

Leominster Conservation Area Appraisal



Acknowledgements

The High Streets Heritage Action Zones is a £95 million government-funded programme led by Historic England, designed to secure lasting improvements and help breathe new life into our historic high streets for the communities and businesses that use them. Historic England is working with local people and partners to unlock the rich heritage on these high streets, through repair and improvement works as well as arts and cultural programmes, making them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors. Historic England in close partnership with Herefordshire Council and Leominster Town Council has driven the Leominster High Street Heritage Action Zone projects. An updated Conservation Area Appraisal was conducted by Border Archaeology as a new street has been added to the original area.



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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Conservation Areas (Herefordshire Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 23 2015) defines *a conservation area as an area of special interest, not only due to the buildings, but also to the interaction between buildings, open spaces around them and natural features such as trees. Together these form distinct areas of quality and interest.*

Leominster Town Centre was first designated as a Conservation Area in 1969 and is one of 64 conservation areas in the county. A map of each area can be found on the council's website. These vary in size and character but all share the distinction of being an area of special interest. Herefordshire Council is committed to the preservation and sustainable management of trees, and we aim to enhance and develop the resource. Trees are specifically protected when they have a Tree Preservation Order on them. Works to trees in conservation areas are controlled.

This conservation area status is a legal recognition that the area has special architectural and historic interest and there is a presumption that the historic character and appearance of the area should be preserved and enhanced. An appraisal was undertaken in 2008 to review the special qualities of the conservation area and to consider evidence in support of adding additional areas to the designation, amending area boundaries or removing areas. The boundary has again been reviewed during preparation of this appraisal. The existing conservation area boundary is shown in the appraisal.

1.2 Overall Aims and Objectives of the Appraisal

The overall purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal will be:

- To clearly define the special interest of the Leominster Town Centre Conservation Area; and
- To identify those elements which contribute to its special interest in terms of archaeology, built heritage and natural environment.

2 Methodology

This appraisal is primarily based on the methodology set out in Historic England's guidance document 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: HE Advice Note 1' (HE 2019). It is also informed by other relevant Historic England guidance documents, in particular *Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (HE 2015), *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 Second Edition* (HE 2017a) and *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments - Principles and Practice* (HE 2017b).

3 Summary of Special Interest

The essential character of Leominster Town Conservation Area is that of an historic market town of medieval origin, lying adjacent to the remains of a substantial monastic precinct associated with Leominster Priory, a Saxon minster church and later Cluniac monastery.

Its special character is defined by:

- The well-preserved medieval plan form of narrow streets and lanes, broad thoroughfares, the central market square and the associated pattern of burgage plots;
- The rich stock of historic buildings ranging in date from the 12th to the 20th centuries; and
- The interrelationship of the built environment and open spaces, which particularly reflect the strong historical associations between the town and the adjacent Priory precinct.

In spite of late 20th century development within the historic core (including the construction of the inner relief road and several large car parks) the town retains much of its medieval street plan.

The architectural heritage of the conservation area is remarkably diverse and includes the remains of the medieval Priory Church, conventual buildings and other ancillary buildings within the Priory precinct, all built of local red sandstone. Within the town, there is a significant number of surviving timber-framed buildings of 14th to 17th century date, many of which are concealed behind later brick and stuccoed frontages of 18th/19th century date, attesting to the importance of the town as a centre for the wool trade during the late medieval and early post-medieval periods.

The continued growth and prosperity of Leominster as an important regional market centre and transport hub during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries is attested by a significant number of fine late Georgian brick townhouses (many of which have later 19th/early 20th century shopfronts inserted), commercial premises and coaching inns.

The precinct boundary of the adjacent medieval Priory is delineated by walls, banks, lanes and watercourses, and the relationship between the borough and priory boundaries remains highly legible. Much of the area within the Priory precinct now comprises recreational open space. The parish church, extensive remains of the conventual buildings, the late 13th century Forbury Chapel at the western gateway to the Priory precinct and the extensive earthworks bordering The Grange are important surviving components of the landscape associated with the medieval Priory precinct.

There are a number of landmark buildings in the conservation area which may be considered as buildings of architectural merit and historical significance which feature noticeably in the context of their individual townscape setting. Each of these is identified in the relevant Character Area appraisal and shown on the accompanying plan.

4 Location and Setting

4.1 Location and Setting

4.1.1 Description of the Town Centre and its Setting

Leominster is set amid the fertile rolling farmland of the Lugg Valley in north Herefordshire, an area of mixed arable fields and livestock pasture, commercial soft fruit growing, hop production and managed woodland. The soils of the area derive their characteristic reddish hue from underlying Old Red Sandstone bedrock.

Leominster is the largest settlement in the northern part of the Herefordshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) and is the main urban focus for a largely rural hinterland of small dispersed hamlets and larger villages, with areas of historic parkland retained at Berrington Hall and Croft Castle. The A44 enters the town centre from the west along Bargates and Cursneh Road passing via Bridge Street and Mill Street to its junction with the A49 trunk road between Hereford and Shrewsbury, the main north and south thoroughfare.

Today, the character of Leominster Town Conservation Area is that of an historic market town with well-preserved medieval, Georgian and Victorian elements. The adjacent open green spaces of the Priory Precinct complement the town's narrow streets and lanes and broad thoroughfares of the town.

Leominster Town Conservation Area lies on a gradually sloping land above the River Lugg floodplain, rising to 80m above Ordnance Datum (OD) on the west side of the conservation area, around Dishley Street/Cursneh Road, falling to below 70m OD on the northeast side. To the west of the conservation area, the land rises more steeply to a high point of over 100m OD in the Newlands area of the town.

Topography has played an important role in the historical development of the town. The early church and monastic settlement grew up on the slightly higher ground above the floodplain to the south of the river, which formed a natural barrier affording protection on two sides. The lower-lying, flood-prone land to the N, later known as The Marsh, was utilized, possibly from as early as the Romano-British period, for industrial purposes and as pasture for livestock. Most of the smaller watercourses are now culverted but historically they were used to power mills and to service industries such as tanning and cloth production as well as providing a source of clean water for the medieval priory.

5 Historic Development and Archaeology

5.1 Prehistoric and Romano-British

Little evidence of prehistoric activity is recorded within the conservation area.

A Romano-British tessellated pavement uncovered in Burgess Street and now sealed by concrete (NGR SO 49 59) suggests a high-status building somewhere in the vicinity but none has been identified to date; however, evidence of industrial activity was recorded in 2003 just outside the conservation area in Mill Street (NGR SO 498 594). The remains consisted of a timber and stone revetment for a watercourse which was radiocarbon dated to AD 120-240

suggesting the Romans operated large-scale smithing industry on the banks of the River Lugg. A large pair of goat-horn cores, also found, were thought to have been connected with ritual.

5.2 Medieval

The 12th century Book of Llandaff records that St David established a religious community in Leominster in the 6th century and this is supported by the early form of its name, Llanlieni, betrays a strong Welsh influence, meaning 'church in the district of the streams', but it is more likely that the founder was Merewalh, a local Saxon ruler, whose church is said to date from the mid-7th century, the notion of an early church being perpetuated in the Saxon word 'minster' which refers to a community of clergy.

It is thought the church stood on the site of the Priory Church but no evidence of it has been found. The Saxon church was dissolved in 1046 and a new foundation established by Henry I in the 12th century as a cell of the Benedictine Reading Abbey

Domesday Book compiled in 1086 records a valuable manor, the bulk of which was held by the crown with the remainder distributed among 14 tenants. The manor also supported six priests but the population as a whole is unknown.

The manor was transferred to Reading Abbey by Henry I in 1123 and the minster church re-founded as its dependency. Of the original priory, the Norman nave and north aisle survive as does the decorative west door, thought to be the work of the Herefordshire School of masons. The southern or parochial nave was built in the early 13th century and the south aisle dates from around 1320; the west tower is 15th century. Remains of the conventual buildings survive to the north of the Priory Church.

The large rectilinear precinct extended south as far as an earthwork boundary bank running along Grange Walk and north to the River Kenwater. The main gate stood next to the late 13th century Forbury Chapel.

The monks promoted Leominster as a commercial centre and borough securing grants for fairs and markets and in spite of a devastating attack by William de Braose in 1207 and another during the Barons Wars of the 1260s, the town grew and prospered owing largely to the demand for high quality Ryeland wool (known as 'Leominster Ore') (Buteux et al., 1996; Hillaby 2004, 2006).

The precinct boundary and medieval borough plan, with its market places, narrow streets and lanes, burgage and tenement plots and later medieval suburb, are clearly discernible in spite of later post-medieval and modern development. The four main components are

- The rectangular market place of Corn Square, which possibly predates the refoundation of the Priory;
- The triangular Market Place defined by High Street/Drapers Lane and Corn Street, with the main livestock market located at its apex (marked by the Buttercross), which had been infilled by the late 16th century;
- A slightly later northward extension of the Market Place along Broad Street;
- West Street and the northern part of South Street (known variously as South End or Turnbull Street); and
- The Marsh, a late 12th century northern suburb extending along Bridge Street.

Later development includes Burgess Street (*Burgeyslone*) and New Street (*novus vicus*), the southern part of South Street and Etnam Street, which is first mentioned in the late 13th/early 14th century and which supplanted an earlier eastern route along the southern edge of the Priory precinct, roughly following the line of Grange Walk (Buteux 1996; Hillaby 2004).

Outbreaks of plague and the Glyndŵr revolt affected development during the 14th and early 15th centuries but the town emerged with a more resilient economy based on the wool production and the linen trade and by the 15th century, a number of guilds had been established representing a range of occupations, including bakers, butchers, shoemakers, glovers, mercers, tailors, tanners and walkers (who removed excess oil and grease from cloth).

5.3 Post-Medieval and Modern

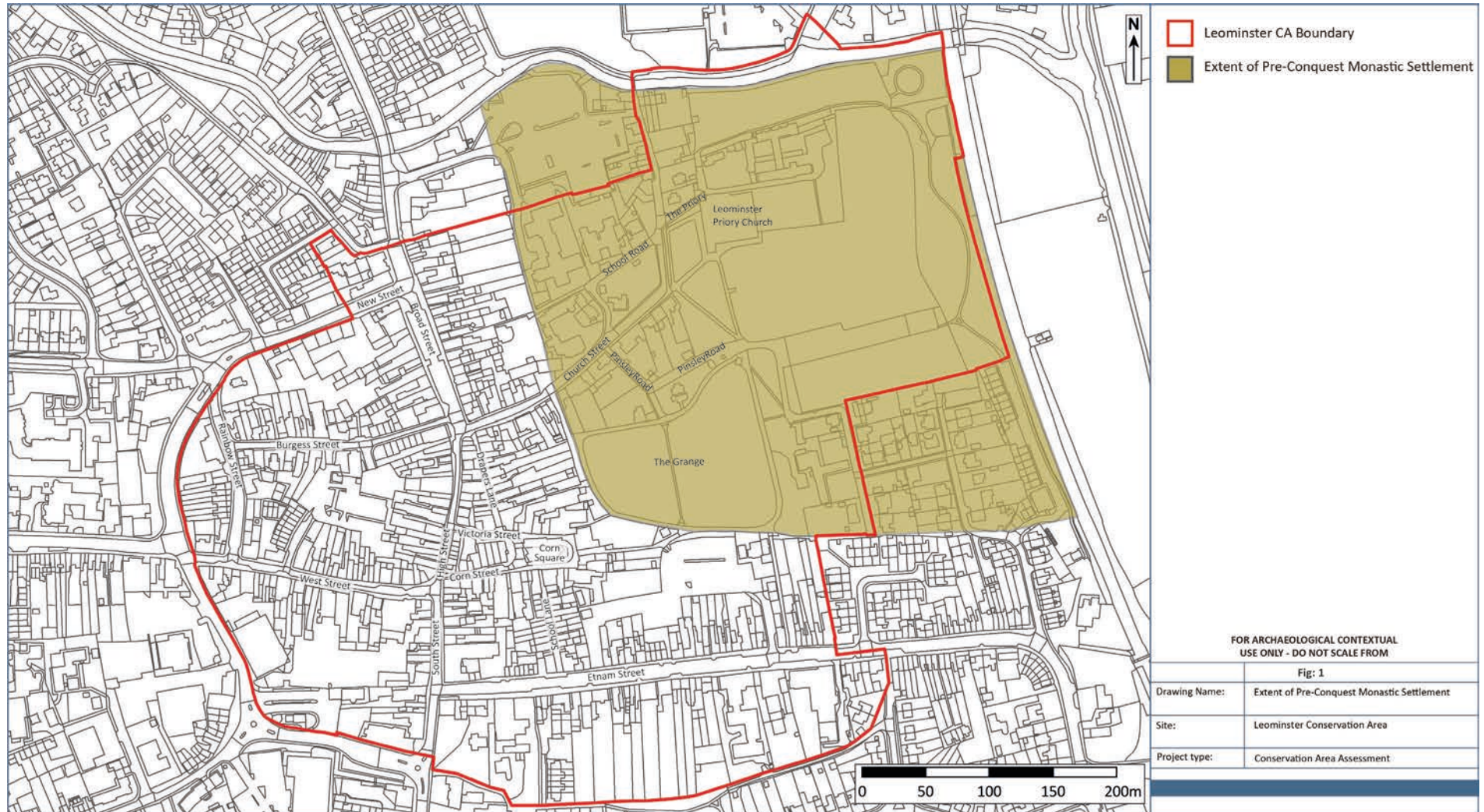
The Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538/9 resulted in the loss of all of the ancillary monastic buildings apart from the reredorter and infirmary (now the Old Priory). The eastern section of the Priory Church was demolished and the surviving part, which included the naves, aisles and west tower, became the parish church of St Peter and St Paul. When Leland recorded his impressions at this time, he noted 'quite a large town with good timber buildings' but acknowledged that the town appeared to be in decline.

