>15</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council

run-down, and predominantly residential town centre, to a comparatively prosperous commercial one, complete with chain-stores, theatres, hotels, a picture house, banks, and public buildings.

4.3.2 The twentieth century saw the town attempting to come to terms with ever increasing levels of car traffic passing through its medieval street layout, and its inherited slum housing. These problems together with the destruction of the eastern third of the town centre in air raids in World War II, and the newly bestowed powers on the local authority planning department, led directly to plans for wholesale redesign of major areas of the town centre in the immediate post-war years.

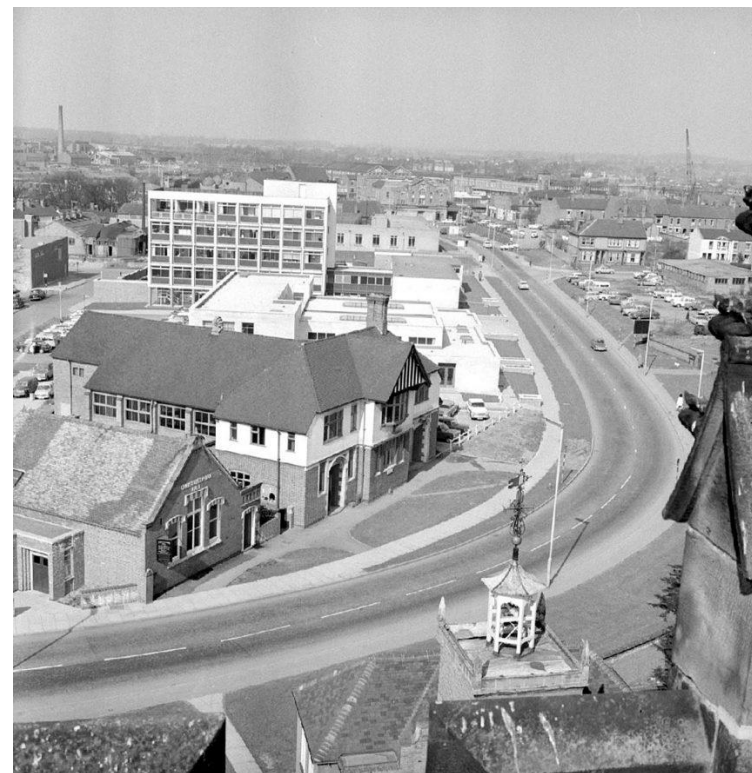


Figure 6: Vicarage Street, part of Nuneaton ring road. 1965. <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council

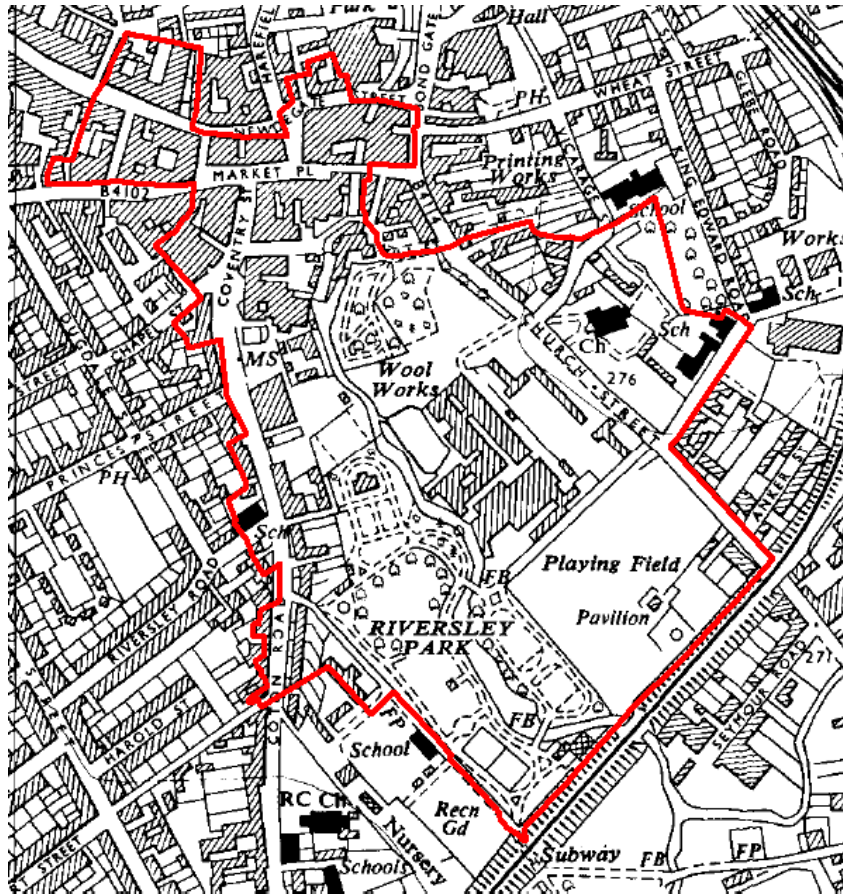


Figure 7: Nuneaton Town Centre 1955

plans were devised at a time when policy makers and designers generally gave little consideration to the historic environment. Consequently, it rapidly became a casualty of the two main urban drivers of change during the last century - commerce and the car. A western loop road, one of the master plan's main proposals, would subsequently develop over the following decades into an almost complete town centre ring road beloved by highway engineers from the 1930s to the 70s. This disrupted the intricate medieval pattern of streets, cutting them off from their approach roads and isolating the centre from its surroundings. It left awkward shaped areas of land for use either as surface level car parks, or to house large freestanding buildings in precinct-like spaces. And it reinforced yet further the isolation of the parish church from the rest of the town, which found itself in the early 1950s standing by a large and busy traffic island facing blocks of new local authority flats designed by Gibberd.

4.3.3 A town master plan by the Borough Council together with a 'town centre design' by Frederick Gibberd of 1947 laid the basis for much that followed over the next fifty years. The



Figure 8: The Parish Church at Nuneaton. 1960s.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 9: Abbey service station in Church Street, during demolition. This was in front of the newly constructed Public Library<sup>18</sup>

4.3.4 Commercial redevelopment associated with post-war reconstruction and street widening schemes demanded ever larger buildings and rear servicing. These disregarded the intricacy and variety generated by respecting the narrow plot divisions of the medieval plan in building floorplans and elevations. As a result, the human scale of significant lengths of street frontages was lost together with the fine grain of the building pattern along Church Street, the south

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<sup>17</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council

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<sup>18</sup> . Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



side of Bridge Street and the Market Place, the north side of Newdegate Street, and along parts of Queen Street and Abbey Street.

4.3.5 The rush to modernize and keep up with retailing fashions in the post-war era was not a new local phenomenon for the Victorians and Edwardians had done the same. But the nature and scale of redevelopment fuelled by the prospect of large financial gains for developers in the 1960s, represented a significant and unwelcome break with the past. The sterility, harshness, lack of quality and architectural good manners in many buildings of that period focused public and local political attention on the value of Nuneaton's surviving older buildings. This eventually resulted in the designation of a town centre conservation area in 1979 and its extension in 1987.

4.3.6 Subsequent redevelopment has tended to respect the contribution made by later 19th and early 20th century buildings even though their individual intrinsic architectural value might be modest by national standards. The construction of the ring road, while damaging to townscape in many ways, has nevertheless allowed the pedestrianisation of the centre. And although the paving

schemes themselves may now be a little dated in design and use of materials, the general amenity of shopping streets has undoubtedly greatly improved over the last two decades. In the new century there is strong and still growing public support for the preservation and enhancement of the town's pre-1945 buildings and every indication that in future this important local heritage will be better treated and appreciated than it has been in the past.

## 4.4 Twenty-first Century

4.4.1 There has been little material change to the buildings or street layout. Three buildings have been demolished, the public toilets located next to the Town Hall; Council Offices located to the rear of the Town Hall -the land now providing additional spaces in the car park; and a row of retail units opposite the library have been replaced with a new apartment scheme.

4.4.2 Town centres in general are under increased pressure from wider societal change. Structural change in town centre economies is occurring in town centres throughout the country and Nuneaton town centre need to adapt. The prevailing economics represent a potential force for change



which it is important the Conservation Area can withstand and embrace future change.

## 5. Character Assessment

### 5.1 Location, Topography and Geology

- 5.1.1 Nuneaton is located in northern Warwickshire one mile to the south of the A5 (Roman Watling Street) that forms the County's northern boundary with Leicestershire. It lies eight miles to the north of Coventry being almost connected to that city by a string of former mining settlements including Bedworth and Keresley that stand on the East Warwickshire Coalfield.
- 5.1.2 The town is also situated at a convergence of ancient road routes on the River Anker indicating that it was historically an important river crossing point for the area. The river is however very difficult to detect within the town centre today though in the past it was responsible for extensive and repeated flooding of commercial streets.
- 5.1.3 The bedrock geology of the area is Mercia Mudstone Group characterised by a sequence of brown and red-brown,

calcareous clays and mudstones, with occasional beds of impersistent green siltstone and fine-grained sandstone.<sup>19</sup>

- 5.1.4 Nuneaton lies on flat land in a slight hollow at an elevation of 270 ft on the eastern edge of the East Warwickshire Plateau. The latter is a rural, rolling upland area of dispersed settlement covering North Warwickshire and forming part of the historic Arden to the west. It has been important to the town's past industrial economy providing sources of stone (including granite), clay, and particularly coal. The plateau has at the same time acted as a barrier to communication between the town and Birmingham to the west. To the north the landscape comprises of the lower lying and more open clay plains of Leicestershire and pastureland of Staffordshire, while to the south and east lies the Warwickshire Feldon, a landscape region historically of open fields and villages important for grain production.
- 5.1.5 The Conservation Area lies at the heart of the town, at the centre of the settlement comprising of large areas of late 19th and early 20th century red brick urban terraces and interwar and later 20th century suburbs.

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<sup>19</sup> British Geographical Survey

5.1.6 Within the ring road the majority of the Conservation Area comprises of traditional urban streets with continuous frontages. Because of this, and because of its flat topography, there are no views or vistas of note within, into, or out of the area.

5.1.7 Beyond the ring road the landscape of the Conservation Area is more green and open, as it includes an extensive area of Edwardian parkland and the adjacent playing field of the former King Edward 6th School to the south east of the town centre.

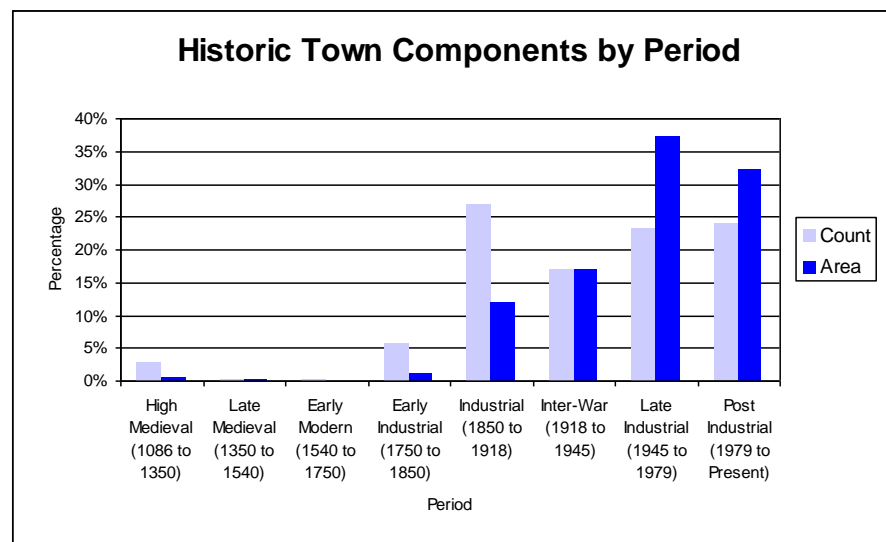
5.1.8 Today the principal functions of the town inside the ring road are commercial (shopping and leisure), civic, professional, and financial. The town's historic market function is however still maintained with a well-attended outdoor street market held on Wednesdays and Saturdays along The Market Place and Queens Road

## 5.2 Architectural Interest and Built Form

5.2.1 The majority of buildings within the Conservation Area date from after the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Nuneaton Historic Character Assessment (2015) identified buildings and features dating from before the industrial period (1850 to

1918) make up only a small percentage of the total townscape.

Table 1: Percentage of buildings built in historic periods.



5.2.2 Amongst the earliest buildings to survive within the town are the town houses within the centre. The earliest examples appear to date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, although there is the potential for earlier fabric. Examples of this type of building are generally two or three storied. They are typically externally rendered in white. Architectural detailing tends to be simple.



Figure 10: Mid-19th century townhouses facing the market place on the corner with Coventry Street

### 5.3 Nineteenth century commercial and civic buildings

5.3.1 Elsewhere within the Conservation Area there are commercial and civic buildings dating from the late Victorian to Edwardian periods. Some of these are very distinctive and include several examples associated with Reginald Stanley one of the town's most important political and industrial figures.