Recovery appears to have been swift. The town's rich stock of late 16th/17th century timber-framed buildings points to economic revival and by 1650 Leominster recorded a population of 3000 (Wills 1981, 15). The decorated two-storey timber-framed Old Town Hall of 1633 which was moved to The Grange in 1856 represents a particularly fine legacy of this period.

Leominster expanded its economic base as new markets emerged and during the 1800s its wealth exceeded that of Hereford. The handsome Georgian and Victorian fronted houses of the well-to-do in Church Street, Broad Street and Etnam Street are indication enough that the 18th and early 19th century was a time of some considerable prosperity. Steam power became increasingly important, especially with the opening of the Shrewsbury-to-Hereford railway and Leominster's first railway station in 1853.

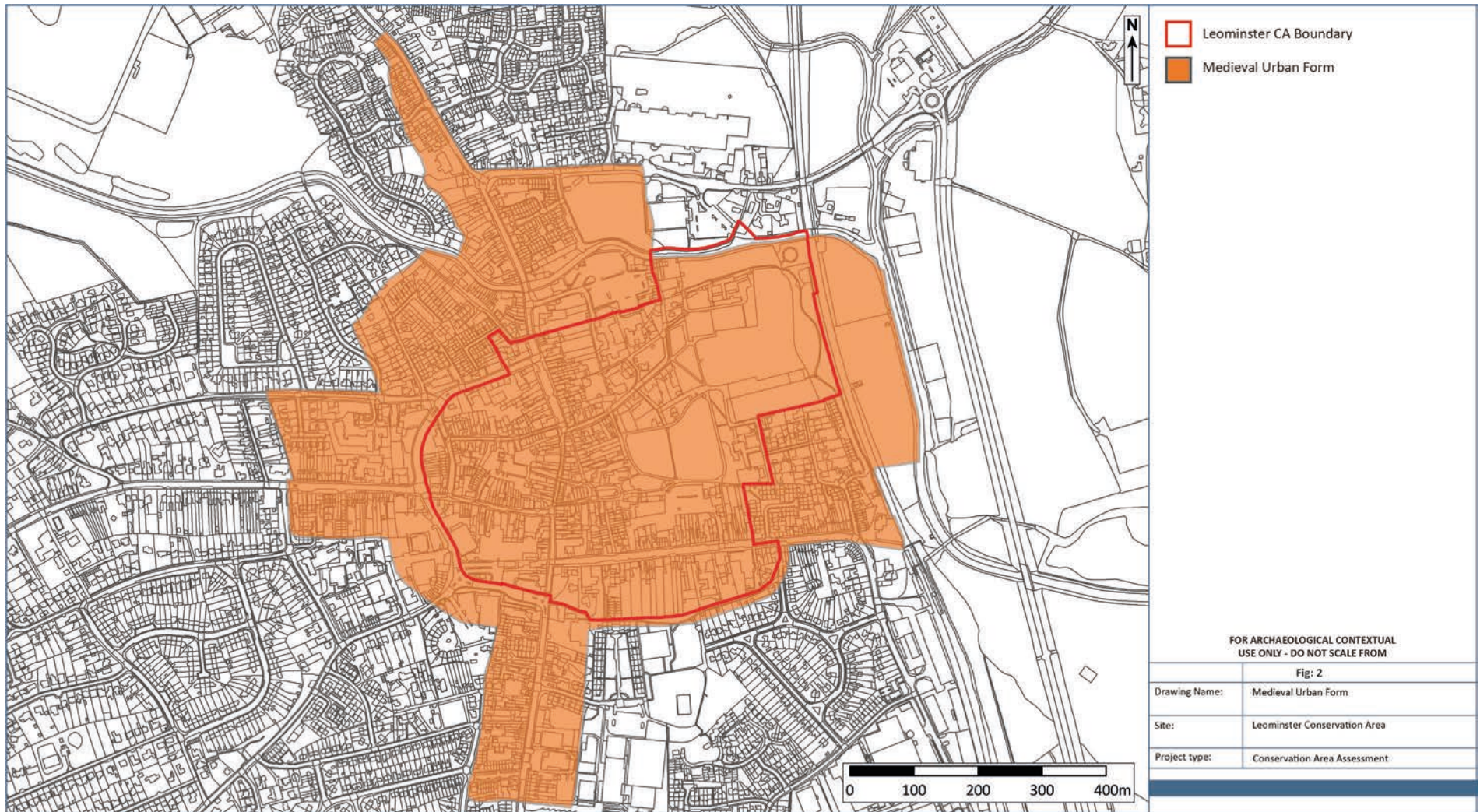
The importance of Leominster both as a regional market centre and a major regional transport hub during the post-medieval period, sitting astride the main highways running westwards from London via Worcester to Aberystwyth and northwards from Hereford to Shrewsbury, and a series of subsidiary turnpike roads established in the 18th century. This is perhaps reflected in the significant concentration of coaching inns and public houses in the town centre.

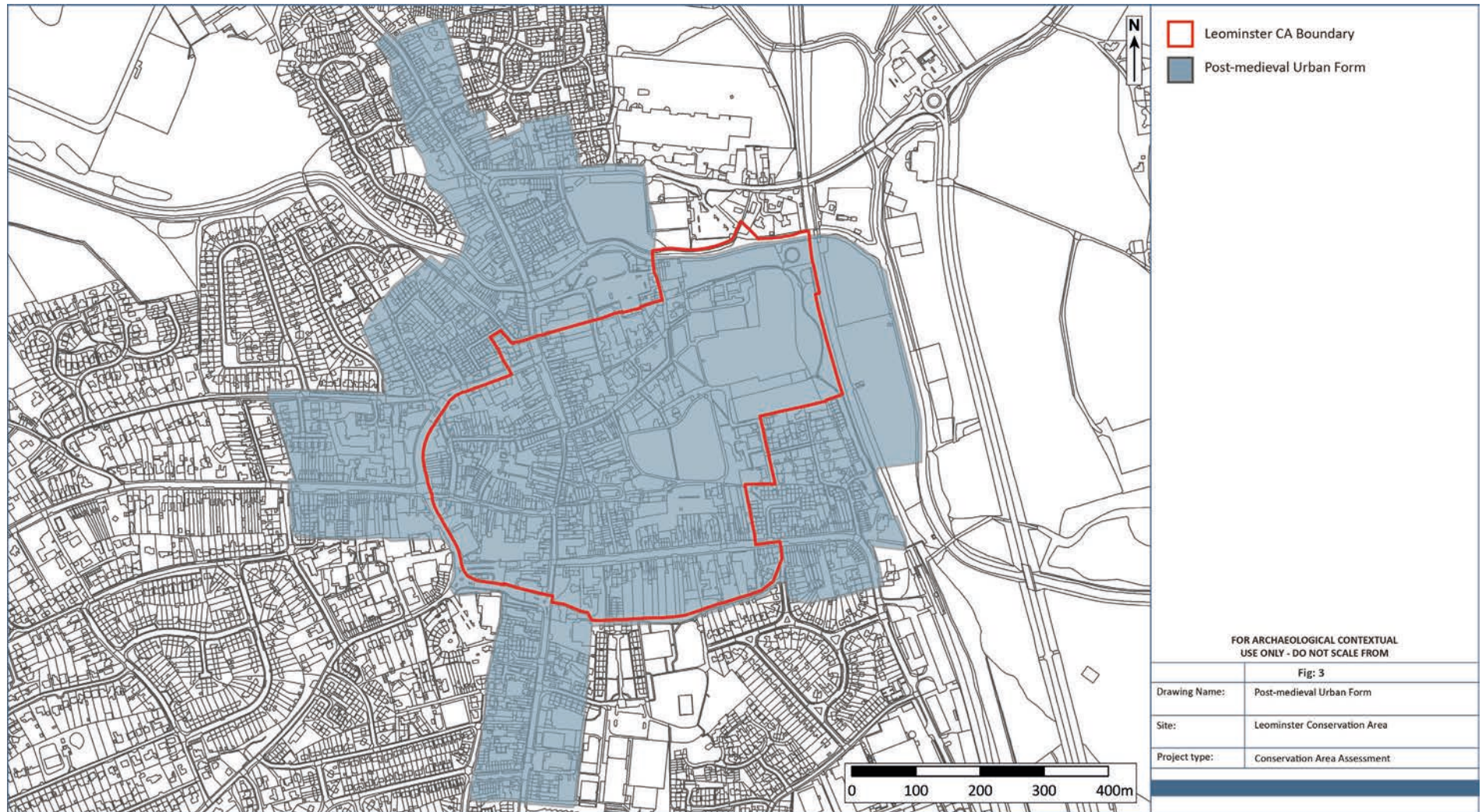
The continued importance of the town as a market centre during the late Victorian/Edwardian period is reflected in the extensive refurbishment of many of the buildings along the principal streets and the insertion of new shopfronts. New commercial premises were erected in Corn Square, High Street, Victoria Street and at the end of Broad Street. Agricultural improvement and the increasing mechanization began to influence local farming practice from the late 19th century and new manufacturing and mercantile establishments opened in response. These include, on Broad Street, Alexander & Duncan's Lion Works Foundry for the production of farm machinery and the former Hinton's General Stores built in 1888 on Rainbow Street.

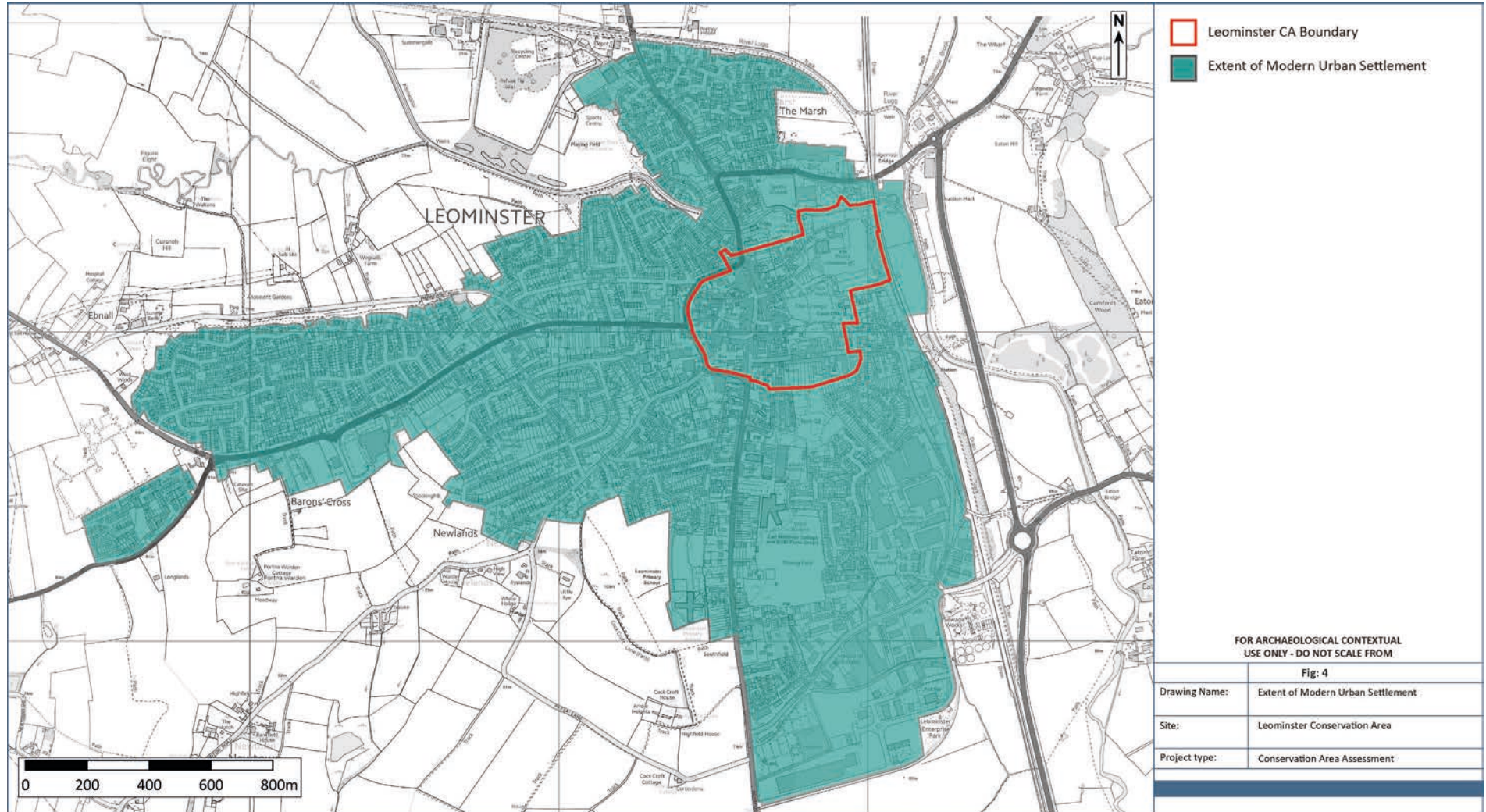


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Fig: 1	
Drawing Name:	Extent of Pre-Conquest Monastic Settlement
Site:	Leominster Conservation Area
Project type:	Conservation Area Assessment







6 Spatial Analysis

6.1 Character and Interrelationship of Spaces

Since the medieval period, the boundary between the borough and the extensive precinct of the adjacent Benedictine Priory has been a key influence on the development of the town. The physical boundary between the town and the Priory precinct, although encroached upon in places by post-medieval and modern urban development, remains highly legible.

The juxtaposition of town centre and open green spaces, chiefly associated with the historic Priory precinct, is of fundamental importance to the historic landscape character of the Leominster Town Centre Conservation Area.

The following open spaces may be regarded as integral components of the conservation area, both in historical and visual terms:

- The Grange: an historic and well-established open recreation space to the south of the Priory church and originally forming part of the monastic precinct, long used by the residents of Leominster for recreational purposes including cricket, bare-knuckle fighting, fairs and dancing. The boundaries of the medieval Priory precinct are clearly defined by a Grade II listed brick and sandstone masonry perimeter wall (Grade II) on the west side and a substantial earthwork bank on the south side. A key feature of historic interest within the Grange is the 17th century timber-framed market hall (Grade II*), known as Grange Court, a landmark building relocated from its original position in 1856. Other late 19th/early 20th century public features within the Grange include a disused drinking fountain (east side); a cricket pavilion of 1901 (north-side) and a Grade II listed war memorial of 1922 located in the northeast corner of the Grange, comprising a bronze angel of Victory and an adjoining memorial wall;
- The Stanley Holland playing fields: adjoining The Grange to the east, a field given to the Borough of Leominster for the benefit of its children by a prominent former resident and civic dignitary; opened in 1930, now includes a sports field and a playground with apparatus;
- The Churchyard of the Priory Church of St Peter and St Paul: an extensive open space with sandstone rubble walls shaded by groups of trees including the site of the east end and transepts of the Priory church formerly marked by information boards (sadly defaced in recent years);
- Pinsley Mead: a picnic site on the north side of The Priory extending along the east side as a small park;
- Burgage plots: a number of private rear gardens retain the plan-form of medieval burgage plots, particularly at Broad Street (east side abutting the boundary of the priory precinct), Drapers Lane (east side), Etnam Street (mainly south side but also north side east of Duke's Walk) and South Street (west side—part);
- Corn Square: a paved open space, formerly the historic site of the corn market, now the site of a weekly market and also less frequent public activities; used as a short-stay parking area in the town centre and surrounded on three sides by significant buildings, many of which are listed, including a group of Grade II listed timber-framed buildings on the south side and a 19th century bank on the east side;
- Broad Street: a wide linear throughfare with parking on both sides, formerly the site of a medieval and post-medieval market, now used for annual public events including the May Fair and Christmas Market. The street is lined on both sides by historic buildings, most of which are Grade II listed, comprising several

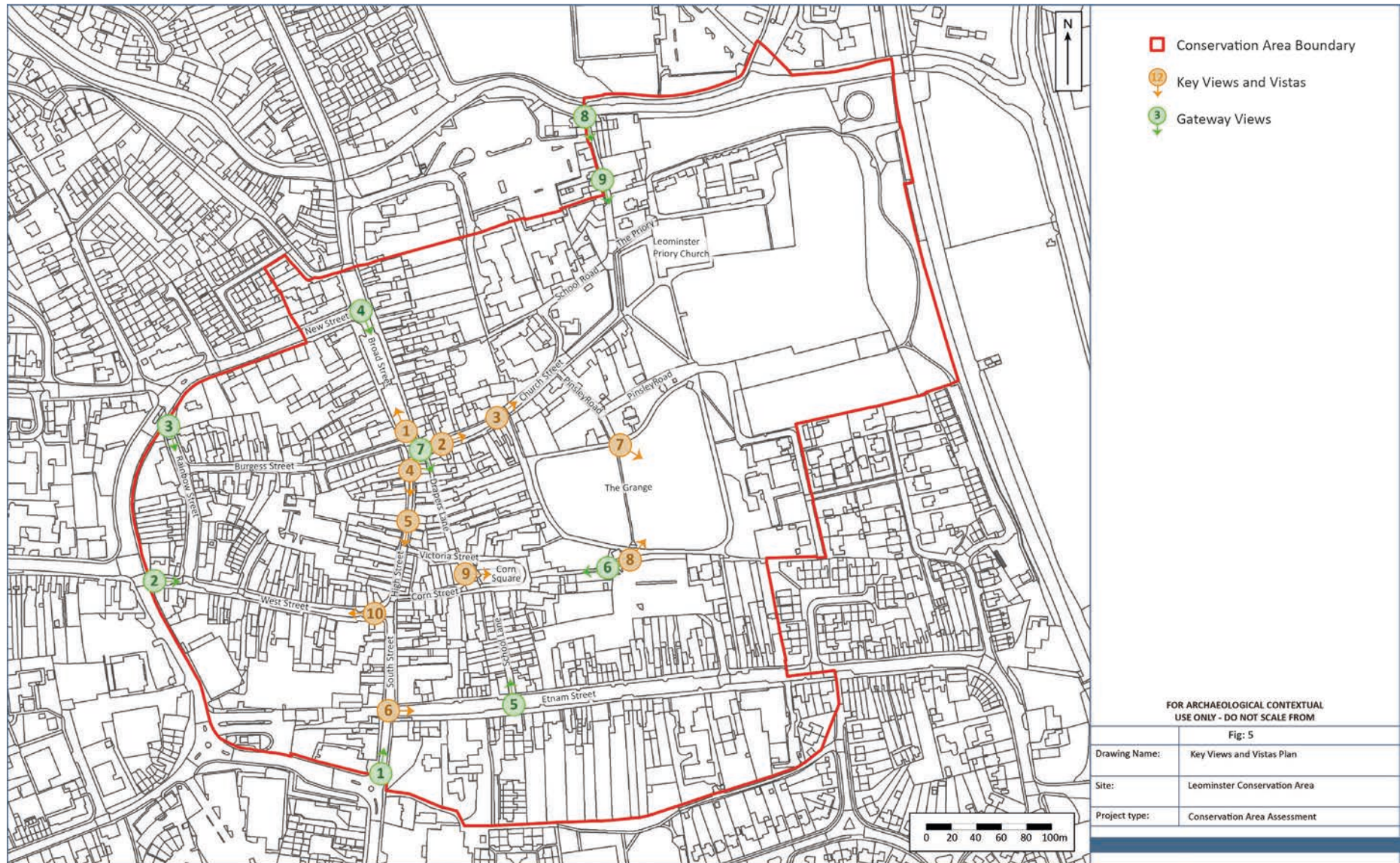
17th century timber-framed buildings and a large number of townhouses with 18th/early 19th century Georgian brick and stuccoed frontages (with later 19th/early 20th century shopfronts inserted), a significant proportion of which conceal evidence of earlier timber-framed cores;

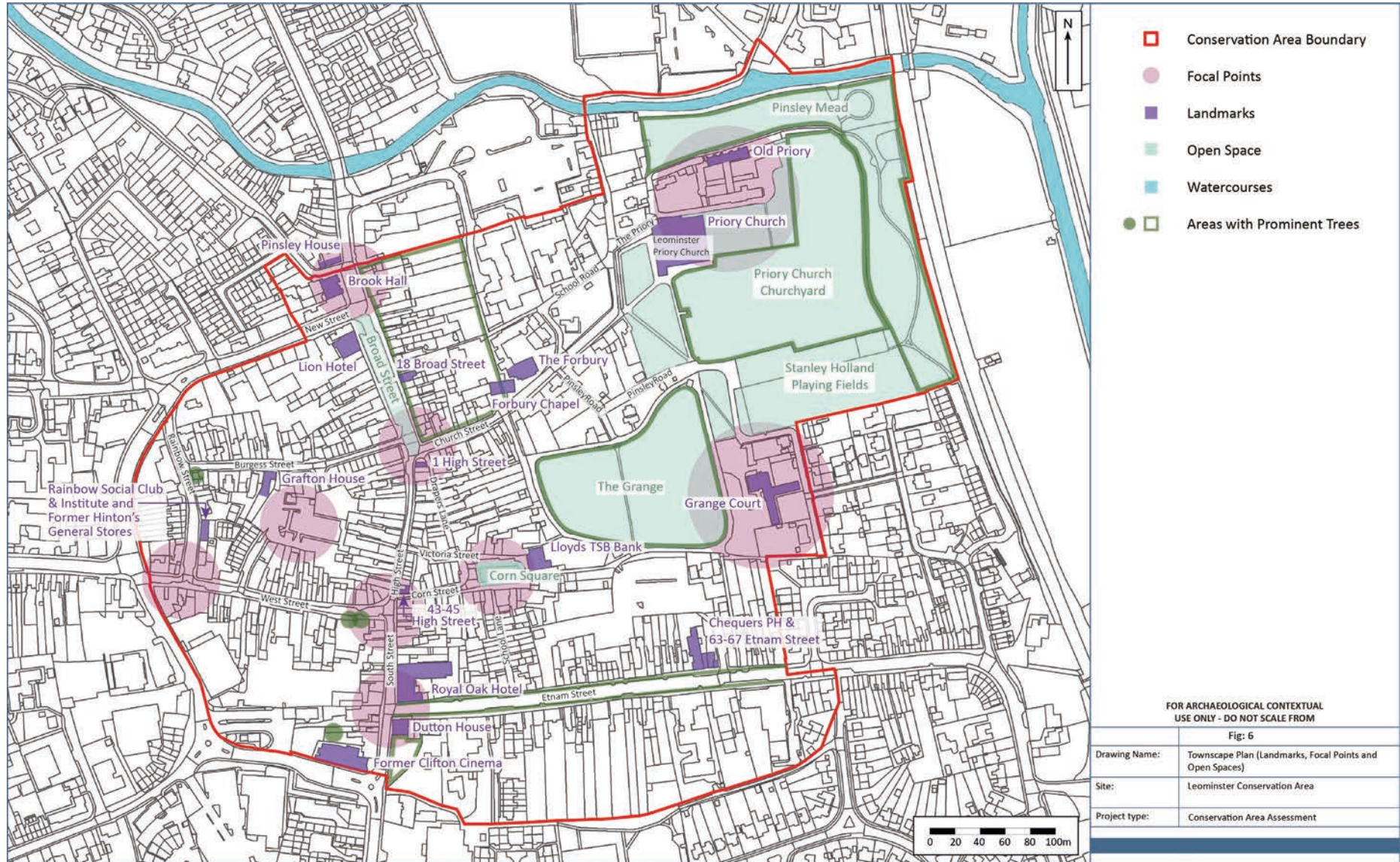
- Mature trees are a characteristic feature of the green open spaces in the north-eastern part of the conservation area where they have a substantial visual and physical impact, and give vertical emphasis. Trees line a major thoroughfare within the conservation area (Etnam Street), and there are also several prominent individual trees. Trees are present throughout the conservation area in back gardens and private spaces where they are generally less prominent. Within the conservation area, all trees are protected.