5.3.2 These buildings are typical of their time in both styling and are overwhelmingly constructed from red brick, the styling tends to reflect the popularity of vernacular revivalist styles of the time.

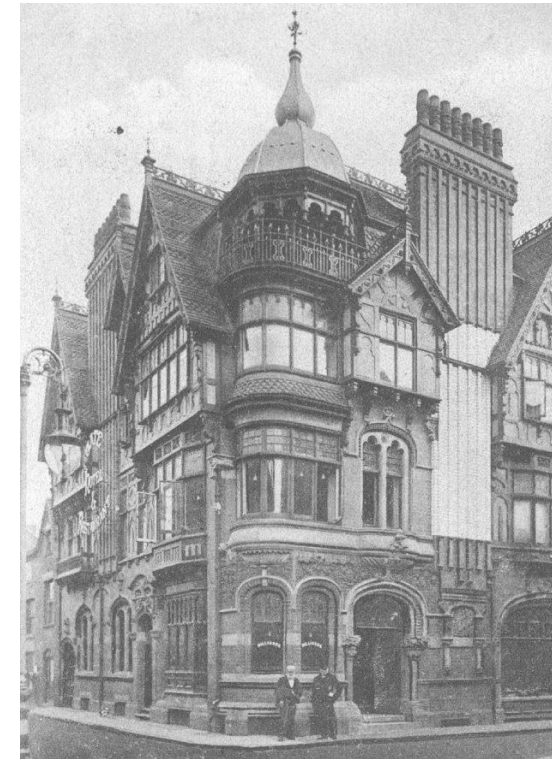


Figure 11: Gate Hotel, Nuneaton. 1900s<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



Figure 12: Former Gate Hotel, built for Reginald Stanley 1888.

## 5.4 Late industrial

5.4.1 The latter part of the twentieth century produced buildings which have followed the red brick style of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The results have been less than impressive lacking the quality of materials and architectural detailing which made the earlier buildings successful.

### 5.4.1



Figure 13: Stratford Street, Nuneaton, example of the historical style of architecture common around 1990s

## 5.5 Street Plot and Layout

5.5.1 Abbey Street, Newdegatre Street and Market Place are the main streets in the Conservation Area. The centre's historic streets are still focused on the marketplace which, when first laid out, likely occupied the area now bounded by Newdegate Street, Abbeygate and Market Place.



5.5.2 The plot layout within the town centre follows, in places, historic boundaries, some of which denote former medieval burgage plots. Concentrations of historic boundaries survive along Abbey Street and around Market Place.

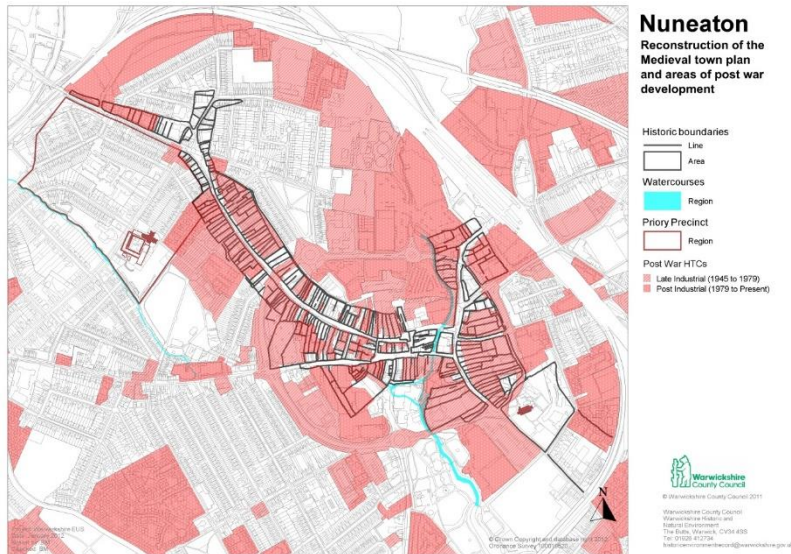


Figure 14: Surviving Historic Boundaries

5.5.3 Despite many buildings dating from the nineteenth century onwards, the lasting impact of the medieval layout can be seen in the built environment today.



Figure 15: Evidence of Burgage Plots

5.5.4 The area around the marketplace consists of a series of plots that are typical of those found in medieval towns. The plots were laid out to a common size. Width measurements taken on plots lining the northern side of the marketplace (Newdegate Street and part of Abbey Street) display a high

degree of consistency. They are based on the statute perch (16½ feet). The majority of burgage plots depicted are either 3 perches in width or a fraction of this number. For example, at the western end are three plots each measuring 2 perches, implying that two 3 perch plots had been reorganised into 3 plots. Mid way in the series are two 1½ perch wide plots, these plots representing the division of one plot into two.

## 5.6 Building Scale

5.6.1 Most buildings in the Conservation Area are two storeys high; in central areas the height increases to three storeys. There are a few key buildings, such as St Nicolas Parish Church, which are considered greater than three storeys. There are no single storey buildings.

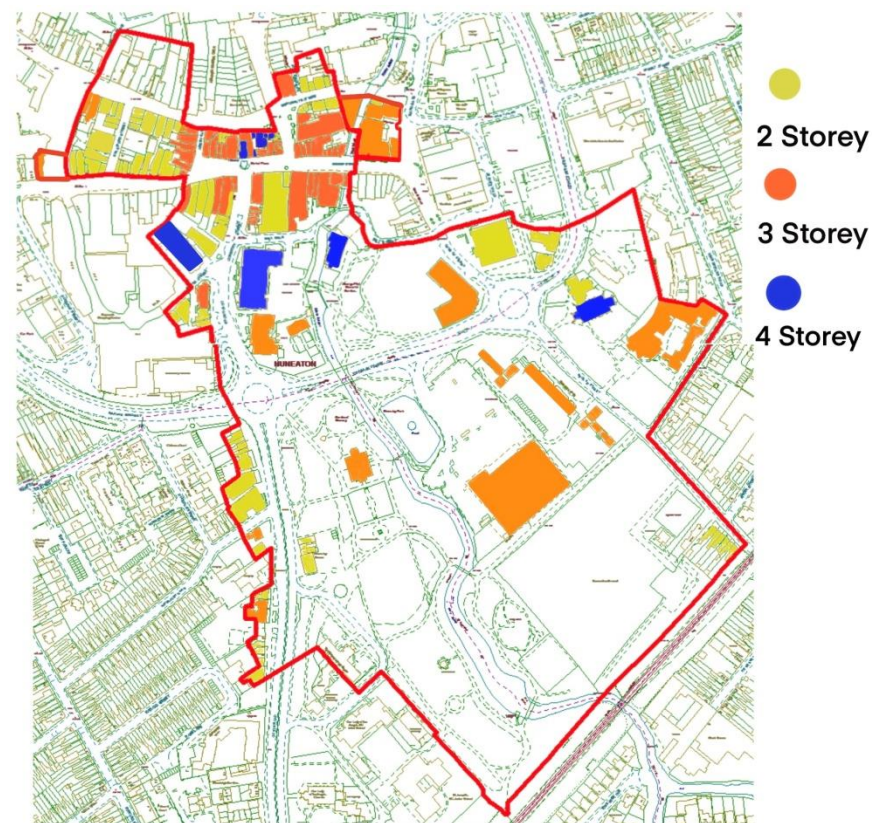


Figure 16: Building Storey Height

5.6.2 In the centre of the Conservation Area most buildings are three storeys high. These are mainly located around Market Place and ancillary streets. Beyond the central area two storey buildings become more prevalent. Some street

corners are notable for the use of tall turrets which are generally higher than the main building itself.

- Coventry Street is composed of buildings two storeys high on the western side and three storeys high on the east side.
- Bridge Street is of a uniform height with buildings three storeys high on both sides.
- Newdegate Street is generally occupied with buildings three storeys high in central and western areas with occasional two storeys and four storeys. Newdegate Street in the east is characterised by two storey buildings.
- Queens Road is of a uniform height with building heights of two storeys.
- Coton Road is mainly composed of building of two storeys.

5.6.3 The maximum building height in the Conservation Area is 22 metres, 62% of buildings are between 10 - 20 metres in height, 38% of buildings are less than 10 metres high<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Emu Analytics <https://buildingheights.emu-analytics.net/?x=-1.4617781888528043&y=52.521167605044894&z=15.170439853056926> (Accessed 23.11.2020).

## 5.7 Building Materials

5.7.1 The predominant building material in the Conservation Area is mainly brick, older buildings often have some stone dressings to window heads and sills. Black and white mock-timber framing also occasionally appears. The architecture ranges from relatively plain brick frontages to the lavish ornamentation. The buildings associated with banks in particular contain lavish architectural ornament in stone or terracotta. Inter-war buildings by contrast are typically much more restrained usually adopting a form of 'strippeddown' Classicism; whilst post-war buildings generally eschew architectural detailing altogether and are therefore essentially 'astylar' without style. Rendered facades are also common within the Conservation Area. The render is generally painted pale, off-white colours and can be seen on former town houses.





Figure 17: Brick frontage with stone dressing, Abbey Road



Figure 18: Edwardian brick building, two storeys with ornate turret, corner Abbey Street and Stratford Street



Figure 19: Former bank building, baroque freestyle, stone and brick materials, corner Newdegate Street



Figure 20: Interwar years development, 1926, brick, corner Coventry Street



Figure 21: Post-war development, 1970s brighter red brick, no architectural details, Queens Road

## 5.8 Materials Palette



Figure 22: Materials Palette

## 5.9 Architectural features and details

### Windows

- 5.9.1 Windows in the Conservation Area are generally square headed although there are examples of arched windows. There are generally timber-framed windows, older buildings having multiple smaller panes. Original metal windows can be found on some inter-war buildings.
- 5.9.2 The window reveals in the Conservation Area are generally simple but there are also examples of brick detailed surrounds, and stone lintels and sills.
- 5.9.3 There are many examples of sash windows on the upper floors of buildings. The sash windows are generally timber-framed casement windows although steel framed can be seen in commercial buildings built between 1920s and 1940s. Sliding sash windows are the prevalent opening. The timber-frames are generally painted white, although there are some exceptions painted with darker colours.
- 5.9.4 Curved windows frames are in evidence on some corner buildings, providing an organic feel to street turnings.
- 5.9.5 Modern buildings have uPVC windows, also a number of historic buildings have had their windows inappropriately replaced with metal or uPVC units. Where opportunities arise, this replacement should be reversed.





Figure 23: Types of Windows

### Shop fronts and entrances

- 5.9.6 The main commercial section of the Conservation Area: Market Place, Newdegate Street, Abbey Street, Queens Road, Bridge Street, and ancillaries, is composed of ground floor levels occupied by shop fronts with entrances to the upper floors accessed via doors adjacent to the shop front or to the rear.
- 5.9.7 Doors to significant commercial and civic buildings are often grander and classical in design such as the entrance to the Town Hall.
- 5.9.8 Shop fronts in Abbey Street are generally of poor quality many with plastic advertisement fascias sometimes in strident colours. The quality of the shop fronts improves as the street approaches the central commercial area.
- 5.9.9 Coventry Street is the location of George Elliot Buildings of 1928 - typical of their period, with crisp hard-edged geometric forms making Classical references in their overall design and detailing, much of which survives intact including terracotta shop front surrounds to the ground floor, and original metal windows above.

5.9.10 Queens Road contains many poorly designed modern shop fronts, similarly at Coton Road roundabout junction is a short, much altered, late 19th century terrace with some unsightly inserted modern shop fronts.

5.9.11 Many of the shop fronts in the Conservation Area have been subject to improvement in the 1960s and 1970s. The period style includes oversized fascias, large areas of undivided plate glass, and aluminium window frames. Although well intentioned such designs do not consider the building as whole, failing to connect to the vertical aspects of the architecture. At street level there is a bland visual experience for the pedestrian.

5.9.12 Standardised corporate signage is in evidence which can result in a lack of distinction and are not always in sympathy with the architecture and materials of the buildings to which they are attached.



Figure 24: National companies can bring welcome visitors to the conservation area. However, the signage does not always integrate with the architectural building style.



Figure 25: George Elliot Buildings, Coventry Street, feature some original shop frontages.

### Decorative details and signage

5.9.13 There are a variety of late-Victorian and Edwardian civic and commercial buildings in the town centre. The more important are buildings generally built of red brick with terracotta or stone detailing. Quoining is in evidence on some buildings

on street corners, noticeably in buildings associated with banking, which give these structures a sense of presence and permanence.



Classical detailing is common in the Conservation Area for example; The George Eliot Hotel contains classical detailing, in the Georgian style, 29-30 Market Place & 31 Newdegate Street of c.1860 is simply designed with a restrained Classical three-storey façade in brick with painted stone dressings; 22 Abbey Street with Classically derived detailing of c.1903, The Town Hall neo-Classical Council House designed by architects Peacock and Bewlay of Birmingham and built between 1931 and 1934; The Art Gallery and Museum with Classical detailing in stone that has Mannerist touches such as large scale changes in its windows that echo French Neo-Classicism of the late 18th century.