Trees are prominent at the following locations:

- The Grange: formal plantings around the edge of the open green space; a line of Scots Pines along the bank on the south side; groups near Grange Court and the cricket pavilion, including three Wellingtonias and other exotic specimens, as well an oak tree near the War Memorial which was planted as an acorn brought back from Verdun, France during the First World War;
- The parish churchyard: an avenue; informal groups and individual specimens of evergreens and deciduous trees; an apple orchard in the former workhouse garden;
- Pinsley Mead: informal groups;
- Etnam Street: an avenue of (mainly) lime trees which frame axial views looking both east and west along the street;
- West Street: a pair of trees prominently located in front of the Talbot Hotel at the corner of West Street and South Street;
- Trees planted to the rear of the historic properties on the east side of Broad Street;
- Several large houses within the Conservation Area have grounds containing clusters of trees and shrubbery which feature prominently within the Conservation Area including Dutton House (at the corner of Etnam Street and South Street) and West Lodge (on the west side of Rainbow Street).

6.2 Key Views and Vistas





The intimate character of the central core with its narrow streets, lanes and passages enclosed on either side by densely packed buildings affords only very limited visual access to the wider townscape, with more distant vistas limited to one or two key viewpoints from where glimpses of the wider landscape to the east of the town can be seen rising towards Eaton Hill.

The priory precinct and its environs comprise several linked areas of green space which give a sense of openness but which are nonetheless closed-off in most directions by stands of mature trees, hedges, buildings and perimeter walls.

The following key views and vistas have been identified within the conservation area. For ease of reference, these have been numbered consistent with the plan (Fig. 5) above:

- An unrestricted view **(1)** from the junction of High Street and Drapers Lane looking north along Broad Street to the junction with New Street takes in the whole of this wide thoroughfare flanked on either side by three-storey Georgian townhouses most of which have 19th/early 20th century shopfronts inserted at ground floor level. The view is partially occluded beyond the Bridge Street/New Street junction by Highbury House Antiques and Pinsley House;
- Turning east **(2 & 3)**, the view along Church Street is a sequential one dominated by three-storey Georgian townhouses. Where the street bends, the low form of Forbury Chapel set at an oblique angle to the road breaks the dominant vertical rhythm of the street frontage. Adjacent, the imposing frontage of The Forbury, now a nursing home, dominates a more open streetscape compared with the Georgian terrace on the south side. Beyond a mature lime tree on the left are the gated precinct and medieval Priory Church;
- Looking south **(4 & 5)** along High Street, a sequential view along this narrow medieval street enclosed on either side by commercial buildings of three and four storeys with a mix of Victorian and modern shopfronts, the earliest buildings (Nos 35-45) forming a group on the east side. At the south end, a mid-18th century building with 20th century shopfront contrasts to the jettied fronts of timber-framed 16th and 17th century buildings. The street is in shared vehicular and pedestrian use;
- From South Street looking east **(6)** along Etnam Street, a broad thoroughfare flanked with a largely unbroken frontage on either side. Buildings ranging in date from early post-medieval to modern are in either commercial or residential use with a number of the larger Georgian townhouses converted to flats. The streetscape includes two public houses and an early 20th century shopfront, with Leominster Baptist Church set back from the street on the south side;
- Looking east across The Grange from the north **(7)** and south **(8)** entrances, the fine 17th century timber-framed former market hall, now Grange Court, stands in isolation among groups of mature trees;
- View east **(9)** across Corn Square towards Grange;
- View of West Street looking west **(10)** along this narrow one-way street from the junction of High Street and South Street forming part of the 12th century planned urban settlement.

Several 'gateway' views into, and within, the conservation area have also been identified, consisting of the following listed below:

- Looking north **(1)** into the conservation area from the B4361 (South Street), two early 19th century houses are seen opposite the late 18th/early 19th century Black Horse Inn and adjacent late 18th/early 19th century property. From the junction of Westbury Street and South Street, the view is framed by the late

- art deco form of the old Clifton Cinema opposite a 17th century redbrick garden wall to the rear of Dutton House, beyond which is the imposing late 18th century form of the Royal Oak Hotel, now derelict;
- From the inner relief road (Dishley Street) looking east **(2)** along a short approach into West Street, a busy commercial road of shops, cafes, takeaways and two hostelries, a number of which occupy buildings of 17th-19th century date;
 - Looking south **(3)** into the conservation area from the inner relief road (Cursneh Road), a short approach into the town centre terminating at the corner of Rainbow Street and Burgess Street. Rainbow Street contains a pair of striking Victorian buildings;
 - Looking south **(4)** into the conservation area from the corner of New Street along Broad Street which is dominated by Georgian townhouses in commercial or residential use; late 19th and early 20th Century shopfronts; some early post-medieval timber-framing;
 - From Etnam Street **(5)** along School Lane, now pedestrianised, into Corn Square taking in the former White Swan public house at the south end two 15th-16th century jettied buildings at the north end;
 - From the car park and The Grange looking west **(6)** along Grange Walk providing pedestrian access into Corn Square;
 - Looking south **(7)** along Drapers Lane, a narrow, pedestrianized alleyway representing an historic link between the medieval market place and Corn Square with modern wrought iron overhead signage at either end and an irregular frontage of earlier 17th to early 19th century buildings with 19th and 20th century shopfronts;
 - Looking south **(8 & 9)** from the mid-19th century footbridge over the River Kenwater and into the priory precinct past a mid-19th century brick terrace on the right opposite a succession of secluded private gardens.

There are several views looking into/out of the conservation area:

- The tower of the Priory Church can be seen looking west from the A49 bypass partially obstructed by an auction sales building;
- Looking south from Mill Street, a view of the tower of the Priory Church now obstructed by a large DIY store;
- Looking east from The Grange and the Stanley Holland playing fields, a view of the wooded slopes of Eaton Hill;
- Looking east along Etnam Street, a glimpse of the wooded slopes of Eaton Hill.

7 Character Analysis

7.1 General

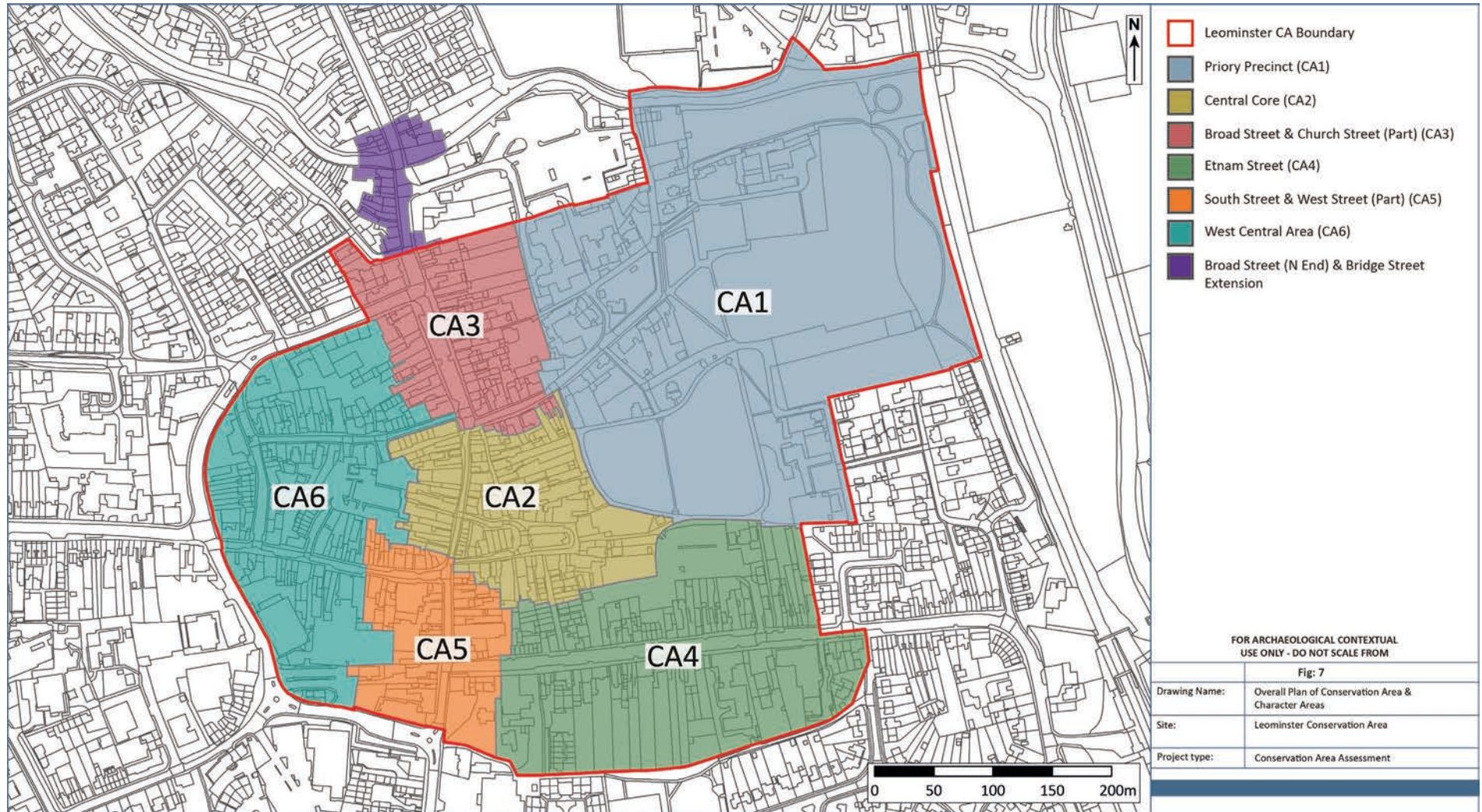
The essential character of Leominster Town Centre Conservation Area may be described as that of an historic market town of medieval origin, the street plan of which survives essentially intact in spite of intrusive late 20th century development with its market places (Corn Square, the triangular market place defined by High Street, Drapers Lane and Corn Street), wide thoroughfares (Broad Street, Etnam Street, West Street) flanked by elongated burgage plots and associated narrow streets, lanes and alleyways.

The town centre retains its historic commercial character as an important agricultural market centre for the local area and remains a strategic transport hub at the meeting point of the trunk road from Worcester to Aberystwyth (A44) and the north-south routeway from Hereford to Shrewsbury (A49), although the latter highway bypasses the town.

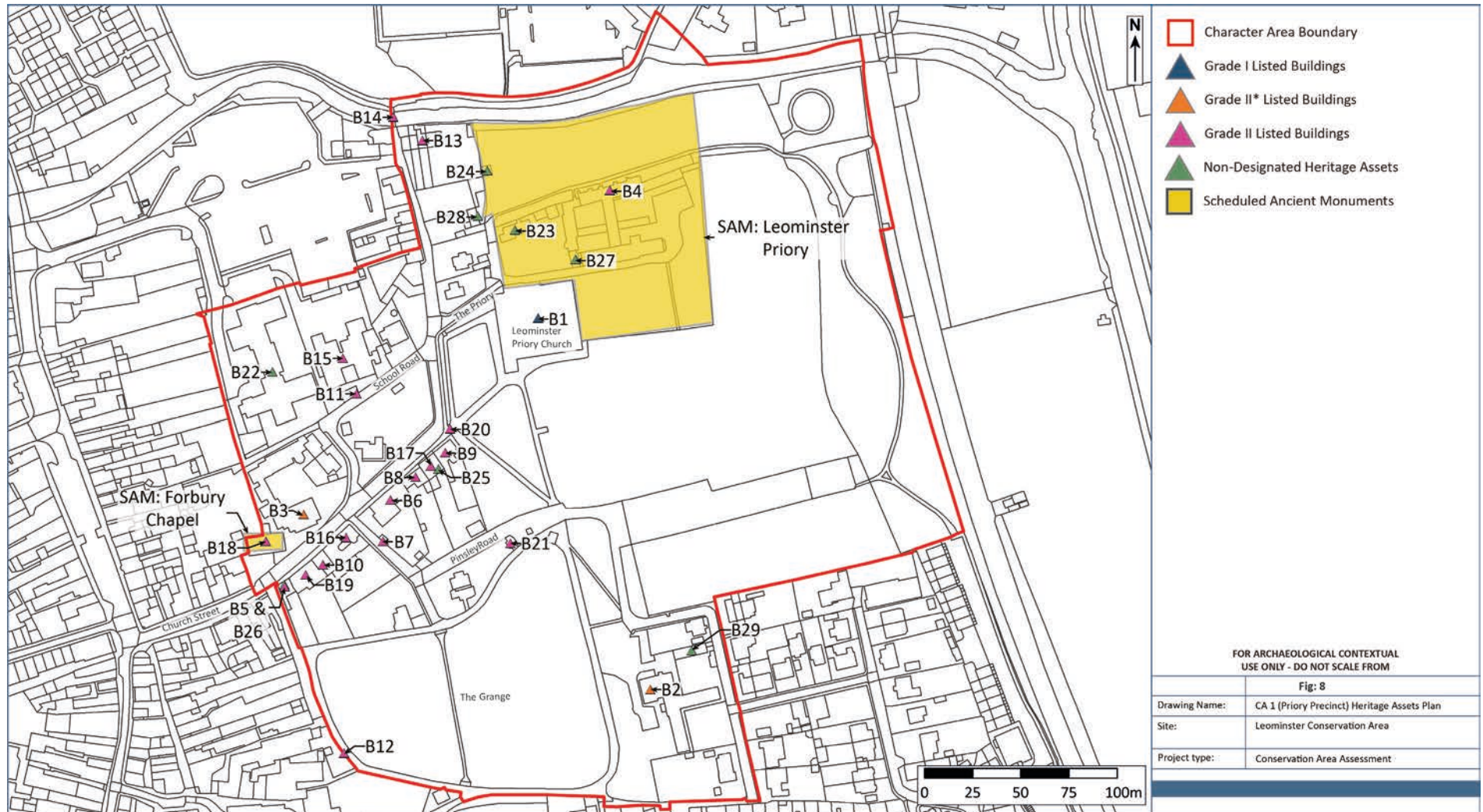
Another key aspect of its special character is its rich architectural heritage, including the stone medieval buildings of the priory precinct including the fine 12th-15th century priory church, a significant number of timber-framed buildings ranging in date from the 14th to the 17th century (many of which are concealed by later 18th/19th century brick and stuccoed frontages), 18th/early 19th century Georgian town houses and 19th century commercial premises and shopfronts.

The interrelationship of the built environment and open spaces further contributes to the significance of the conservation area, with key urban spaces of medieval origin represented by Corn Square and Broad Street; while the boundaries of the medieval Priory precinct, now largely an extensive area of recreational open space occupied by the parish church, priory buildings and the former town hall (Grange Court), is clearly discernible, being delineated by brick and sandstone walls, banks, lanes and watercourses, eloquently illustrating the historic relationship between the Borough and the Priory and how it has evolved since the medieval period.

For the purposes of this appraisal, the conservation area has been divided into six discrete Character Areas (CAs) based on criteria such as architectural character, townscape and historic development (see Fig. 1 below). The remainder of this section comprises a detailed analysis of each CA and its contribution to the conservation area as a whole.



7.2 CA 1 Priory Precinct



- *Summary Description*

7.2.1 This, the largest of the character areas, encompasses about 40% of the Town Centre Conservation Area, is defined on the north side by the northern bank of the River Kenwater, to the east by the railway line and on the western and southern sides by the boundary of the medieval precinct, which extends into The Grange where it is defined to the west by brick and sandstone rubble masonry walls and to the south by the remains of a substantial truncated earthwork bank.

7.2.2 Much of the character area comprises recreational open space lying within the historic bounds of the Priory Precinct, which represents a distinctive, secluded green 'oasis' on the eastern periphery of the urban settlement, including The Grange, the Stanley Holland playing fields and Pinsley Mead (largely enclosed fields until the mid-19th century).

7.2.3 There are discrete enclaves of urban residential development on the western side of the character area, focused along the eastern end of Church Street and the side streets of School Road and The Priory.

- *Summary of Historic Character*

7.2.4 The character area largely encompasses the extent of the former monastic precinct associated with the medieval priory of Leominster, the chief surviving remnant of which being the Priory Church of SS Peter and Paul. The Priory Church, with its prominent tower, surviving remains of the conventual buildings and the Forbury Chapel attest to the historical importance of the Priory and its profound, long-lasting influence on the historical development of the town, lending the area a distinctly ecclesiastical character (Plate 1).

7.2.5 The medieval Priory Precinct was originally much more extensive than the present churchyard, comprising a roughly rectangular area defined by an earth bank and ditch to the south (adjacent to the modern car park) and west (as far as the Forbury Chapel in Church Street) and by the River Kenwater to the north. The original eastern boundary of the precinct is more difficult to define but may have extended eastwards as far as the River Lugg.

7.2.6 Although there has been limited 18th/19th century urban development on the western fringes of the Priory Precinct, it retains a distinctly leafy, open and semi-rural character, quite separate from the urban townscape to the west and south. This owes much to the survival of the Precinct boundary as a well-defined historic feature, demarcating the rear boundaries of the burgage plots along Broad Street, Drapers Lane and Etnam Street.



Plate 1: View looking northeast along Church Street towards the Priory Church with its prominent west tower

- *Summary of Historic Development*

- 7.2.7 Historically, the character area represents the earliest component of the settlement, encompassing the large monastic precinct surrounding the religious house of Leominster Priory, the origins of which can be traced back to the mid-7th Century AD, when the first minster church was founded.
- 7.2.8 The Saxon church, first a monastery and later a nunnery, was destroyed in 1046 but in 1123 King Henry I re-founded Leominster as a cell of his abbey at Reading. The monastic buildings comprised the Priory Church and a substantial range of conventual buildings to the north, set within a large rectangular gated and walled precinct containing mills and fishponds fed by the Pinsley Brook, which the monks may have diverted from its natural course to serve their needs. The fishponds appear to have been located within meadows to the north of the Pinsley Brook ('Pinsley Mead').
- 7.2.9 Following the Dissolution of Leominster Priory in 1538-9, much of the site was subject to clearance. The eastern end of the church was demolished and the nave converted to a parish church, which underwent an extensive programme of restoration in the 1870s.
- 7.2.10 Portions of the conventual buildings survive to the north of the Priory Church, comprising the Old Priory, a 13th century masonry building constructed either as the prior's lodgings or infirmary and re-used as a gaol and workhouse in the 17th/18th centuries.
- 7.2.11 Much of the medieval 'Forbury', the area lying between the Priory Church and the main gate at the western end of the precinct was developed in the 18th and 19th centuries and now forms a discrete residential townscape component represented by the eastern portion of Church Street and School Road.

- *Plan Form/Spatial Layout*

7.2.12 The central portion of the character area is occupied by the Priory Church, set within an extensive churchyard defined by a sandstone masonry perimeter wall. The churchyard, which forms a key component within the character area, is laid out with green lawns with a large number of funerary monuments having been cleared in the late 20th/early 21st century. However, the Priory Church and churchyard as existing represent only a small portion of the former medieval precinct.

7.2.13 The main gate at the western end of the precinct lay in Church Street adjacent to the Forbury Chapel, a plain oblong building of coursed sandstone which was built in the late 13th century to extend the provision for worship to the settlement that grew up outside the gate.

7.2.14 The boundary of the medieval precinct is also preserved on the west and southwest sides by a brick and sandstone rubble wall (sections of which are Grade II listed) and to the south by an embanked section of footpath which runs along the southern side of the Grange, a large expanse of open space to the south of the churchyard (*Plate 2*). The mature trees surrounding much of the Grange lend it a distinctly secluded character. Further to the E and NE of the Grange are several other areas of recreational grassland (Priory Park, Pinsley Mead and Stanley Holland Playing Fields).



Plate 2: View looking north-northwest across The Grange, showing the embankment with footpath in foreground

7.2.15 The residential street of Church Street and its continuation to the north (known as 'The Priory') running along the west side of the churchyard towards the River Kenwater appear to represent long-established roadways, the former being mentioned in documentary sources dating back to the late 14th century. Both streets are shown on Galliers' map of 1832. School Road appears to be a later addition to the street layout, added when the National School was built in the 1850s.

- *Built Form*

7.2.16 In terms of built form, there is a distinct contrast between the imposing edifice of the Priory Church and the remains of conventual buildings to the north, which are set within grassy lawned areas isolated from the urban townscape component to the west.

7.2.17 The urban townscape component is primarily represented by a series of 18th and 19th century two-storey townhouses (all Grade II listed) lining the southern side of Church Street and The Forbury, a three storey mid-18th century house on the northern side. Most of these houses face directly onto the street behind a narrow footway.

7.2.18 Other distinct built components within this character area comprise the substantial complex of mid to late 19th century National School buildings at School Road and a series of two storey terraced cottages of 17th and mid-19th century date at The Priory, to the south of the 19th century cast-iron footbridge over the River Kenwater.

- *Building Materials*

7.2.19 The Priory Church, the former conventual buildings (Old Priory) and the Forbury Chapel are all constructed of local reddish sandstone rubble and ashlar, as are the nearby mid-19th century National School buildings in School Road. The predominant building material for the houses within the urban townscape component (Church Street, School Road and The Priory) is red brick, sometimes clad in stucco, although there are some timber-framed cottages of 17th century date at The Priory. The roofs are chiefly of slate with some tiled roofs for the later 19th/20th century residential properties in School Road.

- *Streetscape*

7.2.20 The streets within the western portion of the character area (Church Street, School Road and The Priory) are generally narrow with a footway on one side of the street or none at all. The footways are of concrete or asphalt while in the vicinity of the Priory Church, it is constructed of river cobbles.

7.2.21 As one proceeds further eastwards along Church Street towards the Priory Church, there is a noticeable difference in streetscape character, with an increasing amount of greenery including a mature lime tree at the junction with School Road and a substantial tree-lined bay hedge flanking the northern side of Church Street, which, together with the three-storey late 18th/19th century town houses opposite, frame views looking eastwards towards the west front and tower of the Priory Church, which becomes increasingly prominent in the view.

- *Architectural Character*

7.2.22 The architectural character of this area may be said to comprise two distinct elements, reflecting the clear demarcation between the Priory Church and the urban townscape element on the western fringes of the character area. The central portion of the character area is dominated by the medieval Gothic edifice of the Priory Church (the commanding tower of which represents a prominent landmark in short, medium

and long-distance views of the town) together with the adjacent remains of the former medieval conventual buildings (The Old Priory) to the north (*Plate 3*).



Plate 3: View looking east towards Priory Church, showing churchyard wall

7.2.23 The architectural character of the urban townscape component on the western fringes of the study area is more varied. The dominant character is represented by a series of grand late Georgian/Victorian townhouses along Church Street, which exhibit Neo-Classical architectural detailing including prominent doorcases, sash windows, moulded and modillioned eaves and cornices, some having rusticated, stuccoed exteriors.

7.2.24 The townhouses contrast with the small-scale mid-19th century brick terraced cottages at The Priory, which nevertheless have some notable architectural detailing including hoodmoulds for the windows. The National Schools buildings situated prominently along School Road are designed in High Victorian Decorated Gothic style, typical of their date but also presumably reflecting the proximity of the Priory.

- *Built Heritage Assets (fig. 8; Tables 1-2)*

7.2.25 The Priory Precinct may be justifiably said to include the most important historic buildings within the town, above all the Grade I listed Priory Church. The extant remains of the church comprise the Norman Romanesque nave and north aisle of c.1123-30, the later parochial nave completed in about 1239 and the south aisle added c.1320. The tall west tower and west window were added in the 15th century. The Priory Church was subject to extensive restoration by the Victorian church architect George Gilbert Scott in 1872-9. The site of the demolished eastern end of the church is now grassed over leaving only information boards (sadly defaced) to mark its location.