Figure 26: Top; George Eliot Hotel. Bottom; Museum and Town Hall

5.9.14 Name and function plaques can also be found on some buildings in the Conservation Area.



Figure 27: Decorative Details and Signage



## Roofs and Chimneys

- 5.9.15 The Conservation Area contains a variety of form and pitch of roofs. Some buildings are topped with a steep pitch others a relatively shallow pitch, some are concealed behind brick parapets. Most of the roofs have slate or clay tiles.
- 5.9.16 Gables are a commonly used architectural feature in the Conservation Area. Most are simple in appearance; however, some are ornamented with decorative terracotta tiles such as the former Gate Temperance Hotel in Abbey Gate.
- 5.9.17 Modern buildings tend to have flat roofs and lack the character of older buildings.



Figure 28: Roofs in the Conservation Area

## Refuse Bins

5.9.18 Refuse bins can be problematic and detract from the character and appearance in the Conservation Area. Commercial and retail buildings are provided with large wheelie bins which are stored at the rear of the property; these are moved to the front on collection days. On collection days the bins can be unsightly.

5.9.19 There are few residential properties in Nuneaton Town Centre conservation area. Those properties often store the bins in front gardens and are collected from the pavement.



## 5.10 Boundary treatments

5.10.1 Boundary treatments refer to where private buildings meet the public realm. Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area are located in the commercial centre; these buildings are situated with direct access to the street and do not have a boundary. Some buildings have an entrance set back from the street.



5.10.2 Private dwellings in the Conservation Area are found mostly in Attleborough Road and Church Street. These buildings are traditionally bounded by low brick walls. These walls have, in places, been replaced by low fencing and hedges which harms the unity of terrace blocks. Dempster Court, is bounded by a service road which itself is surrounded by an open lawn area.



5.10.3 King Edward VI College is surrounded by a brick wall which is of a similar design and material as the building it surrounds. St Nicholas Parish Church is surrounded by a low retaining wall which forms the boundary. Riversley Park is surrounded by dense shrubbery which is in keeping with the open setting.



## 5.11 Important Views

5.11.1 Views are an important aspect of the Conservation Area as heritage assets can gain significance from their setting. This section of the appraisal considers how the townscape contributes towards the significance of heritage assets in the Conservation Area.

### View 1

5.11.2 The view from Coventry Street heading north is an important gateway to the Conservation Area and demonstrates the towns historic commercial centre. Key buildings are situated directly in front of the viewer; the former town hall with clock tower is locally listed as is the building adjoining. To the east is the George Eliot Buildings which contain rare examples of shop frontages which accord with the overall building design. On the right-hand street corner is the bank building which is a Grade II Listed Building.



Figure 29: View 1

### View 2

5.11.3 Queens Road eastwards toward Market Place is the entrance point for pedestrians approaching the Conservation Area from Abbey Street carpark and Ropewalk. The Conservation Area at this point only includes the buildings on the north side of the street. The red brick block paving contrasts positively with the rendered buildings and the absence of street furniture is another positive. The shop fronts are mostly of full height glazing which impacts negatively on the street scene.





Figure 30: View 2

### View 3

5.11.4 Further east of Queens Road is Market Place the towns historic commercial centre. There are many important heritage buildings at this viewpoint. The clock tower of locally listed no. 26 Market Place can be seen in the distance, other locally listed buildings can be seen to the

fore of the tower, stylish interwar development is to the north of the street which contributes positively to the view and a Grade II Listed building is to the south. Street furniture and overgrown trees contribute negatively to the view.



Figure 31: View 3

### View 4

5.11.5 The view from the corner of captures the Grade II listed buildings; no. 35 (Hawkins) , no. 39 (Santander) and locally listed no. 37 (JC Smith). The George Eliot Statue is located

in a spacious public area which provides a meeting space for people to gather.



Figure 32: View 4

### View 5

5.11.6 Kinetic views looking north along Coton Road, nos. 37-39 on the west side of the road are locally listed buildings. Riversley Park is on the east side of the road. The road leads directly to the town centre and demonstrates the towns historic residential character.



Figure 33: View 5 (Source: Google)

### View 6

5.11.7 View from Coton Road, an important historical setting in the town centre and represents the gateway into the town for motorists and other road users due to location of nearby car parking facilities. The Town Hall is a landmark building that with the former Council House adds height and scale to the street scene which represent the towns historic civic centre.



Figure 34: View 6

## 5.12 Setting

5.12.1 Setting is an important contribution towards the special interest of an area. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes a setting as; “The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to

the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”<sup>22</sup>.

5.12.2 Riversley Park is a positive contribution in the Conservation Area which provides an important green open space within the heart of the town centre. The formal gardens provide the ideal setting from the Nuneaton Museum and Art gallery.

5.12.3 The main streets in the Conservation Area were originally adapted for pedestrian use in the 1980s. The prioritising of streets for pedestrian use is a key part of the town centre setting. The streets are mainly composed of brick paving which can have a negative impact where buildings are also predominantly composed of red brick due to the lack of contrast.

5.12.4 The Conservation Area lies at the heart of the town centre which itself is surrounded by the A444 ring road. The ring road isolates key areas such as Riversley Park and St Nicolas Church from the town centre. The A444 is a busy traffic road and is adjacent to Riversley park. The traffic

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<sup>22</sup> National Planning Policy Framework pg. 71 [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431414/NPPF-2019.pdf)



noise in the park is very prominent in this area of the Conservation Area.

## 6. Character Area and Zones

Character areas are sub-areas of the Conservation Area that are distinguished or defined by various attributes or characteristics derived in the main from past and/or present land uses and their related patterns of ownership. These are reflected to varying degrees in the layout or pattern of the town's buildings and spaces, and in their individual appearance and character.

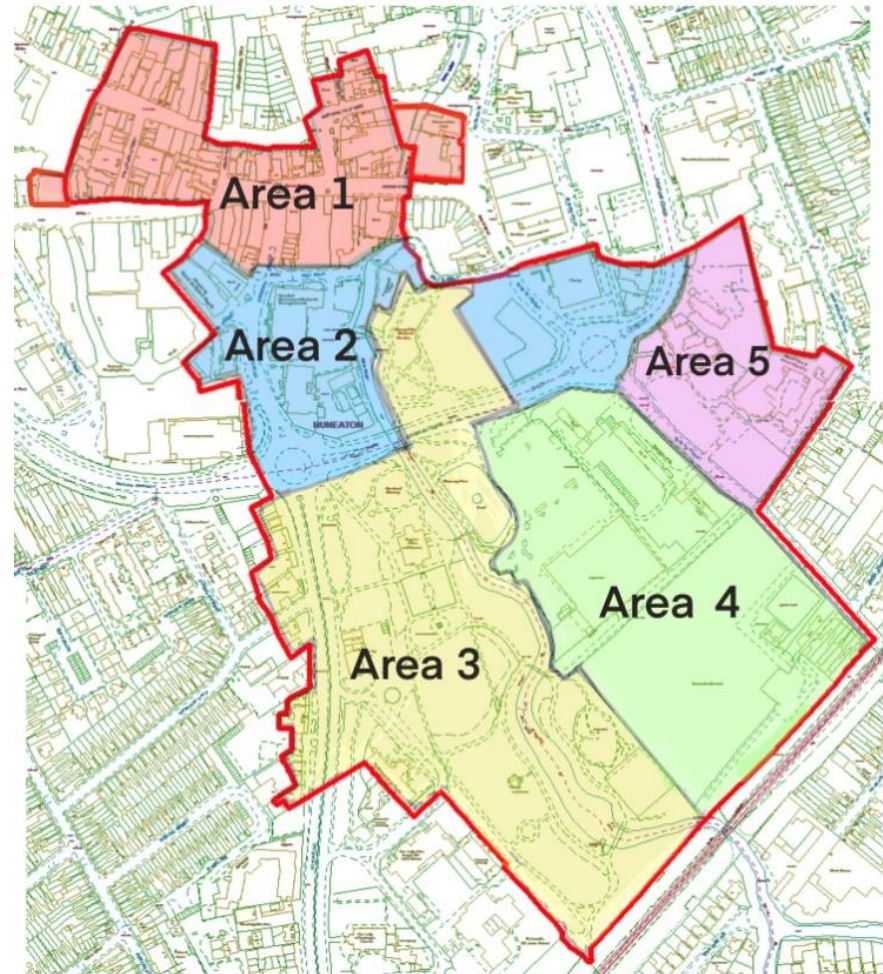
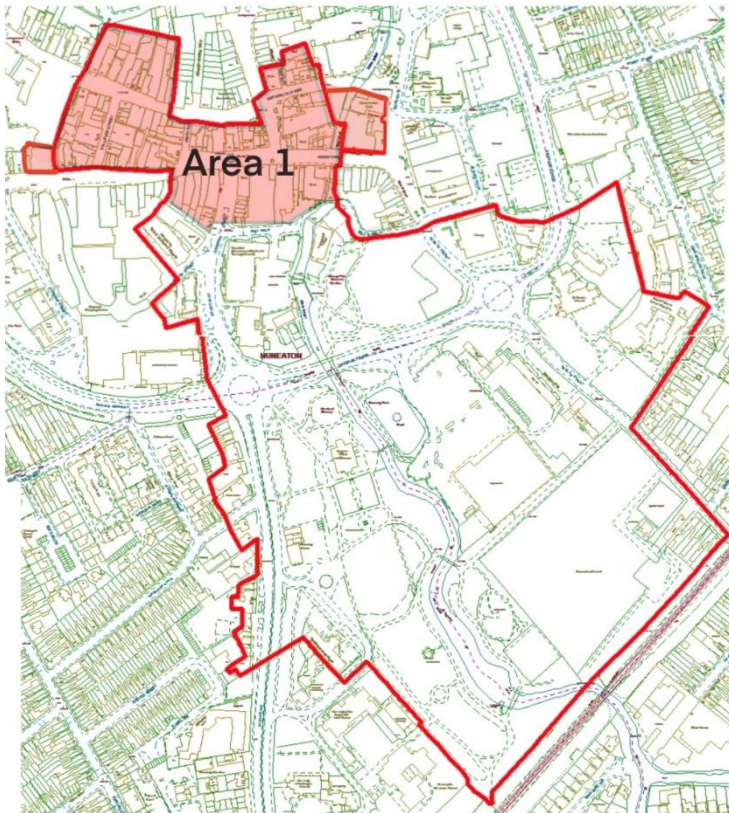


Figure 35: Conservation Area Zones

## 6.1 Character Area 1: Market Place and Historic Commercial Core



### Principal features

6.1.1 Principal features of special interest of this area and its characteristics include:

- Planned medieval street pattern of five principal routes converging on the marketplace at the heart of the town.
- Very large original rectangular medieval marketplace later filled with a planned rectangular island block of tenements at its centre.
- Broad principal streets of irregular width which until the late 19th century narrowed markedly where they joined the Market Place. This is still discernible along Queens Road and Abbey Street.
- Some characterful late-Victorian and Edwardian buildings including several associated with Reginald Stanley one of the town's most important political and industrial figures.
- Surviving rows of pre-1939 buildings lining stretches of the principal streets.
- A good small group of late 19th / early 20th century bank buildings on prominent corner sites in and around the Market Place.

- Good representation of Interwar buildings throughout the character area many of which retain original features typical of the period on their facades.

### Location and Topography

- 6.1.2 This character area has a roughly rectangular shape orientated east west and occupies the central third of the area enclosed by the ring road. It includes the Market Place and the five streets that converge on it – Abbey Street, Newdegate Street, Queens Road, Bridge Street, and Coventry Street.

### Townscape and Architectural Character

- 6.1.3 Within the character area buildings form rows with continuous frontages lining both sides of its constituent streets, and are a mix of two, three, and four storey buildings.
- 6.1.4 There are big scale changes apparent between the human scale of traditional pre-war buildings and the larger more alien scale of the majority of post war developments, particularly those along the south side of Bridge Street/ Market Place, and the north side of Newdegate Street. The

latter typically have wide frontages that have ignored historic plot divisions originating from the medieval town. The result, where such buildings predominate or are to be found in numbers, is a rather stark and barren streetscape.



Figure 36: Market Place and the narrow Bridge Street in the Distance. 1937<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council





Figure 37: Market place and widened Bridge Street. 2021

### Landmark Buildings

- 6.1.6 The area, despite being at the heart of the town, has no perceivable centre. Its civic or public spaces, other than its wide streets, are small and not well defined. The junction of Coventry Street and Market Place for example, whilst holding a water feature on the site of the historic market cross and marked by the tower of the former town hall, is sensed merely as a road junction and not as a space distinguishable from the rest of the Market Place. Indeed since the widening of Bridge Street in 1960, it is difficult to appreciate that Market Place is a space distinguishable from the rest of that street and Queens Road.

- 6.1.5 All streets have been pedestrianised, and their paving and landscaping schemes are now rather dated in design. Street trees have been abundantly planted, though many have grown too big for their locations and/or have been poorly sited directly in front of some of the towns better building facades.



Figure 38: Market Place Fountain

6.1.7 The most architecturally accomplished buildings in the town are indisputably buildings associated with banking. They are all on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural Interest, Grade II. Whilst not particularly large buildings they nevertheless impress with their assured designs and excellent craftsmanship.



Figure 39: 7 Market Place

6.1.8 The better quality individual non-statutorily listed buildings include the former Gate Temperance Hotel in Abbey Gate, 7 Market Place, 25 Market Place, 29-30 Market Place & 31 Newdegate Street, George Elliot Hotel (formerly the Bull), the former Liberal Club, and former Scala Cinema in Abbey



Street, and the Art Deco Co-operative Society building in Queens Road.



Figure 40: 23a Queens Road (Former Co-op Building)

6.1.9 Among other buildings particularly worthy of mention for their architectural historic interest are two surviving groups of buildings that developed into early department stores - the former JC Smiths building (nos.1-3) at the east end of the town centre in Bridge Street.

### Street by Street Assessment

#### The Market Place & Bridge Street

6.1.10 Bridge Street and Market Place have lost their individual identities as a result of street widening of the former in 1959/60. The two are therefore considered together here as a single entity.



Figure 41: Bridge Street towards Market Place. 1950s<sup>24</sup>

6.1.11 There is a stark contrast along the street between north and south side. The north side retains continuous and varied rows of traditional three-storey 19th century and early 20th c buildings. All are built at a human scale using traditional materials. Most employ a familiar architectural vocabulary derived from Classicism to ornament facades with elements such as eaves cornices and window architraves. This adds interest to facades when viewed at close quarters. Buildings

on the south side by contrast are at a much larger scale; over-scaled in fact for the street and their historic neighbours opposite. They have ignored the plot divisions of earlier buildings thereby coarsening the 'grain' of building development and eradicating all traces of medieval plot boundaries. Elevations lack traditional detailing and architectural ornament and present little or no interest to the eye when viewed from either near or far.

6.1.12 An interesting collection of buildings comprising the former JC Smiths Department store, now Debenhams, occupies the length of built frontage on the north side of the street east of the town bridge. The most notable is a late Victorian red brick and stone building with large-bracketed timber eaves typical of the 1880s commercial architecture. This currently lies outside the Conservation Area.

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<sup>24</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



6.1.13 Further west the George Elliot Hotel together with 3&4 Bridge Street are an important visual presence being among the few early-mid 19th century buildings (parts possibly earlier) to survive in the town. They present a long, three storey, elegantly proportioned, stucco façade to the street with simple Classical detailing, in the Georgian style. This block is handsomely terminated by the architecturally accomplished banking building.



6.1.14 Occupying the opposite corner site to Newdegate Street is the locally listed 28-30 Market Place & 31 Newdegate Street of c. 1860. It is simply designed with a restrained Classical three-storey façade, this time in brick with painted stone dressings. Its rounded corner, articulated brick facades, and boldly projecting cornice 'turns the corner' with Newdegate Street in a pleasant manner.



Figure 42: 28-30 Market Place 1966<sup>25</sup>



Figure 43: 28-30 Market Place. 2021

Next to this is 26/27 Market Place, part of the old former Town Hall façade of the late 19th century, and again locally listed. The upper floors of the elevation, display a mix of details derived from Classical and other sources and they make a significant streetscape contribution, though overlarge street trees partly obscure them from view. The existing shop fronts to the very tall ground floor are poor

<sup>25</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council

visually The remaining third of the former Town Hall frontage is surmounted by a prominent lead and timber clock tower which is an important local landmark and skyline feature. It stands next to 25 Market Place, a building that occupies a prominent position terminating northward views along Coventry Street. This building is very conservative in its use of a Queen Anne / early Georgian architectural style for its inter-war date, and may perhaps be taking its cue from the Edwardian late 17th century style of architecture displayed at 35 Newdegate Street. It also complements the more typical for the period Neo-Georgian Town Hall in Coventry Street (see Area 2 below).



Figure 44: Market Place. 1950s<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council





Figure 45: 26 Market Place, Old Town Hall, and Clock Tower

### Queens Road

6.1.15 Queens Road has always had less civic presence than Abbey Street with a greater preponderance of lesser quality two-storey domestic Victorian buildings. Only part of its northern side is included in the Conservation Area and older buildings along it are all of this type. They generally fail to

provide a satisfactory sense of enclosure owing to their low height relative to street width particularly where the latter broadens just beyond the Market Place. They have also generally suffered from ill-considered and unsympathetic alterations in the past, particularly to upper floor windows. Despite their shortcomings surviving Victorian buildings within the street are valuable historic assets that need to be retained and enhanced by the reinstatement of missing original features and improvements to their shop fronts.

6.1.16 The architectural quality of modern buildings, which are in the majority in the street, is generally indifferent both in terms of design and choice of materials. They have tended to follow national fashionable commercial architectural trends that date quickly and weaken local distinctiveness. Those on the south side of the street and outside the Conservation Area are particularly poor.





Figure 46: Queens Road eastwards towards Market Place

### Abbey Street

6.1.17 This is a broad street adopting a sweeping northwestward curve. On the basis of its late Victorian and Edwardian commercial architecture atmosphere. Its status here is now that of a secondary shopping street whose civic and

commercial presence rapidly peters out as the ring road is approached.

6.1.18 Groups of predominantly three-storey and some two-storey 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings continuously line the street with the occasional later 20th century replacement (usually only two storeys high). They provide a strong sense of enclosure. The best buildings in the street are two associated with Reginald Stanley - the exuberant and eccentric former Gate Temperance Hotel on the corner with Stratford Street, and the more sober red brick and terracotta former Liberal Club. The latter was designed by his architect F J Yates of Birmingham who may also have designed the Hotel.



6.1.19 Worthy of mention is the locally listed former Scala Cinema of 1914 notable in the townscape for its Classically derived façade.



Figure 47: The Scala Cinema the morning after closure, Abbey Street, Nuneaton.  
28 August 1977<sup>27</sup>



Figure 48: 121-122 Abbey Street Former Scala Cinema

<sup>27</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council

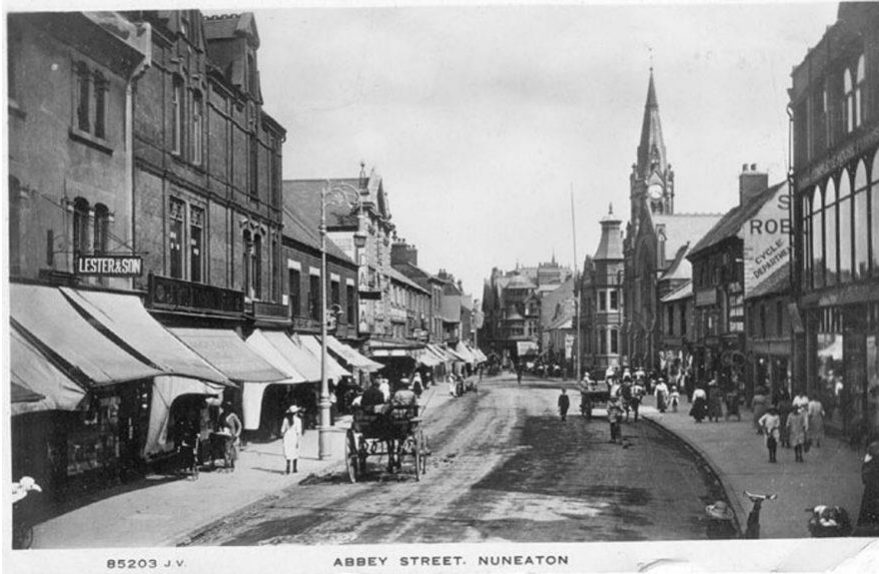


Figure 49: Abbey Street Nuneaton. 1920s<sup>28</sup>

### Newdegate Street

6.1.20 The street contains some of the best, along with arguably some of the worst, of Nuneaton's buildings. What could have been a most satisfactory and pleasing area of townscape, building on the success of its bank architecture, was marred visually by the incongruous building 21-25 Newdegate Street.



6.1.21 Architectural high points include 20 Newdegate Street (former HSBC Bank) occupying a prominent corner site, 39 (Hawkins) Newdegate Street, another former bank, which terminates views along Abbey Street and Newdegate Street from the west, and No. 35 Newdegate Street (Santander).

<sup>28</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council





Figure 50: Nos. 35, 37, 39 Newdegate Street in the foreground. No 20 Newdegate Street in the background

### Coventry Street

6.1.22 This is a broad and short street. Views northward are terminated by the north side of the Market Place in the form of the conspicuous and tall three-and-a-half-storey red brick Neo-Georgian façade of 25 Market Place, and part of the former town hall building with its distinctive clock tower.

6.1.23 The east side of the street is strongly and appropriately enclosed by an almost continuous run of tall three-storey buildings beginning with Barclays Bank –once again on a corner site with Market Place. It is a substantial ornate building in brick and terracotta, and very much in line with the exuberant commercial architectural fashion of the late 19th century. Following on after a narrow gap are the George Elliot Buildings of 1928 - again very typical of their period, with crisp hard-edged geometric forms making Classical references in their overall design and detailing, much of which survives remarkably intact including terracotta shop front surrounds to the ground floor, and original metal windows above.



6.1.24 The east side is less successfully enclosed as a result of street widening in the inter-war period. This has left side elevations of buildings exposed that were never intended to

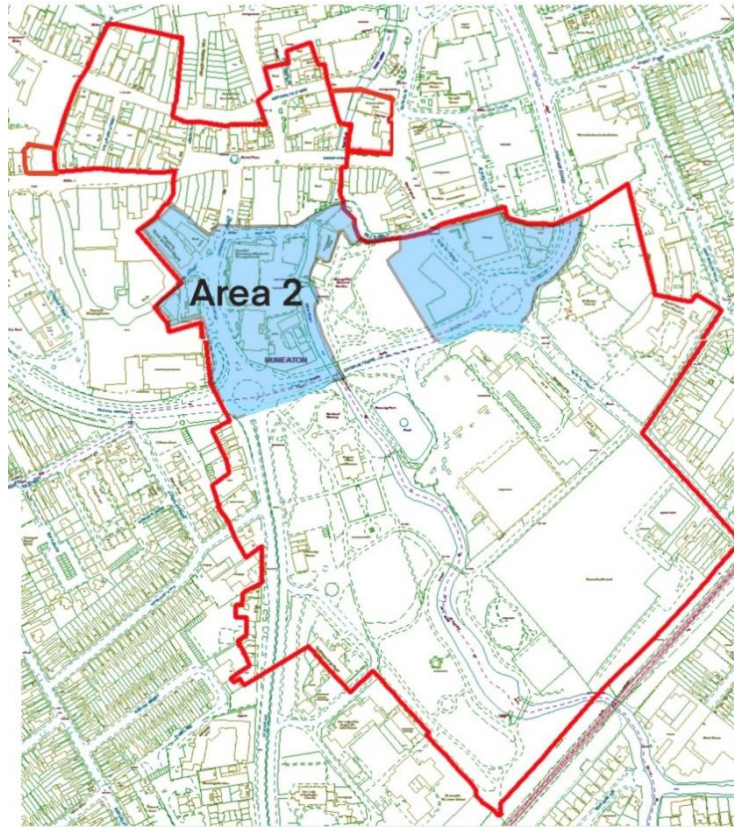
be seen as part of a principal street frontage. The flat roofed and rendered two-storey elevations running back from 6 Market Place are poor visually both in scale and in their blank rendered facades that lack good quality architectural detailing. Next to it to the south stands another late 1920s commercial block 7-15 Coventry Street again quite well detailed and retaining many original features. Its height and scale though, being only two storeys, results in rather weak enclosure of the street. The shop front to No.9 is included on the local list.



Figure 51: Coventry Street



## 6.2 Character Area 2: Civic and Administrative Area



### Principal features

- Post-war redevelopment of a bomb damaged area to the south and east of the town centre comprising mainly of large freestanding buildings of the 1960s
- Subject to design proposals by the Modernist architect and town planner Frederick Gibberd who attempted to create an identifiable civic centre for the town.
- Neo-Classical Council House designed by architects Peacock and Bewlay of Birmingham and built between 1931 and 1934.
- Good small and concentrated group of late 19th century red brick and stone public buildings including the Congregational Chapel in Chapel Street, and the former police station, magistrates court, and gaol, at the corner of Chapel Street and Coton Road.

### Location and Topography

- 6.2.1 This character area forms a bi-lobed east-west area to the south of the town within the ring road from Coventry Road/ Coton Road/Chapel Street in the west to Vicarage Street/Ring Road in the east. It is interrupted at its middle by the incursion of the George Elliott memorial gardens that

forms part of Character Area 3 (see below), and is bounded to the south by the ring road and to the north by Mill Walk/Mill Street.