- 7.2.26 Located to the immediate north of the Priory Church are the remains of the former medieval conventual buildings, comprising a Grade II listed stone range of 13th century date known as the Old Priory, which appears to incorporate the remains of the Priory infirmary (or possibly the Abbot's lodging) with a reredorter below; it was used as a gaol c. 1692 and later converted to use as the parish workhouse in the mid-18th century.
- 7.2.27 Lying at the western extent of the character area is the Forbury Chapel (originally dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury), a single-storey sandstone building of c.1284 with a fine hammerbeam roof of 1525. It is designated as a Grade II listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (*Plate 4*).



Plate 4: View northeast along Church Street showing Forbury Chapel and The Forbury, a Grade II listed 18th century house*

- 7.2.28 Located immediately to the east of the Forbury Chapel is The Forbury, a substantial Grade II* three-storey red brick mansion of mid-18th century date, which has a well-proportioned, symmetrical façade with fine Georgian detailing including a pedimented façade and a door case with curved pediment and entablature supported by fluted Doric pilasters.
- 7.2.29 A highly important built heritage asset situated within The Grange is the 17th century timber-framed former market hall (Grade II*), known as Grange Court, which was built c. 1633 by John Abel, Master Carpenter to King Charles I, and sited at the Buttercross at the northern end of the High Street. The imposing structure came to be viewed as an impediment to traffic and was eventually removed to its present site where it was reconstructed in 1856 as a gentleman's residence (*Plate 5*). The building remained in private ownership until 1939, when it was acquired by Leominster District Council, and is now a community hub hosting weddings and functions.
- 7.2.30 Other notable built heritage assets of late 19th/early 20th century date within The Grange include a disused drinking fountain (east side); a cricket pavilion of 1901 (north side) and a prominent Grade II listed war

memorial of 1922 located in the northeast corner of the Grange, comprising a bronze angel of Victory standing on a Portland stone plinth and an adjoining memorial wall with bronze plaque.



Plate 5: View of Grange Court (the former Market Hall of c.1633), looking east

- 7.2.31** The eastern portion of Church Street contains a series of Grade II listed late 18th/early 19th century three-storey townhouses (mostly along the south side) including Nos. 12-18 and Nos. 22-26 Church Street, distinguished by elegant late Georgian architectural detailing including prominent doorcases, sash windows, moulded and modillioned eaves, storey bands, and stucco facades (some with rusticated detailing). Adjoining these properties is the Old Vicarage, a two-storey Tudor Gothic house of 1849 with a stuccoed façade and ornamental bargeboarded gables.
- 7.2.32** Leading off to the north of Church Street is School Road, a residential street of post-medieval origin, dominated by the Grade II listed National School buildings built in 1857-8 and now converted for use as a community centre. The school, built of sandstone masonry with slate roofs in Decorated Gothic style, is situated behind a perimeter wall with ornate cast iron railings and gates which is also Grade II listed and defines the southern extent of the former playground. The residential properties along School Road appear to be of early to mid-20th century date and of little interest in architectural or historical terms.
- 7.2.33** Further to the northeast, along the roadway known as The Priory is a humble brick terrace of small, two-storey mid-19th century cottages of red-brick construction with distinctive label moulds over doors and windows and two 17th century timber-framed houses (all designated as Grade II). Pedestrian access to The Priory from the north is via an elegant mid-19th century cast-iron footbridge (Grade II) over the River Kenwater built in 1844.

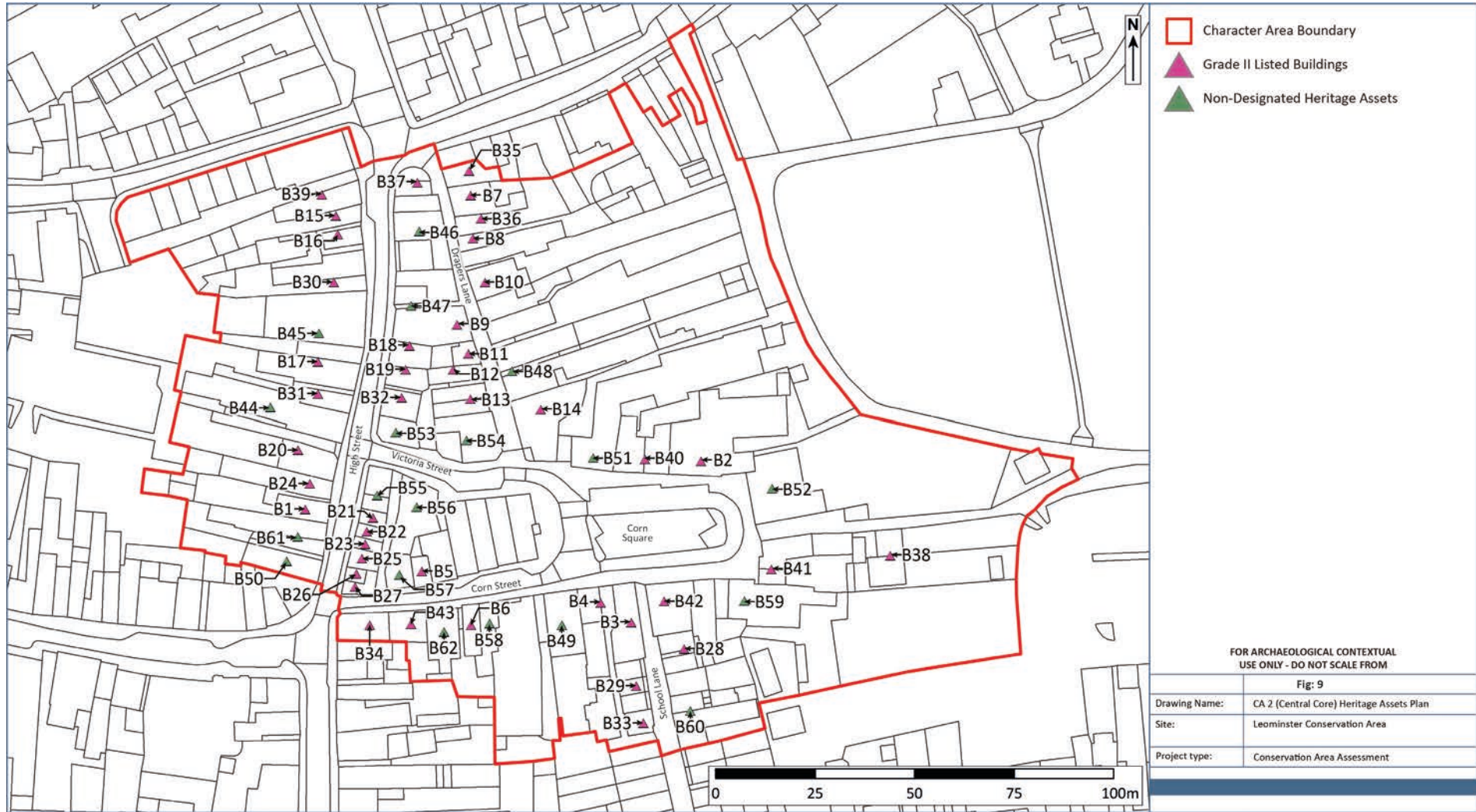
#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B1	1077617	The Priory Church of St Peter & St Paul	I
B2	1077616	Grange Court	II*
B3	1255417	The Forbury	II*
B4	1077618	Priory Building at the Old Rectory	II
B5	1255412	12 Church Street	II
B6	1255413	The Old Vicarage	II
B7	1255414	Wall to Garden of Number 20	II
B8	1255415	22 Church Street	II
B9	1255416	26 Church Street	II
B10	1255423	16 Church Street	II
B11	1255488	Community Centre Perimeter Walls, Railings, Gates & Gate Piers	II
B12	1255523	Wall Around the Grange Recreation Ground	II
B13	1255524	6-12 The Priory	II
B14	1255525	Footbridge Over River Lugg & Associated Guard Rails	II
B15	1270285	Community Centre	II
B16	1270324	18 Church Street	II
B17	1270325	24 Church Street	II
B18	1270326	Forbury Chapel	II
B19	1270330	14 Church Street	II
B20	1342415	Gates & Gate Piers to Churchyard of the Priory Church of St Peter & St Paul	II
B21	1470401	Leominster War Memorial	II

Table 1: CA1 Priory Precinct Character Area: List of Designated Heritage Assets (based on information contained in the National Heritage List for England)

#	HER Entry	Name
B22	1253	Arkwright Court, Former Leominster Junior School, W of Abbey
B23	3703	C19 Building, Priory Site
B24	4583	Barn, N of Priory Church
B25	12301	Almshouses, The Forbury
B26	19552	Gaol, Church Street
B27	58265	The Old Priory Offices
B28	58266	2-4 The Priory
B29	58267	Outbuilding, Grange Court

Table 2: CA1 Priory Precinct Character Area: List of Non - Designated Heritage Assets (primarily based on information contained in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record)

7.3 CA 2 Central Core



- *Summary Description*

7.3.1 This character area represents the historic central core of the market town, consisting of two main components. The first of these comprises Corn Square, a rectangular paved open space and car parking area (surrounded by commercial premises and a tourist information centre), the northern part of School Lane (a narrow lane leading south to Etnam Street) and Grange Walk (leading east from the square to the Grange recreation area).

7.3.2 The second component covers the former triangular market place demarcated by High Street, Drapers Lane and Corn Street comprising narrow streets and lanes lined by a variety of commercial premises, bisected by a 19th century roadway (Victoria Street) and several very narrow lanes (Cordwainers Lane, Ironmongers Lane and Butchers Row) affording pedestrian access within the historic core.

- *Summary of Historic Character*

7.3.3 This character area can be broadly characterised as the commercial heart of the town centre, both in terms of its historic character and present function, with limited residential elements represented by flats over commercial premises and a small number of houses. Corn Square remains an important open space within the town centre (*Plate 6*), still used as the historic venue for the weekly market on Fridays and less frequently for farmers' markets and other public events while High Street and Drapers Lane remain the principal shopping streets within the town.

- *Summary of Historical Development*

7.3.4 Historically, the rectangular open space of Corn Square appears to represent the original market place and corn market, first documented in the late 13th century as 'Corncepying'. The origins of Corn Square are unclear and it has been previously suggested that it could represent a late medieval/early post-medieval addition to the market area. However more recent analysis has suggested that it may represent a market area of late Saxon or early Norman date, thus possibly predating the establishment of the planned urban settlement following the refoundation of Leominster Priory in 1123.

7.3.5 The triangular wedge-shaped area defined to the west by the slightly curved alignment of High Street, Drapers Lane (to the east) and Corn Street (to the south) probably represents the market place laid out as part of the planned urban settlement established in the early to mid-12th century, shortly after the refoundation of the Priory, which appears to have been infilled with buildings by no later than the end of the 16th century.



Plate 6: View east looking across Corn Square

- *Plan Form/Spatial Layout*

7.3.6 The plan form of this character area comprises two distinct components, both of medieval origin, namely the rectangular market place/corn market of Corn Square and the triangular market place defined by the High Street, Drapers Lane and Corn Street.

7.3.7 Long narrow burgage plot boundaries laid out to the west of the High Street, east of Drapers Lane and south of Corn Street probably represent part of the original planned settlement layout, while the plots within the triangular market place appear to represent later medieval/early post-medieval infill.

7.3.8 Extending to the east of Corn Square towards the Grange is the narrow footway of Grange Walk, the course of which appears to represent the original routeway leading east from the town to the immediate south of the Priory precinct, predating to the establishment of Etnam Street further to the south in the 13th century. Leading off to the south of Corn Square towards Etnam Street is School Lane, a narrow pedestrian thoroughfare probably representing a late medieval addition to the street plan, laid out at some time during the 15th century.

- *Built Form*

7.3.9 Within Corn Square, there is a noticeable contrast between the properties along the southern and eastern sides of the Square, consisting of two storey buildings of timber-framed and brick construction and the taller buildings lining the northern side of the street, which are mostly of three storeys, of brick construction and stuccoed.

7.3.10 Most of the buildings lining High Street, Drapers Lane and Corn Street are of two to three storeys (predominantly of three storeys along the High Street) with narrow densely packed frontages typical of

medieval burgage tenements with prominent, steeply pitched gables and some overhanging jetties, creating a distinct sense of enclosure and intimacy strongly redolent of its medieval origins, which is further enhanced by the narrow, covered alleyways of Cordwainers Lane and Ironmongers Lane (linking High Street and Drapers Lane) and Butchers Lane to the rear of the High Street.