6.2.2 The area's streets are Church Street, part of Coton Road, and Chapel Street.

### Coton Road/Chapel Street

6.2.3 The length of Coton Road down to the ring road roundabout along with Chapel Street is included in this character area. Up until the late 19th century it had been largely undeveloped being an area prone to flooding. From that time, it became an area for large religious and public buildings beginning with the police station, magistrates court and gaol on a triangular site at the junction of Chapel Street/Coventry Street/Coton Road.



Figure 52: Nuneaton Police Station and Magistrates Court, Coton Road. 1951<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



Figure 53: Former Nuneaton Police Station and Magistrates Court, Coton Road.  
2021

6.2.4 These were followed closely by the Coton Road Congregational Chapel of 1903, which replaced a late 18th century chapel on the same site. Following the culverting of Wash Brook south of Mill Walk, the opposite side of the street became an obvious site for the large and impressive Neo-Classical Georgian Town Hall of 1934. In 1993 it was joined by a block of Council offices to the south.



Figure 54: Coton Road. Town Hall on the right with Market Place in the distance. 1960s<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council





Figure 55: Coton Road. Notice how unmanaged trees and street furniture obscure the view. 2021

### Townscape and Architectural

6.2.5 Character The townscape character of this area comprises predominantly of a relatively loose aggregation of large discreet, mostly public buildings of mid/late 20th century date. They stand within a mixed setting of landscaped open space, car parks, streets, rear servicing areas to shops fronting the Market Place and riverside. Running through them is Mill Walk and Mill Street - part service road and part pedestrian footpath of poor general amenity that passes by

and over a short, unprepossessing, heavily engineered section of the River Anker. The latter is traversed by a couple of poor-quality concrete and metal pedestrian bridges of the mid – late 20th century

6.2.6 To the east of this area, around the library and immediately west of the ring road (and continuing north beyond the present conservation area boundary), the townscape is very much one in transition and lacking a coherent identity.



Figure 56: Nuneaton Library

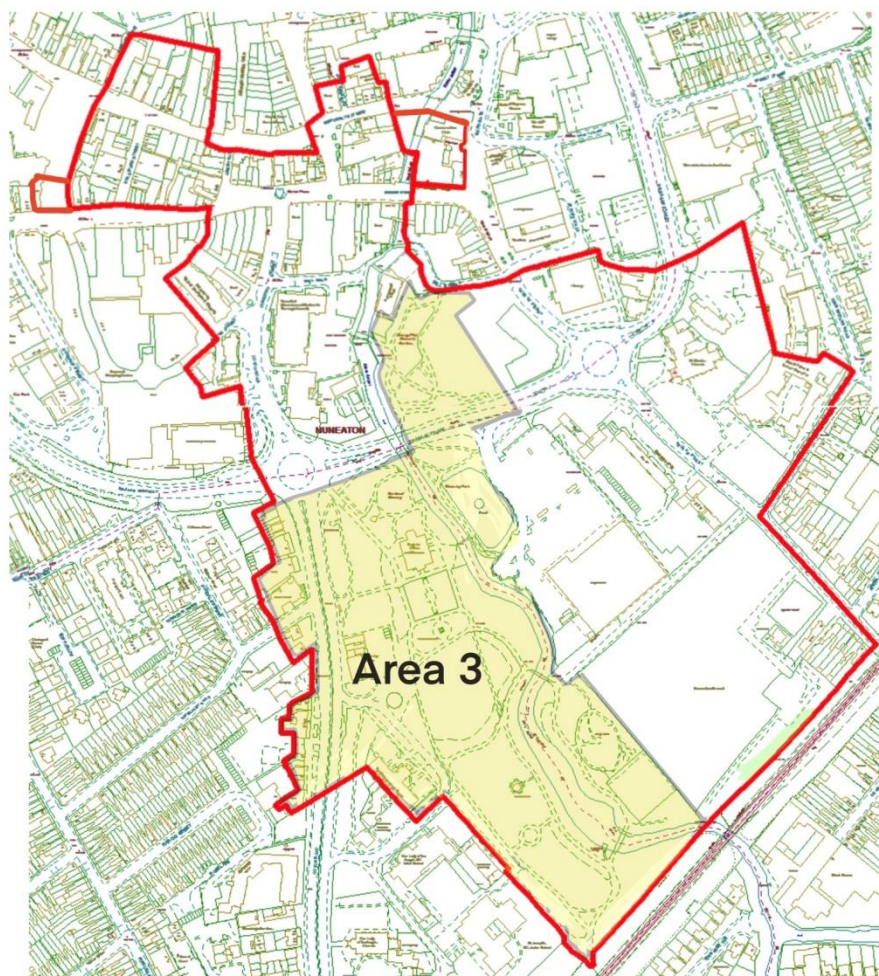


6.2.7 By contrast the most coherent area of townscape is the group of Victorian public buildings at the corner of Chapel Lane and Coton Road, Important or key buildings are the Neo-Classical Council House of 1934 by Peacock and Bewlay , the above-mentioned group of Victorian civic buildings comprising the former police station, magistrates court and gaol, and the near -contemporary buttressed and pinnacle ‘freestyle’ Gothic Congregational (now URC) chapel in Chapel Street. All of the latter share the late Victorian fashion for brick facades dressed with stone or terracotta detailing. They also add significantly to the skyline interest of Coventry Street where the cupolas and fleches of the chapel and the former police station together the clock tower in the Market Place combine to noteworthy townscape effect.



Figure 57: Chapel Street Nuneaton United Reformed Church

### 6.3 Character Area 3 Riversley Park, George Elliot gardens, and Coton Road



#### Principal Features

- Edwardian Riversley Park retaining much of its original layout
- George Elliot Memorial Gardens linking Riversley Park to the town centre
- Art Gallery and Museum
- The River Anker experienced as a significant feature through the park
- A series of varied 19th century buildings along the west side of Coton Road

#### Location and Topography

- 6.2.8 An irregular linear area of land mostly lying along the west side of the river Anker, bounded to the west by Coton Road, to the east by Sainsbury's Supermarket and King Edward VI playing field, to the south by the railway line, and to the north by Mill Walk.

#### Townscape and Architectural Character

- 6.2.9 This is an area of well-treed, landscaped, parkland through which runs the river Anker. Unlike in the town centre area

the river here plays a prominent role in the landscape The Park comprises a series of formal and informal spaces articulated and adorned by trees and shrubs and linked by an intricate network of footpaths. The formal gardens with traditional planting beds are laid out at the north end immediately to the south of the art gallery and museum building, which is placed on the garden's central axis. Also on this axis and terminating it to the south is the granite cross Memorial of 1914-18 and nearby Boer War memorial both of which are Grade II listed<sup>31 32</sup>



Figure 58: Riversley Park and Bandstand. 1950s<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> [Nuneaton War Memorial, Non Civil Parish - 1438676 | Historic England](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Nuneaton Boer War Memorial, Non Civil Parish - 1438689 | Historic England](#)

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<sup>33</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council)





Figure 59: Museum and Art Gallery, and Memorial, Riversley Park , 1950s<sup>34</sup>



Figure 60: Museum and Art Gallery, and Memorial, Riversley Park

- 6.2.10 The Art Gallery and Museum is a cuboidal building in red brick with Classical detailing in stone that has Mannerist touches such as large-scale changes in its windows that echo French Neo-Classicism of the late 18th century. It forms a focal point and meeting place for the park. The park extends across to the east side of the river where there are two bowling greens accessed by footbridges. The nearby pond is a former reservoir once serving the demolished Union Wool and Leather Company works and belongs to

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<sup>34</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



Sainsbury's supermarket. Trees and water are in abundance creating a very attractive and relaxing environment close to the busy commercial centre of the town. To the west trees help to screen the busy traffic laden Coton Road from the body of the park, though Riversley House, an office block of the 1970s and its associated car park are discordant elements.

- 6.2.11 The railway embankment provides strong green enclosure to the park along its southeast boundary whilst the King Edward VI playing fields (see Area 4 below) act as an important buffer zone between the park and the built-up areas east of the heavily trafficked Attleborough Road. Enclosure is less satisfactory on the western flank with flat roofed buildings standing close to the park boundary separated from the footpath by a steel palisade fence.

### Coton Road

- 6.2.12 This is now a wide pedestrian-hostile dual carriageway road where the car dominates the environment. The central reservation and kerbs are railed with unsightly metal barriers towards the ring road which restricts pedestrian access and movement. Trees to Riversley Park mostly enclose the east

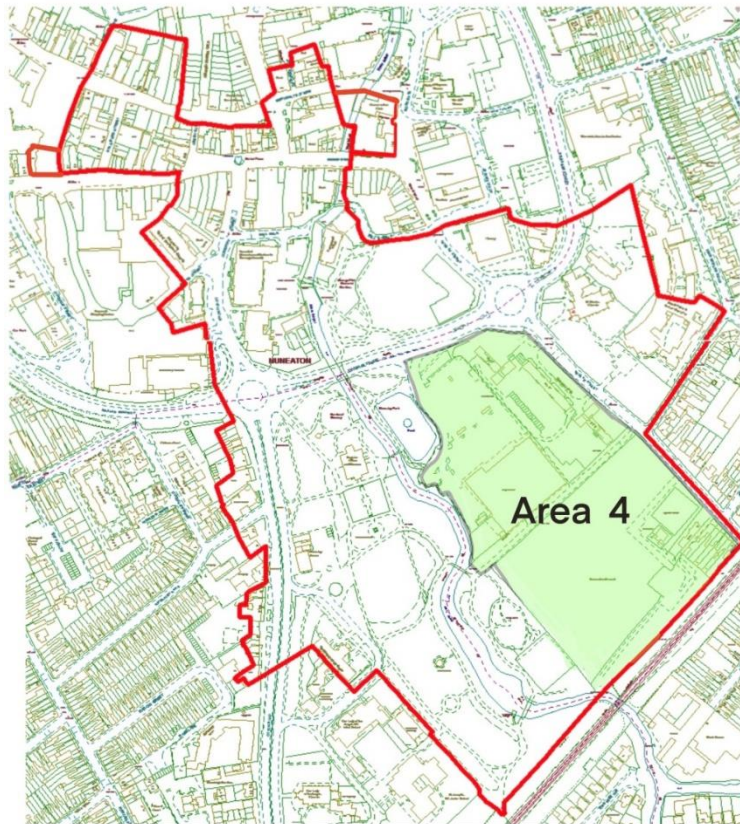
side whilst on the west the existing conservation area boundary has been drawn to include a series of good quality, mostly detached, 19th century houses. At its northern end adjacent to the Ring Road at the Coton Road roundabout junction is a short, much altered, late 19th century terrace with some unsightly inserted modern shop fronts, 18- 22 Coton Road.



Figure 61: Coton road, Nuneaton. 1900s<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council

## 6.4 Character Area 4: Park Fringe



### Principal Features

- Large open green space of King Edward VI playing field with many mature trees of landscape importance around its perimeter.
- Attractive tree lined footpath linking Attleborough Road to Riversley Park.
- Dempster Court designed by Frederick Gibberd again with important trees in landscaped areas.

### Location and Topography

- 6.4.1 A roughly rectangular block of flat land bounded by the ring-road to the northwest, Riversley Park to the southwest, Church Road and Attleborough Road to the north east, and the railway embankment to the southeast.

### Townscape and Architectural Character

- 6.4.2 This character area possesses limited inherent townscape and architectural interest. Its value resides largely in its open green spaces that act as a green buffer between Riversley Park and Attleborough Road, together with the mature trees that such spaces allow. Sainsburys supermarket is a large single-storey building of brick with 'black and white' panel

cladding and pitched roofs above, fronted by an extensive car park. The latter is accessed off the ring road. The building presents a long blank elevation to the footpath linking Riversley Park with Attleborough Road but is otherwise quite well tucked away amongst trees and shrubs and does not intrude.

6.4.3 Beyond Sainsburys to the east, overlooking Church Street and the large ring road roundabout, are the apartment blocks of Dempster Court. These are typically austere post-war brick and render L-shaped three storey flats with shallow pitched roofs. They form part of Gibberds vision for Nuneaton which included the library he designed over a decade facing them on the north side of the traffic island. The flats were clearly of a form height and orientation intended to form satisfactory visual enclosure to the large space occupied by the roundabout, and in this they have largely succeeded. They are of interest primarily as examples of the work of a major architectural figure and urban designer of the mid-20th century.