- *Building Materials*

7.3.11 In terms of building materials within this character area, there is a significant preponderance of surviving timber-framed buildings with plaster or brick infill. In most cases, timbers have been painted black with infill (brick or plaster) painted white. A number of timber-framed buildings also have stuccoed frontages although features such as jettied upper floors and steeply pitched gables remain clearly discernible. Red brick remains the predominant building material for 18th/early 19th century buildings although there are a number of later 19th century buildings with distinctive yellow brick frontages. The predominant roofing materials comprise both Welsh slate and plain tile.

- *Streetscape*

7.3.12 In terms of streetscape, the High Street has narrow footways paved with stone slabs flanking a paved carriageway, while the alleyway of Drapers Lane is completely pedestrianised. Within Corn Square, the footways are paved with large stone slabs, and setts in limited areas, and the carriageway is paved with tumbled concrete blocks with traffic calming measures at pedestrian crossing points. There is little greenery within the square except for two ornamental trees planted at the east and west ends.

- *Architectural Character*

7.3.13 The architectural character of Corn Square is varied, with a cluster of two-storey timber-framed and jettied properties of 15th/17th century date forming a coherent, visually striking group of early buildings along the south side of the square at the junction with School Lane, several with later 20th century shopfronts inserted (*Plate 7*). The north side is lined with several three-storey 18th century houses with plain Georgian stuccoed facades with sash windows, contrasting with the former Post Office (now the Dukes Head Inn), a half-timbered and brick building in florid Neo-Tudor style of 1908.

7.3.14 Featuring prominently at the east end of the square is the Lloyds Bank building of 1866, with its elegant yellow brick façade with stone dressings in Italianate *palazzo* style, along with the former Herefordshire Council Offices of 1875, also in Italianate style with a yellow brick façade with polychrome brick dressings. At the west end of the square is a somewhat uninspired two-storey late 1960s brick building housing a restaurant and several shop premises, occupying the site of the former Corn Exchange. The east front has a projecting glazed balcony at upper storey level, adjacent to which is the ornate Millennium Clock.



Plate 7: View looking southeast towards series of 15th-17th century timber framed buildings along the south side of Corn Square at the junction with School Lane

- 7.3.15** The architectural character of the High Street and Drapers Lane is similarly diverse, comprising several exposed timber-framed structures (some jettied) of 16th or 17th century date, juxtaposed alongside late 18th/19th century brick buildings with sash windows with gauged brick headers. These later frontages often conceal evidence of earlier timber-framed cores, the side and rear portions of which can frequently be discerned from the alleyways to the rear of the High Street and Drapers Lane. Most of these properties have later shopfronts of late 19th/early 20th century date, with traditional architectural detailing including moulded hoods on enriched modillions, fascia boards, pilasters, consoles, cast-iron brackets and canted plate glass windows.
- 7.3.16** However, there are some late 20th century glazed shop frontages (particularly along the west side of High Street) with broad continuous fascia which detract somewhat from the overall coherence of the street scene. The east end of Corn Street is largely dominated by two-storey commercial premises with glazed shop frontages of mid-late 20th century date, contrasting noticeably with the earlier timber-framed and painted brick buildings situated towards the west end of the street.
- 7.3.17** At the northern end of the character area, the three-storey Regency-style façade of the Buttercross Arcade and Library, with its Tuscan colonnade and stuccoed façade with plain stone pilasters, moulded cornice and parapet is a relatively recent addition to the street scene, built in 1992-93 on the site of the Victorian market hall, but is considered to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding *locale*.
- *Built Heritage Assets (fig. 9; Tables 3-4)*
- 7.3.18** In terms of built heritage assets, there is a significant number of listed buildings (43 in total, all Grade II listed) within the central core, as well as a number of buildings which may be considered to be non-designated heritage assets of local interest.

- 7.3.19 A significant proportion of the designated heritage assets are timber-framed buildings broadly ranging in date from the 15th to the 17th centuries. The earliest surviving timber-framed buildings appear to be represented by a pair of two storey properties on the south side of Corn Square, flanking the north end of School Lane.
- 7.3.20 No. 16-17 Corn Square is a complex L-shaped building of probable mid-15th century date, with three chambers situated within the jettied upper storey; while the adjoining property at the former Three Horseshoes Inn (now Café #1) is a jettied two storey house of 16th century date with later 18th/20th century additions. Further to the west along Corn Street are a number of surviving timber-framed houses of late 16th or 17th century date with later 19th century shop frontages (Nos. 3 & 6 Corn Square).
- 7.3.21 Along the High Street there is a significant number of Grade II listed timber-framed houses of 16th/17th century date, some re-fronted in the 18th or early 19th century, with later 19th/early 20th century shopfronts. No. 1 High Street, at the corner of High Street and Drapers Lane, has a stuccoed frontage of late 18th century date concealing an earlier 17th century timber-framed rear portion.



Plate 8: View northeast showing the corner of High Street and Corn Street showing a series of late 16th/17th century timber framed buildings including Nos. 43-45 High Street in foreground

- 7.3.22 Especially noteworthy is a group of late 16th/17th century timber-framed houses with jettied frontages along the east side of the High Street, comprising Nos. 37, 39, 41 and particularly Nos. 43-45 High Street (Plate 8). The latter building is of especial note, a three-storey timber-framed and jettied structure occupying a prominent position at the corner of the High Street and Corn Street, the interior of which was found to contain evidence of wall paintings of early 17th century date.

7.3.23 Drapers Lane similarly contains a significant concentration of historic buildings, including a number of 16th/17th century timber-framed buildings including Nos. 9-11, with a close-studded, twin-gabled frontage with projecting uppermost storey with moulded bresummer (*Plate 9*) and Nos. 20-22 Drapers Lane, a two-storey timber-framed building with gabled dormers, presumed to be of 17th century date although it has been suggested that some of the surviving fabric may date back to the 15th century. However, the majority of the properties appear to be modest late 18th century brick buildings although it is possible that several may conceal evidence of earlier timber-framing.



Plate 9: View looking north-northwest along Drapers Lane, showing twin gabled and jettied timber-framed building at Nos. 9-11, of 16th/17th century date

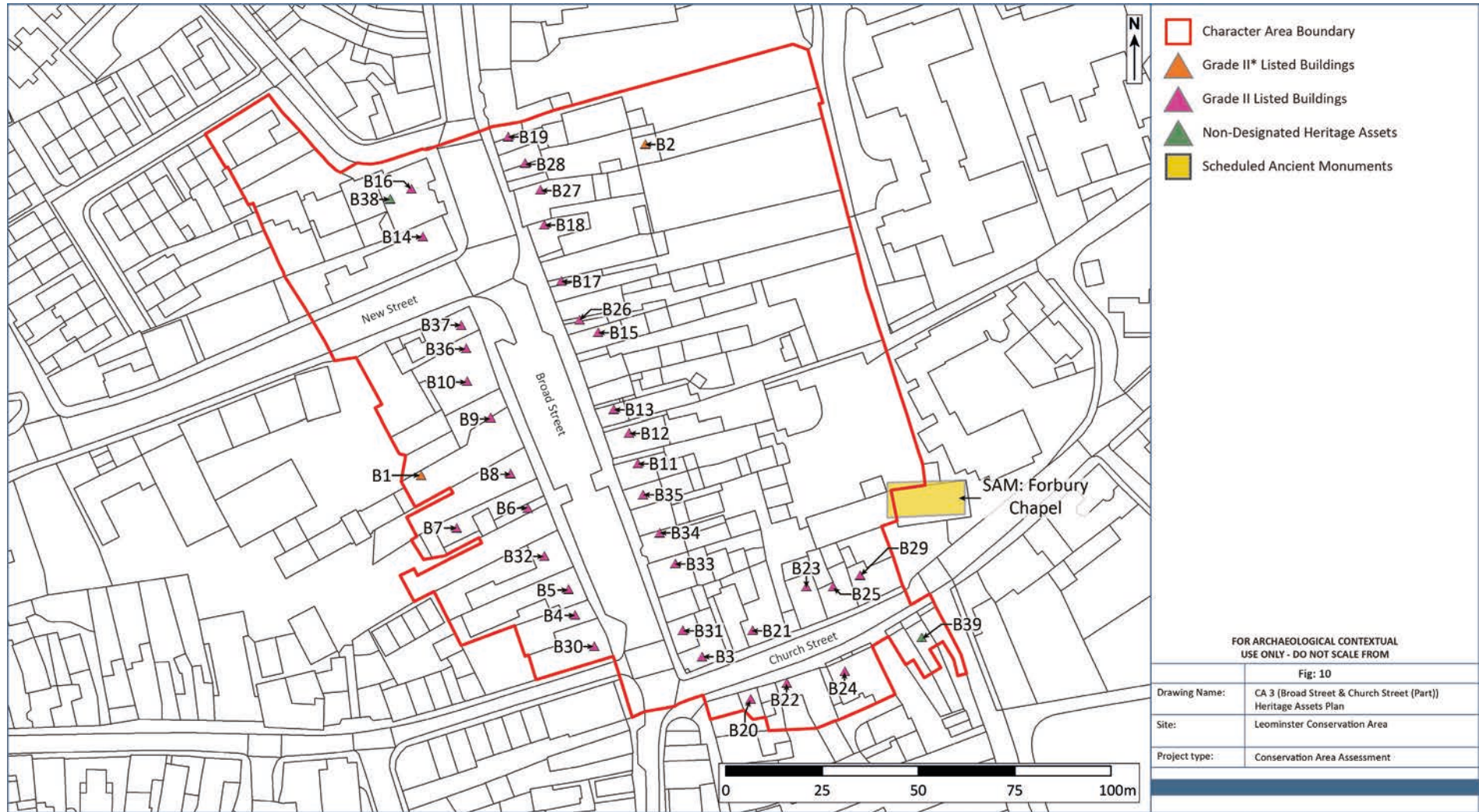
#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B1	1119684	Number 30 R Bright Butchers & Outbuilding at Rear	II
B2	1255419	Conservative Association Offices, Conservative Club & Rankin Constitutional Club	II
B3	1255420	16 Corn Square	II
B4	1255421	16A & 17 Corn Square	II
B5	1255424	3 Corn Street	II
B6	1255425	6 Corn Street	II
B7	1255426	3 & 5 Drapers Lane	II
B8	1255427	9 & 11 Drapers Lane	II
B9	1255428	12 & 14 Drapers Lane	II
B10	1255429	13 & 15 Drapers Lane	II
B11	1255430	16 Drapers Lane	II
B12	1255431	18 Drapers Lane	II
B13	1255432	20 & 22 Drapers Lane	II
B14	1255433	27 Drapers Lane	II
B15	1255448	4 High Street	II
B16	1255466	6 High Street	II
B17	1255467	20 High Street	II
B18	1255468	Number 21 Including Shop	II
B19	1255469	23, 23A & 23B High Street	II
B20	1255470	26 High Street	II
B21	1255471	35 High Street	II
B22	1255472	37 High Street	II
B23	1255473	39 High Street	II
B24	1255474	28 High Street	II
B25	1255475	41 High Street	II
B26	1255476	43 High Street	II
B27	1255477	45 High Street	II
B28	1255485	3 & 5 School Lane	II
B29	1255486	6 & 8 School Lane	II
B30	1270275	8 & 10 High Street	II
B31	1270276	22 High Street	II
B32	1270277	25 High Street	II
B33	1270284	10 School Lane	II
B34	1270286	1 South Street	II
B35	1270293	1 Drapers Lane	II
B36	1270294	7 Drapers Lane	II
B37	1270304	1 High Street	II
B38	1270311	The Nook	II
B39	1270312	2 High Street	II
B40	1270327	4, 5 & 6 Corn Square	II
B41	1270328	10 Corn Square	II
B42	1270329	The Three Horseshoes Public House & Shop Adjoining	II
B43	1270331	2 Corn Street	II

Table 3: CA 2 Central Core - Table of Designated Built Heritage Assets (based on information contained in the National Heritage List for England)

#	HER Entry	Name
B44	5520	24 High Street
B45	8848	14-18 High Street
B46	8853	8-9 High Street
B47	8854	13-19 High Street
B48	8857	17-25 Drapers Lane
B49	8864	18 Corn Square
B50	58263	36 High Street
B51	58270	3 Corn Square
B52	58271	9 Corn Square
B53	58272	Bawn House, Victoria Street
B54	58273	Victoria House, Victoria Street
B55	58274	31-33, High Street
B56	58276	Jubilee Building, Victoria Street
B57	58277	1 Corn Street, Victoria Street
B58	58278	8-12 Corn Street
B59	58279	11 Corn Square
B60	58282	7-13 School Lane
B61	58264	32-34 High Street
B62	58252	4 Corn Street

Table 4: CA 2 Central Core - Table of Non-Designated Built Heritage Assets (primarily based on information contained in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record)

7.4 CA 3: Broad Street/Church Street (part)



- *Summary Description*

7.4.1 This character area includes the majority of Broad Street (to the south of the junction with Vicarage Street) and the western portion of Church Street extending up to but not including The Forbury which marked the former western boundary of the Priory Precinct.