Figure 62: Dempster Court flats seen from the corner of Vicarage Road. 1952<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



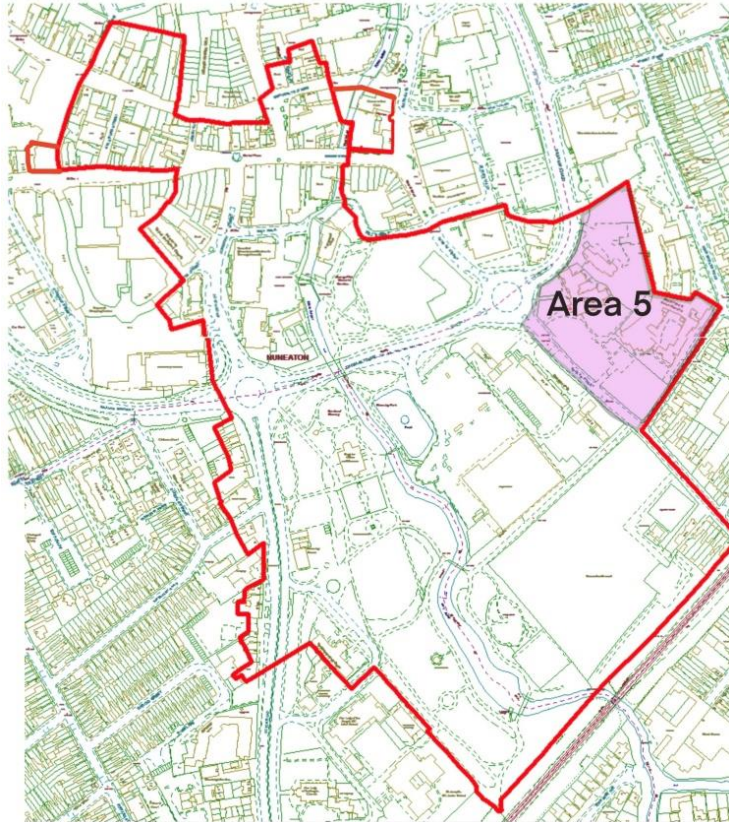
Figure 63: Dempster Court, Church Street

and the southern end of the Park. The trees around its perimeter, including those along the path, make an important amenity contribution to the Conservation Area. The playing field also serves to distance Riversley Park from the noise and traffic along Attleborough Road to the west. At its eastern corner along the west side of Attleborough Road is the small row of houses and hotel previously mentioned. They are generally unremarkable with little to distinguish them from other housing of the same date outside the Conservation Area except for the prominent corner turret to the hotel.

6.4.4 To the south of these is the large former King Edward VI School playing field, bounded to the north east by Attleborough Road and to the south east by an embankment to the railway line. It is included in the area for its amenity value as a sizeable area of open green space providing an attractive tree lined approach to Riversley Park. The path known as Lovers Walk (marred in part by the rear service side of the supermarket) has an open aspect southward offering middle distance towards the railway embankment



## 6.5 Character Area 5: The Church, Vicarage, and Grammar Schools.



### Principal Features

- Church and churchyard of St Nicholas

- Former King Edward VI School
- Old Grammar School
- Former Vicarage
- Mature trees and green spaces associated with the church

### Location and Topography

- 6.5.1 This is a small area around the Church that includes its former vicarage and associated former Old Grammar School and its replacement, the King Edward VI College. It is located to the south east of the town beyond the ring road and the large Church Street traffic Island and is bounded by Church Street the ring road and part of King Edward Street.

### Townscape and Architectural Character

- 6.5.2 This church-related group stands divorced from the town and is to a large extent dominated by the ring road and the large Church Street traffic island when approaching from the town centre. They are individual free-standing buildings set within sizeable grounds containing many mature trees of townscape value that provide a complimentary green setting and welcome relief to the dense urban area within the ring



road. The traffic island destroys any sense of continuity of Church Street as a street to either side of the ring road.



Figure 64: King Edward VI Grammar School, Nuneaton. 1900s<sup>37</sup>



Figure 65: King Edward VI Grammar School, Nuneaton

- 6.5.3 The tower of the church seen among trees is still a prominent feature of the local area in views from Church Street within the ring road despite recent large-scale construction of the Law Courts nearby. The churchyard, its boundary walls, surviving monuments, and particularly mature trees make an important contribution to the amenity of Attleborough road within the Conservation Area, though its historic value and character has been steadily eroded over the last fifty years.

<sup>37</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



Figure 66: St Nicolas Parish Church, Church Street

6.5.4 The vicarage is a 17th century brick building with a front of five shaped gables largely hidden from view behind a tall boundary brick walls along the ring road, the latter acting as a physical barrier to pedestrian access from the town.



Figure 67: The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Street

6.5.5 The former grammar school which stands a little apart from the other buildings of the group is by Clapton Rolfe - an Arts and Crafts architect from Oxford. Its design shows the influences of the major Victorian architects of the High Victorian period - Street and Butterfield in its Gothic motifs and of Norman Shaw in the tile-hanging. Extensive 20th century additions have been made affecting the immediate setting of the former school including the crescent shaped

addition in 'modern' style by Essex, Goodman and Suggitt of  
Birmingham.

## 7. Audit of Heritage Assets

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area is considered to be a heritage asset in its own right. The Conservation Area contains listed and unlisted buildings which contribute towards the special interest of the Conservation Area. There are also some buildings and structures that make no contribution or detract from the character of the Conservation Area.
- 7.1.2 This Section considers every building in the Conservation Area, and defines them within the following categories:
- Listed Buildings
  - Locally Listed Buildings
  - Positive Buildings (those that are not designated but add value to the Conservation Area)
  - Neutral Buildings
  - Detracting Buildings

- 7.1.3 The audit has been carried out by a visual examination from public roads and paths. The audit is not a detailed assessment of each individual building. It should not be assumed that the omission of any information is an indication that a feature or building is not important. The audit provides information as to the state of the buildings in the locality at the time of the review conducted in 2021. The ascribed values do not supersede any requirements set out in the NPPF or national guidance in relation to heritage assets. A detailed assessment of significance specific to a building or site within the Conservation Area should always be carried out prior to proposing any change.
- 7.1.4 A full gazetteer of the listed, locally listed and positive buildings is located in Appendix A

### 7.2 Listed Buildings

- 7.2.1 Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are designated for their architectural and/or historic interest.
- 7.2.2 Alterations, additions, or demolitions to listed buildings require Listed Building Consent, which allows local planning



authorities to make decisions that have been informed by an understanding of the building or the site's significance.

7.2.3 Outbuildings associated with listed buildings are likely to be within their 'curtilage'. That is, a building or structure which is associated with a listed building and has been since before July 1948. The curtilage listed structure is considered to be part of the listing and subject to the same Listed Building Consent procedures.

7.2.4 National and local planning policies recognise changes to other buildings or sites in the setting of a listed building can affect its special interest. Preserving or enhancing the setting of a listed building is a material consideration in planning decisions.

7.2.5 There is one Grade I listed building in the Conservation Area, St Nicolas Church and eleven Grade II listed buildings and structures in the Conservation Area.

## 7.3 Locally Listed Buildings

7.3.1 Locally listed buildings are those which do not meet the criteria for national designation as listed buildings but are of local interest and importance.

7.3.2 Locally listed buildings have a degree of significance, meriting consideration in planning decisions when changes are proposed.

7.3.3 There are twenty-two locally listed buildings or structures in the Conservation Area. The proposed boundary amendment would result in an additional two structures to the total.

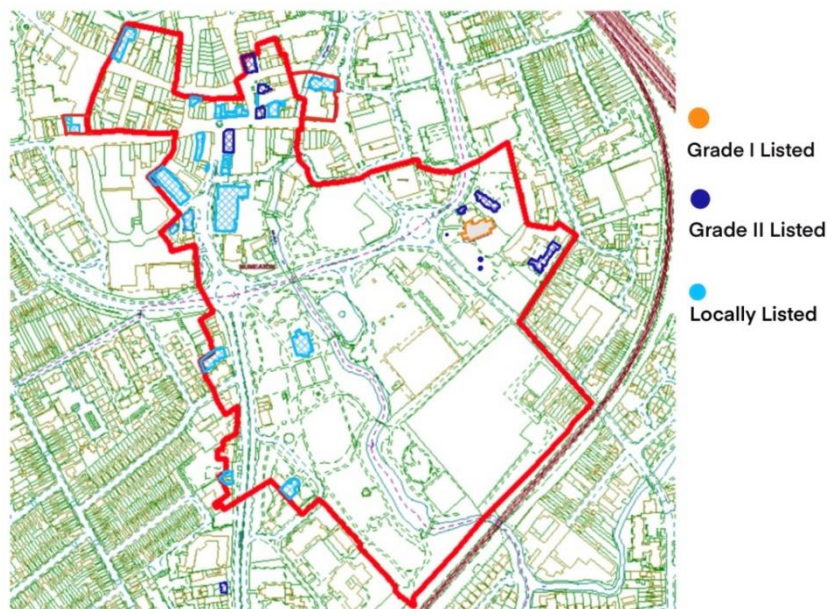


Figure 68: Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

## 7.4 Local List Addition

7.4.1 Historic England suggests a review of a conservation area is an opportunity to identify new buildings and structures suitable for local listed status.<sup>38</sup>

7.4.2 Locally listed buildings are non-designated heritage assets; structures, places, landscapes etc which are identified by Local Planning Authorities as having some heritage significance which should be considered in the planning process.

7.4.3 Historic England<sup>39</sup> and National Government<sup>40</sup> advocate the advice issued by Civic Voice with regards to establishing a criteria for inclusion on a local heritage list.

7.4.4 Civic Voice are a national organisation who have developed a guide on how to develop a local list<sup>41</sup> The toolkit was used to assess the suitability of additions to the Nuneaton and

<sup>38</sup> Historic England, , Local Heritage Listing, Historic England Advice Note 7, Para 16

<sup>39</sup> Historic England, , Local Heritage Listing, Historic England Advice Note 7, Para 28

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-heritage-list-campaign-call-for-expressions-of-interest/local-heritage-list-campaign-guidance>

<sup>41</sup> Civic Voice, Local Heritage Toolkit  
[http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Civic\\_Voice\\_Local\\_Heritage\\_List\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Civic_Voice_Local_Heritage_List_Guide.pdf)

Bedworth Borough Council Local List. As part of the 2021 review of the Conservation Area, Nuneaton Library has been identified as a building to include on the local list.

- 7.4.5 The Criteria and reasoning are detailed below:
- 7.4.6 **Rarity** -. Nuneaton Library is a unique building in the local area. The Library was instigated as part of the civic expansion of the town which began in 1946 and continued into the 1960s. The project also included a police station and magistrate's court, the magistrate's court has since been demolished. The Library is the most noteworthy example of architecture from the period.
- 7.4.7 **Representativeness** – The building represents a distinct architectural period of post war reconstruction. The style of the building is a softer version of modern British architecture for the period. The erection of the library also represents a post war period where nationally there was a focus on building new libraries, funding for libraries declined in the 1960s with authorities turning to prefabricated buildings as a

cheaper alternative to the bespoke design of Nuneaton's library.<sup>42</sup>

- 7.4.8 **Architectural Interest** – The building uses modern materials but is influenced by neoclassical architecture which typically emphasises symmetry and geometry. The building is of stone-faced concrete piers which support the weight of the structure and full faced windows which give the building an open feeling. The freize is a decorative band with a light grey mosaic with semi-circular clerestory windows. The entrance features semi-circular windows which are projected forward over the metal and glass entrance lobby.
- 7.4.9 **Townscape Value** – The Library is a key landmark building and contributes strongly to the townscape in this part of the Conservation Area. The building marks the entrance point to the town centre and is clearly identifiable as a building of Nuneaton and not another town.
- 7.4.10 **Historic Association (with a person)** - The Library was designed by a nationally known architect and town planner,

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<sup>42</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-culture-entertainment/heag109-culture-and-entertainment-lsg/>

Frederick Gibberd. Gibberd was born in Coventry and attended the Birmingham School of Architecture and was employed by Nuneaton Council. Gibberd's work can be found throughout the country and included the notable Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral<sup>43</sup> and Regent's Park Mosque. He wrote an influential book *Town Design* regarding his interest in 'visual planning'; and became an international authority on the subject. A book on his works was written in 2017 entitled simply 'Frederick Gibberd<sup>44</sup>'.



Figure 69: Nuneaton Library. 1960s<sup>45</sup>

## 7.5 Positive buildings

7.5.1 Buildings which do not meet the criteria for inclusion on the local list but still make a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area are categorised as positive buildings.

7.5.2 Criteria for identifying positive contributors include:

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<sup>43</sup> [Gibberd - History](#)

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/books/id/52132/>

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<sup>45</sup> Reproduced from the "Our Warwickshire" website © Warwickshire County Council



- Position and presence within the streetscape;
- Use of materials, architectural motifs or detailing;
- Scale and massing;
- Relationship with neighbouring buildings, both physical and historical;
- Associations with notable architects or other historical figures; and
- Historical uses.

7.5.3 The locations of the positive buildings in the Conservation Area are shown on Figure XX the details are found in Appendix A.

## 7.6 Neutral and Negative Contribution

7.6.1 Buildings which do not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are categorised as either neutral buildings or negative buildings.

7.6.2 Neutral buildings are those which neither make a positive or negative contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Proposals which affect neutral buildings could

enhance the Conservation Area through high quality design and use of quality building materials.

7.6.3 Negative buildings are considered to detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This may be due to their scale and massing, design, materiality, condition or use, or a combination of the above. Negative buildings have potential to enhance the Conservation Area through refurbishment, demolition and/or replacement.

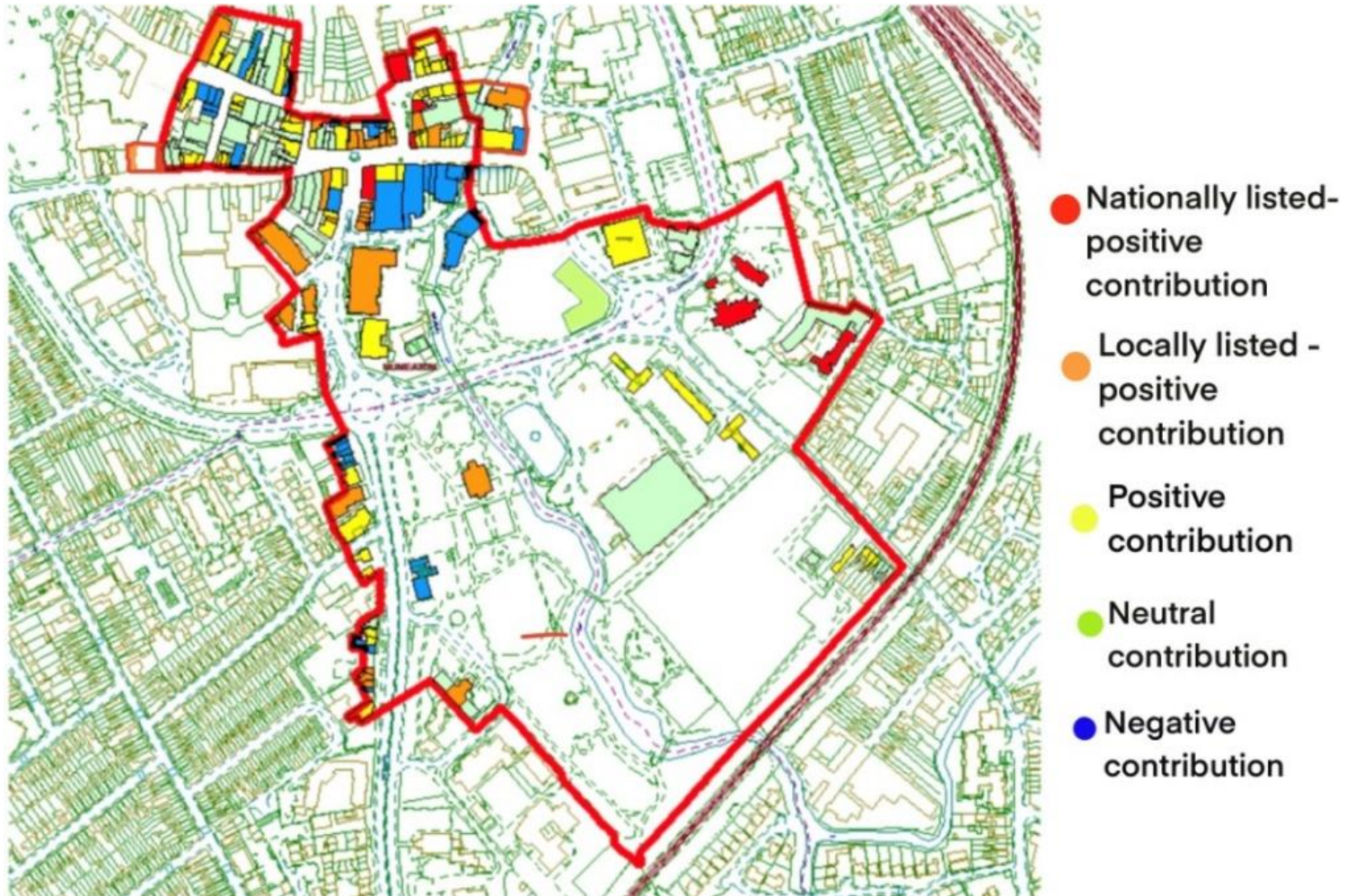


Figure 70: Individual Building Contribution to Character of the Conservation Area

## 8. Assessment of Condition

8.1.1 Structural changes to the economy mean town centres are under increased economic pressure. The Conservation Area is mainly composed of commercial activities and is unlikely to escape these pressures. Town centre monitoring undertaken in 2019 shows there were 23 vacant ground floor units in the Conservation Area.

8.1.2 The former Debenhams building located in Newdegate Street/Bridge Street is a large irregular shaped building which may be difficult to occupy in its current form. The front of the building is locally listed, whilst the side entrance on Bridge Street has a positive effect on the Conservation Area. Future designs should look to the vertical aspects of the building to create a frontage that recognises the integrity of the buildings.



8.1.3 The former HSBS building in Newdegate Street has been unoccupied for several years. The building is Grade II listed, the interior is apparently in a state of disrepair.

8.1.4 The square in Newdegate Street featuring the George Eliot statue is an area of potential for the Conservation Area. There are many positive buildings in this area which could be enjoyed if there was a quality public realm. The current form looks tired, and there is an abundance of street furniture that obscures views of historic buildings.



Figure 71: Street Furniture Obscuring Key Building



8.1.5 The ebb and flows of businesses mean signage is a source of constant change in the Conservation Area.

Unsympathetic signage which does work in sympathy with the building design and the wider setting of the Conservation Area can have a negative impact to the special character of the area. There are numerous examples of signage which detracts from the overall look of the host building.



Figure 72: Signage not in sympathy with the host building

8.1.6 Street cafés with outdoor seating can add to the enjoyment and add theatre to the Conservation Area. Similarly shop displays which extend outside the premises can add variety and visual interest. However, improvised street screening and pavement displays also have a negative impact on the Conservation Area and the wider street scene. There are examples in the Conservation Area which detract from the host building and surrounding area.



8.1.7 Trees need to be carefully managed. There are examples of unmanaged trees which obscure the views of buildings which make a positive contribution towards the Conservation Area.





8.1.9 Street signage and bollards can present a cluttered street scene and detract from the Conservation Area. Coventry Street is a gateway to the town centre but contains examples of many features which detract such as ; street signage; bollards; refuse bins, solid bar shutters and overgrown trees.

8.1.8 There are canvas banners attached to some buildings in the Conservation Area. These can quickly become faded and look tired. Over time they can become detached and flap in winds. The effect can be negative to towards the character and setting on the Conservation Area.



Figure 73: Visual clutter at Coventry Street

## 9. Conservation Area Management Plan

### 9.1 Building Works

- 9.1.1 Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015<sup>46</sup> sets out where development rights are permitted or not permitted in relation to conservation areas. The Order does not mean development cannot occur in the Conservation Area but planning permission should be sought. Guidance in this management plan will be a material consideration with regards to planning applications in the Conservation Area.
- 9.1.2 Further advice can be obtained at the Planning Portal website: [Planning Portal](#) alternatively contact Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's Planning Department.
- 9.1.3 In determining applications there will be a strong presumption in favour of retention of all buildings identified in this appraisal as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

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<sup>46</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

- 9.1.4 In proposals to alter buildings there will be a strong presumption in favour of retention of original features and materials. Efforts should be made to reinstate important period details, particularly windows where they have been lost.

### 9.2 New Development

- 9.2.1 Negative buildings provide opportunity for development in the Conservation Area. Demolition of buildings that detract from the Conservation Area may be beneficial. However, gap sites can also detract, therefore demolition of whole buildings may only be permitted where rebuilding or an alternative open space scheme is proposed.
- 9.2.2 New development proposals should consider:
- The significance of any building to be demolished.
  - The significance of any relationship between the building to be demolished and adjacent structures and spaces.
  - The potential impact of the new design on the setting of any listed buildings, locally listed buildings, and positive buildings.

- The scale and grain of the surrounding area, including historic plot boundaries.

9.2.3 The building materials and architectural detailing characteristic of the area should be a key point of reference to inform the choice of materials and detailing of the new design.

9.2.4 Contemporary designs may be acceptable in the Conservation Area although cues should be taken from the positive buildings of the area and not obstruct views or overlook key buildings.

### 9.3 Residential Development

9.3.1 The cladding of any part of the exterior of the dwelling house with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles is not permitted development in a conservation area. Cladding is not considered appropriate in Nuneaton Town Centre conservation area and its use is discouraged.

9.3.2 Dwelling houses in the Conservation area are predominantly two storeys high. The enlargement of a dwellinghouse by

construction of additional storeys or additions to the roof is not considered appropriate in the Conservation Area.

### 9.4 Change of Use

9.4.1 In 2019 changes were made to The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 that, subject to prior approval being sought, allows for the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E (commercial, business and service) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses). The right allows for the for limited local consideration by the local planning authority of specific planning matters through the prior approval process. These considerations include: Flooding; Impacts of noise from commercial premises; Provision of adequate natural light to all habitable rooms; In conservation areas only - "consideration of the impact of the loss of the ground floor commercial, business and service use"; and Impact of the loss of health centres and registered nurseries on the provision of such local services.

9.4.2 Class M2 allows the change of use from E to C3 (residential) but would require prior approval. The Council

will consider the impact of residential use on the ground floor of a building in the conservation area regardless of the building's heritage significance. Consideration will be given to Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area as a heritage asset, and the contribution the building and its use contribute towards the setting and character of the conservation area. Commercial activity is a key characteristic of the area and robust evidence and justification would need to be provided to support the change of use to residential to the ground floor.

## **9.5 Commercial Premises Fronts**

9.5.1 The Conservation Area is centred on the town centre which forms the principal retail area of Nuneaton. The character and appearance of shop fronts is important to the special interest of the Conservation Area.

9.5.2 Alterations to shops, financial and professional services are not considered permitted development in conservation areas and planning permission should be sought.

9.5.3 In determining applications regarding development to a historic shop front or parts of one, there will be a presumption in favour of retention. Where traditional

features of interest remain, they should be retained. It is desirable to reinstate historic features such as corbels and pilasters which have been lost and the vestiges remain. The replacement of inappropriate modern frontages on traditional buildings is encouraged.

9.5.4 Full height glazing does not reflect the character of historic buildings. Smaller windows with stallrisers (the base of the shop window), transoms (bar over the window segregating main glazing panel) and mullions (vertical beam that divides a window into smaller panes) are typical traditional window features. Traditional and characteristic materials, such as painted timber, will best enhance the historic character of the buildings.

9.5.5 Fascias should be in proportion to the rest of the shop front and not overly large. Fascias should be below the sill of the window (not above the cornice if one is present) and not extend beyond the vertical framework of the building on either side. Fascias carried across more than one building should be sub divided to reflect the separate integrity of the building.



9.5.6 New shop fronts set in existing buildings should take account of the character of the building in which they are located and the wider street scene. Designs should consider the original building framework set by structural and decorative features within the elevation. Where a unit extends across more than one building it is important that the vertical division between the buildings is retained or reinstated. Signage may need to be divided in two or more parts to indicate separate buildings. .

9.5.7 New shop fronts on modern buildings should adopt the basic principles of traditional shop front design, consideration should be given to the vertical aspects of the building.

### **Canopies and Non-Retractable Blinds**

9.5.8 Canopies can provide space for pavement cafes which can be a positive contribution in the Conservation Area. However, non-retractable blinds and canopies can be visually intrusive and permanently conceal large parts of buildings to which they are attached. Canopies should not conceal historical features and should be retractable. Where businesses occupy more than one building, the canopy should respect the individual integrity of the building.

### **Shutters**

9.5.9 Solid shutters can have a harsh, unwelcoming appearance and can encourage vandalism. They can have a negative impact on the Conservation Area at night times and enhance the perception of a fear of crime. Solid shutters and perforated shutters should be avoided. Grille shutters are considered to be more acceptable.

## **9.6 Advertisements and Signage**

9.6.1 Advertisements are governed under the Town and County Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007<sup>47</sup>

9.6.2 An advertisement is defined as, “any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice, awning, blind, device or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of, advertisement, announcement or direction<sup>48</sup>”

9.6.3 There are some advertisements that have deemed or express consent under the Regulations. Advertisements not

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<sup>47</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>48</sup> [Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

falling within these classes will require advertisement consent.

- 9.6.4 When considering applications for advertisements that require consent, there are two considerations: amenity and public safety. Amenity refers to visual appearance and the general characteristics of the locality including any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest<sup>49</sup>.
- 9.6.5 The 1990 Act requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 9.6.6 Local planning authorities are required to consider if parts of their area should be an area of special control for advertisements because of the need to protect amenity<sup>50</sup>. Currently the Council does not deem it necessary to designate the Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area as an area of special control for advertisements.

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<sup>49</sup> [dclg-circular.qxd \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>50</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

## 9.7 Advertisements and Signage Guidance

### Fascia Signage

- 9.7.1 Fascia signage should be situated only on the fascia above the shop window.
- 9.7.2 No signage should be positioned on upper storeys.
- 9.7.3 Consideration should be given to the colour palette and lettering of signage to ensure it complements the design of the building.
- 9.7.4 Fascia signage should only contain the business details, images of products should not be on the fascia, or attached to the exterior of the building.
- 9.7.5 Internally lit signage is not appropriate in the Conservation Area. External lighting for signage should be discreet and not intrusive.
- 9.7.6 Glossy and reflective materials should not be used for signage in the Conservation Area. Mat finished boards are considered more appropriate.

9.7.7 Corporate signage of national chains are unlikely to be acceptable in the Conservation Area. Adaptations are likely to be required to align with the Conservation Area requirements. The need for the shop front to have an appropriate architectural relationship both to its 'host' building and to the Conservation Area will be judged as more important than the need for corporate identity.

### **Hanging Signs**

9.7.8 Hanging signs can be a positive addition to the Conservation Area. They should be positioned to take the design of the building into account. Where hanging signs are already in position a new sign should align with the existing sign to produce a uniform effect. Hanging signs should normally be limited to one per shop. Internally lit hanging signs are not appropriate in the Conservation Area.

### **Banners**

9.7.9 Banners are not considered appropriate in the Conservation Area, as they can obscure architectural details of key buildings. On all building's banners can quickly deteriorate and have a negative impact on the street scene.

### **Street Signs**

9.7.10 An abundance of street signs can lead to a confusing and cluttered street scene. The entrance to Coventry Street presents a cluttered entrance to the Conservation Area. Where possible, signs should be placed on buildings or at the back edge of footways. Placing signs on new posts which add to clutter should be avoided.

### **Click and Collect Facilities**

9.7.11 Click and collect facilities within the cartilage of the building should be sited to avoid obscuring key historic buildings in the Conservation Area. Paint colour of the facility should not be overly obtrusive to the host building or the surrounding area.

## **9.8 Street Furniture**

9.8.1 Street furniture such as signs, refuse bins, seating etc. can appear to be sited in a haphazard manner in the Conservation Area. Care should be taken not to obscure views of historic positive buildings. Where possible, street furniture should be in conformity with other local street furniture using similar materials and finishes.

## Seating

- 9.8.2 There are several seating areas in the Conservation Area: surrounding the fountain in Market Place, either side of Newdegate Street, nearby the George Eliot statue and throughout Riversley Park. Replacement seating should be positioned to take in a view, ideally enhancing appreciation of historic buildings and places. Ideally seating should be on the sunny side of streets, squares, or gardens.

## 9.8 Trees

- 9.8.1 Trees can make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Cutting down a tree or doing any pruning work requires notification to the Council six weeks in advance.

## 9.9 Cemetery

- 9.9.1 Historic England provides detailed information regarding undertaking work in cemeteries. Applicants should check the Historic England website for guidance before preparing a planning application.
- 9.9.2 Planning applications for carrying out work on funerary monuments should include a condition survey. The survey

should include the following details of the monument under consideration:

- Location
- Dimensions
- Monument type and description
- Orientation and inscribed faces
- Inscription technique
- Names, dates of death and dedication
- Designer/sculptor/mason
- Construction materials
- Significance
- Structural condition, including previous repairs
- Evidence of previous work
- If emergency stabilisation is required
- Who carried out the inspection
- Date of inspection

- 9.9.3 Historic England have produced guidance entitled 'Carrying out a monument and memorial condition survey' :  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/advice/carrying-out-monument-and-memorial-condition-surveyspdf/>



9.9.4 Work must be undertaken by competent people, specialist work should be undertaken by qualified conservators or memorial masons.

## 10. Bibliography of Sources and Resources

Emu Analytics [Building Heights in England from Emu Analytics \(emu-analytics.net\)](#) (Accessed 23.11.2020)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Landscape Character Assessment (2012)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Nuneaton Town Centre Conservation Area: Appraisal and Management Proposals (2009)

[https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/153/j3 -  
\\_nuneaton\\_town\\_centre\\_conservation\\_area\\_appraisal\\_and\\_management\\_proposals\\_2009.pdf](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/153/j3_-_nuneaton_town_centre_conservation_area_appraisal_and_management_proposals_2009.pdf)

Warwickshire County Council, Our Warwickshire [Our Warwickshire | Explore our county's history and landscape](#)

### National Planning Legislation, Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)  
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system>

[/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](#)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

Planning Practice Guidance [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 [Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 [dclg-circular.qxd \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

### Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Plan (2017)

[https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/1788/d11\\_-\\_borough\\_plan\\_2011\\_-\\_2031\\_publication\\_2017](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/1788/d11_-_borough_plan_2011_-_2031_publication_2017)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Town Centres Area Action Plan: Issues and Options (2020)

[Town Centres Area Action Plan Issues and Options 2020 \(2\).pdf](#)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2020) [Document](#)

[downloads - Adopted Borough Plan | Nuneaton & Bedworth \(nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Historic England Guidance**

Carrying out a monument and memorial condition survey

<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/advice/carrying-out-monument-and-memorial-condition-surveyspdf/>

Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management  
Second edition, Historic England Advice Note 1 (2019)

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (April 2008):

[Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance | Historic England](#)

The Setting of Heritage Assets Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) (December 2017): [The Setting of Heritage Assets \(historicengland.org.uk\)](#)

Traditional Windows, Their Care, Repair and Upgrading (2017)  
[Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading | Historic England](#)

Valuing Places: Good Practice in Conservation Areas (January 2009): <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/valuing-places/valuing-places-good-practice-conservation-areas.pdf/>

## Appendix A: Heritage Value Assessment

			
<p>25 Market Place Local List - Positive</p>	<p>26 Market Place Local List- Positive</p>	<p>24 Market Place Local List- Positive</p>	<p>21a-22 Market Place Neutral</p>
			
<p>Corner Abbey Gate/21 Market Place Local List – Positive</p>	<p>Corner Newdegate Street/Abbey 1-5 Local List – Positive</p>	<p>11 Newdegate Street Negative</p>	<p>13 Newdegate Street Neutral</p>





17-19 Newdegate Street

Neutral



21-25 Newdegate Street

Negative



27-29 Newdegate Street

Positive



28-30 Market Place +31  
Newdegate Street  
Local Listed - Positive



26/27 Market Place  
Local Listed - Positive



3-4 Bridge Street  
Positive



George Eliot Hotel  
Local Listed - Positive



1 Bridge Street  
Positive



31 Bridge Street / 35 Newdegate Street

Grade II Listed- Positive



37 Newdegate Street

Locally Listed (frontage) - Positive



39 Newdegate Street

Grade II Listed - Positive



20 Newdegate Street

Grade II Listed - Positive



41-45 Newdegate Street

Positive



47-49 Newdegate Street

Positive



59 Newdegate Street

Positive



32/34 Newdegate Street

Positive





30 Newdegate Street  
Positive



26/28/38/40 Newdegate Street  
Positive



24 Newdegate Street  
Positive



22 Newdegate Street  
Positive



Newdegate Place  
Positive



Newdegate Place - Hall  
Positive



21c Queens Road  
Neutral



21b Queens Road  
Neutral



21a/21/19 Queens Road

Positive



19 Queens Road

Positive



Corner of Queens Road/Stratford Street

Positive



11 Queens Road

Positive



7/9 Queens Road

Negative



5 Queens Road

Neutral



Queens Road (Waterstones)

Neutral



Queens Road 1-3

Neutral





1a Queens Road (Corner of Abbey Gate)

Neutral



14 Market Place

Neutral



13 Market Place

Neutral



12 Market Place

Neutral



11 Market Place  
Local Listed – Positive



8 -10 Market Place  
Positive



7 Market Place  
Grade II Listed - Positive



5 and 6 Market Place  
Positive



4 Market Place  
Positive



3 Market Place (Boots)  
Negative



2a Market Place  
Negative



1 & 2 Market Place  
Negative



18 to 20 Bridge Street  
Negative



15 Market Place  
Neutral



18 Stratford Street  
Neutral



6 to 14 Stratford Street  
Neutral



			
<p>2-4 Stratford Street &amp; 11 Abbey Street</p>	<p>10 Abbey Street &amp; 1, 1(b) Stratford Street</p>	<p>1b Stratford Street</p>	<p>3 Stratford Street</p>
<p>Negative</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Negative</p>
			
<p>5 Stratford Street</p>	<p>5a Stratford Street</p>	<p>13-14 Abbey Street</p>	<p>15 Abbey Street</p>
<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Positive</p>



16 Abbey Street  
Positive



121-122 Abbey Street  
Local List - Positive



123 Abbey Street  
Positive



124 Abbey Street  
Positive



125 Abbey Street  
Neutral



126 Abbey Street  
Negative



126a Abbey Street  
Positive



127 Abbey Street  
Neutral





128 Abbey Street  
Neutral



129 Abbey Street  
Neutral



130 Abbey Street  
Positive



131 Abbey Street  
Negative



7 Abbey Street  
Neutral



6 Abbey Street  
Neutral



4-5 Abbey Street  
Neutral



1 to 3 Abbey Street  
Positive



4 Abbey Gate  
Positive



3 Abbey Gate  
Neutral



19-20 Market Place  
Positive



18 Market Place  
Neutral



4,6,8,10 Coventry Street  
Local List – Positive



12 - 14 Coventry Street  
Local List - Positive



Mill Walk rear Poundland  
Negative



Government Office, Mill Walk  
Negative





Town Hall  
Local List - Positive



Coton Road Council House  
Positive



11 to 18 and no. 9 and no.7  
Locally Listed (No, 9 frontage)-  
Positive



17-23 Chapel Street  
Neutral



Chapel Street Nuneaton United  
Reformed Church  
Local List – Positive



Coton Road - Warwick House  
Local List - Positive



Coton Road former Council Office  
Positive



1 Coton Road  
Positive



Chapel Street - Jailhouse pub  
Local List – Positive



2 Chapel Street - Sycamore Tree  
Positive



Sub Station rear of Town Hall  
Neutral



Church Street Library  
Positive



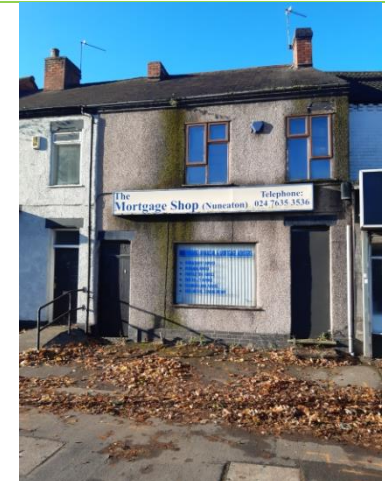
Retirement Apartments - Church Street  
Positive



18 Coton Road  
Negative



19 Coton Road  
Negative



20 Coton Road  
Negative





21 Coton Road  
Negative



22 Coton Road  
Negative



23 Coton Road  
Negative



24 Coton Road  
Local Listed - Positive



Park House, Riversley  
Road/corner Coton Road  
Positive



24a Coton Road  
Positive



25 Coton Road  
Positive



32 Coton Road  
Neutral





33 to 35 Coton Road  
Positive



37-39 Coton Road  
Local List – Positive



Public House Coton Road  
Positive



Riversley Park Centre Coton Road  
Local List - Positive



Riversley House  
Negative



Museum Riversley Park  
Local List - Positive



Sainsbury's Vicarage Street  
Neutral



25 Attleborough Road  
Positive





27-31 Attleborough Road  
Neutral



33-37 Attleborough Road  
Positive



Dempster Court  
Positive



Dempster Court  
Positive



Dempster Court  
Positive



King Edward VI College  
Grade II Listed - Positive



St Nicholas Church  
Grade I Listed - Positive



The Old Vicarage  
Grade II Listed - Positive

			
<p>Old Grammar School</p>	<p>Christadelpharian Hall, Vicarage Street</p>	<p>St Nicholas Church Hall, Vicarage Street</p>	<p>23a Queens Road (Former Co-op building)</p>
<p>Grade II Listed - Positive</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Local List - Positive</p>
		<p>+</p> 	
<p>Nuneaton Conservative Club, Newdegate Street</p>	<p>2-6 Bridge Street</p>	<p>2-6 Bridge Street</p>	<p>1-3 Bridge Street</p>
<p>Local List - Positive</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Positive</p>



A positive rating should not be seen as an endorsement of features which have been detailed in Section X which detract from the conservation area.

### Criteria

Is it an important example of an architectural period, style or type nationally, regionally, locally?
Is the building the work of a particular architect of note?
Does it relate by age, materials, style or use to adjacent buildings, particularly those recognised as being historically significant?
Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former social or economic uses within the area either individually or as part of a group?
Does it individually or as part of a group, serve as an important reminder of the gradual development of the area, or of an earlier phase of growth?
Does it have significant historic association with established features such as road layouts, burgage plots?
Does it have a landmark quality, and/or contribute to the quality of the public realm?
Does it have significant historic associations with local people or past events?
Does it retain a high degree of Intactness and/or integrity of design including original materials,