7.4.2 Broad Street represents an important commercial thoroughfare and urban open space of medieval date, forming an historic extension to the original market place and linking the High Street to the historic northern suburb of the town. Church Street is also of medieval origin, leading eastwards from the town towards the precinct of Leominster Priory.

- *Summary of Historic Character*

7.4.3 Broad Street, as its name suggests, is a wide thoroughfare aligned roughly north-south (*Plate 10*) and is strongly commercial in character, being lined with a mixture of office and shop premises including antique dealers, estate agents' and solicitors' offices, a long-established newsagent's shop, a restaurant, two art galleries and one surviving bank (HSBC). It remains a key urban public space within the centre of the town that is still used from time to time for public events including the May Fair and Christmas Market.



Plate 10: Broad Street looking north towards the junction with New Street

7.4.4 The western end of Church Street may be described as having a transitional character, with commercial properties towards its western end, which gradually changes to a more leafy, residential aspect as one proceeds eastwards towards the Priory precinct as evidenced by a series of fine 18th/19th century townhouses.

7.4.5 The layout of Broad Street and the western end of Church Street reflects their historic medieval origins although the architectural character is chiefly defined by Georgian and Victorian properties, many with later 19th/20th century shopfronts, with considerable evidence of earlier timber-framed buildings of late medieval date concealed behind later façades.

- *Summary of Historical Development*

7.4.6 Broad Street was laid out as a northward extension of the original High Street, probably during the second half of the 12th century. Its width indicates that it was built to provide an extension to the original market place, reflecting the growing prosperity of the town during this period. It remained a key commercial area within the town from the medieval period onwards, serving as the centre for the sale of sheep and pigs from the 13th century until the early 1800s. Its historic commercial origins are emphasised by the presence of numerous late 19th/early 20th century shopfronts along both sides of the street.

7.4.7 At the south end of Broad Street is an historic crossroads where it meets the High Street, Drapers Lane, Church Street and Burgess Street. This crossroads was first referred to in the late 13th century as 'Five Crosses' and was also the site of the medieval Buttercross, where the weekly market for butter, poultry and eggs was held. The site of the Buttercross was later occupied by the market hall, an ornate two-storey timber-framed building originally with an arcaded ground floor, erected in 1633 and relocated to the Grange in 1855. Archaeological excavations to the west of the Buttercross site in 1990 yielded significant evidence of 12th-15th century occupation.

7.4.8 Church Street represents the historic western approach leading from the south end of Broad Street towards the Priory (attested by the presence of the late 13th century Forbury Chapel, which stood at the western gate to the monastice precinct) and thus probably represents one of the earliest components of the medieval street plan.

- *Plan Form/Spatial Layout*

7.4.9 The plan form of Broad Street strongly reflects its medieval origins, with densely packed, narrow burgage plots laid out to the rear of the frontages along both sides of the street. Those along the west side of the street have been heavily truncated by 19th/20th century development while those on the east side have survived relatively intact.

7.4.10 The eastern extent of these burgage plots is defined by a stone and brick masonry wall which respected the western boundary of the Priory precinct, gradually increasing in length to the north as the course of Broad Street diverged slightly from the north-south alignment of the precinct boundary. This rear boundary wall, the course of which still can be partially followed along Arkwright Close, appears to have been renewed and rebuilt in places during the post-medieval and modern periods, although the lowest courses could possibly incorporate medieval masonry.

7.4.11 The plan form of Church Street reflects its transitional location between Broad Street and the western boundary of the Priory precinct, with narrow burgage plots focused towards the western end of the street, with larger townhouses set within more spacious, irregularly shaped plots further to the east.

- *Built Form*

7.4.12 The buildings along both Broad Street and the western portion of Church Street are mostly of three storeys with the exception of a number of substantial four-storey properties towards the north end of Broad Street (No. 21 on the west side, at the corner with New Street, and Nos. 32 & 34 on the east side).

7.4.13 Most buildings face directly onto the street, with a small number of mews dwellings located to the rear of the street frontage (No. 40a Broad Street and Alton Court Mews). There are only a few gaps between buildings, the chief exceptions being the broad Victorian carriage entrance to Lion Yard (on the west side of Broad Street) and to the left of No. 9 Church Street. The vertical rhythm of the streetscape in this area is emphasised by the height of the buildings and the presence of numerous shopfronts of 19th/early 20th century date.

- *Building Materials*

7.4.14 The predominant building material is brick (generally laid in Flemish Bond), often with stucco cladding, although there are several earlier timber-framed buildings, some of which are concealed by later brick or stuccoed exteriors, with a small number situated in rear courtyards. Welsh slate is the chief roofing material for the majority of the buildings within the character area, although some buildings are roofed in plain or composite tile.

- *Streetscape*

7.4.15 Broad Street is a one-way thoroughfare (running from south to north) with fairly wide footways paved with stone slabs, with controlled bay-parking on both sides and an informal crossing point roughly midway along the street. In Church Street, traffic is two-way, with narrow footways paved with concrete and asphalt along the north side with interlocking stone pavers along the south side.

- *Architectural Character*

7.4.16 The architectural character is chiefly defined by tall, late Georgian and early Victorian properties, with a mixture of stuccoed and exposed red-brick exteriors, the chief exception being the timber-framed and jettied exterior of No. 18 Broad Street (built c.1600). Most of the properties along Broad Street and the westernmost extremity of Church Street have later 19th/20th century shopfronts inserted. However, there is also significant evidence of earlier timber-framed buildings of 15th to 17th century date, mostly concealed behind later frontages.

- *Built Heritage Assets (fig. 10; Tables 5-6)*

7.4.17 Almost all the properties along Broad Street and the west portion of Church Street are listed buildings (two of which are Grade II* while the remaining 35 are Grade II). The earliest surviving properties are located along the east side of Broad Street and include several houses containing late medieval fabric. Recent investigations have demonstrated that several of the timber-framed buildings assigned a 17th century date by the Royal Commission survey in the early 1930s and subsequent statutory listing descriptions in fact contain fabric of medieval date.

- 7.4.18 Of particular note are No. 30, where an early 19th century frontage conceals internal timber-framing that was previously dated to the 17th century but may in fact represent a much-altered building with kingpost roof structure of late medieval date, and a Grade II* listed group of timber-framed and weatherboarded outbuildings to the rear of No. 40 Broad Street, comprising a north range ('Dairy') and an unusual east galleried range that appear largely to date to the late 15th/early 16th century and may originally have been constructed as lodgings or a guest house connected with the nearby Priory.



Plate 11: East side of Broad Street looking southeast

- 7.4.19 A significant number of 17th century timber-framed buildings survive along the east side of Broad Street, mostly concealed behind later brick or stuccoed frontages of Georgian date (*Plate 11*). Notable examples include No. 14A, a three-storey house with a roughcast exterior concealing evidence of a 17th century timber-framed structure (evidenced by the shallow jettied upper storey) and Nos. 22-24, which retain a 17th century timber-framed core and rear wing behind a mid-18th century stuccoed façade. Undoubtedly, the most prominent 17th century building is No. 18 (Fletchers Newsagents), an imposing three-storey building of c.1600 with an exposed box-framed frontage with twin-gables and two jetties carried on moulded bressumers, with a late 19th century glazed shopfront beneath.
- 7.4.20 At the northern extremity of the character area, Brook Hall, occupying a prominent setting at the corner of Broad Street and Vicarage Street, is a detached two-and-a-half-storey timber-framed house of mid-late 16th century date (roughcast externally) with a jettied upper storey that was re-fronted c.1870-80 in austere yellow brick when it became a meeting hall. The interior, although partially converted to flats in 2017, retains evidence of 16th/17th century wall paintings and panelling, suggestive of a high-status residence.
- 7.4.21 The remaining buildings along both sides of Broad Street are predominantly townhouses of 18th or early 19th century date with front elevations of red brick or stucco, with later inserted late 19th/early 20th century shopfronts. Characteristic features include doorcases with open pediments, flat hoods or entablatures on

pilasters or attached columns; sash windows set within flat-arched openings with gauged brick headers or segmental arched openings and parapets with modillioned, moulded or coped cornices.

- 7.4.22 Some evidence of Victorian and later remodelling is apparent, most notably represented by the Lion Works, originally built as the Red Lion Inn in the late 18th/early 19th century and remodelled in 1843 as the Lion Hotel with a substantial two-storey brick assembly room (Lion Ballroom) added to the rear, which retains a well-preserved Neo-Classical interior with richly detailed plasterwork. The hotel and associated buildings were incorporated into the extensive premises of the Lion Works Foundry established on the west side of Broad Street in the 1860s for the production of agricultural machinery. At the south end of the character area, the HSBC Bank at the corner of Broad Street and Burgess Street is a late 18th century three-storey house with a distinctive sandstone colonnaded façade added in 1921 (*Plate 12*).



Plate 12: View looking northwest along west side of Broad Street, with the HSBC bank with colonnaded façade at the junction with Burgess Street

- 7.4.23 Several notable late 19th or early 20th century shopfronts have been inserted at ground-floor level in several of the townhouses along both sides of Broad Street. On the east side, examples include No. 18 (Fletchers Newsagents, late 19th century), No. 20 (Foxton House, of early 20th century date) and, most notably, Nos. 14-14A, which have a late 19th century glazed shopfront with a deep fascia-board and moulded hood carried on Ionic pilasters.
- 7.4.24 Other noteworthy shopfronts along the west side include Nos. 9-11 Broad Street, a pair of late 18th century townhouses with a late 19th century glazed shopfront with enriched fascia-board and modillioned hood supported by elaborate figurehead (caryatid) consoles carried on panelled pilasters. The elaborate recessed shop frontage to the left of the entrance to the former Lion Works premises appears to be of early 20th century date, set behind four large segmental arched openings with scrolled consoles with lion's heads at either end.



Plate 13: View from the southeast end of Broad Street looking east along Church Street

- 7.4.25** Church Street forms the historic western approach from the town to the Priory precinct (as evidenced by the presence of the 13th century Forbury Chapel) and thus probably represents one of the earliest components of the medieval street plan. Both sides of the street are lined with townhouses of late 18th/early to mid-19th century date (all Grade II listed), mostly with painted brick or stucco frontages.
- 7.4.26** The frontages of several houses along the north side conceal evidence of 17th century timber-framed cores (notably Nos. 3, 5, 7 and 9 Church Street) and a number of modern shopfronts have been inserted at the west end of the street. Along the south side of Church Street is a series of prominent early to mid-19th century three-storey townhouses with stuccoed and rusticated frontages in Neo-Classical style, most notably, The Gatehouse of c.1840-50 with its elaborate porch with fluted Corinthian columns (*Plate 13*).

#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B1	1119689	Lion Ballroom & Youth Enquiry Service	II*
B2	1255399	Building in Yard to Rear of Numbers 40 & 42	II*
B3	1255374	2 Broad Street	II
B4	1255375	3 Broad Street	II
B5	1255376	5 Broad Street	II
B6	1255377	9 & 11 Broad Street	II
B7	1255378	Building 10m to W of Number 11 Broad Street	II
B8	1255379	13 Broad Street	II
B9	1255380	Lion Works	II
B10	1255381	17 Broad Street	II
B11	1255382	18 Broad Street	II
B12	1255383	Foxtton House	II
B13	1255384	22 & 24 Broad Street	II
B14	1255385	Highbury House Antiques	II
B15	1255392	26 Broad Street	II
B16	1255393	Brook Hall	II

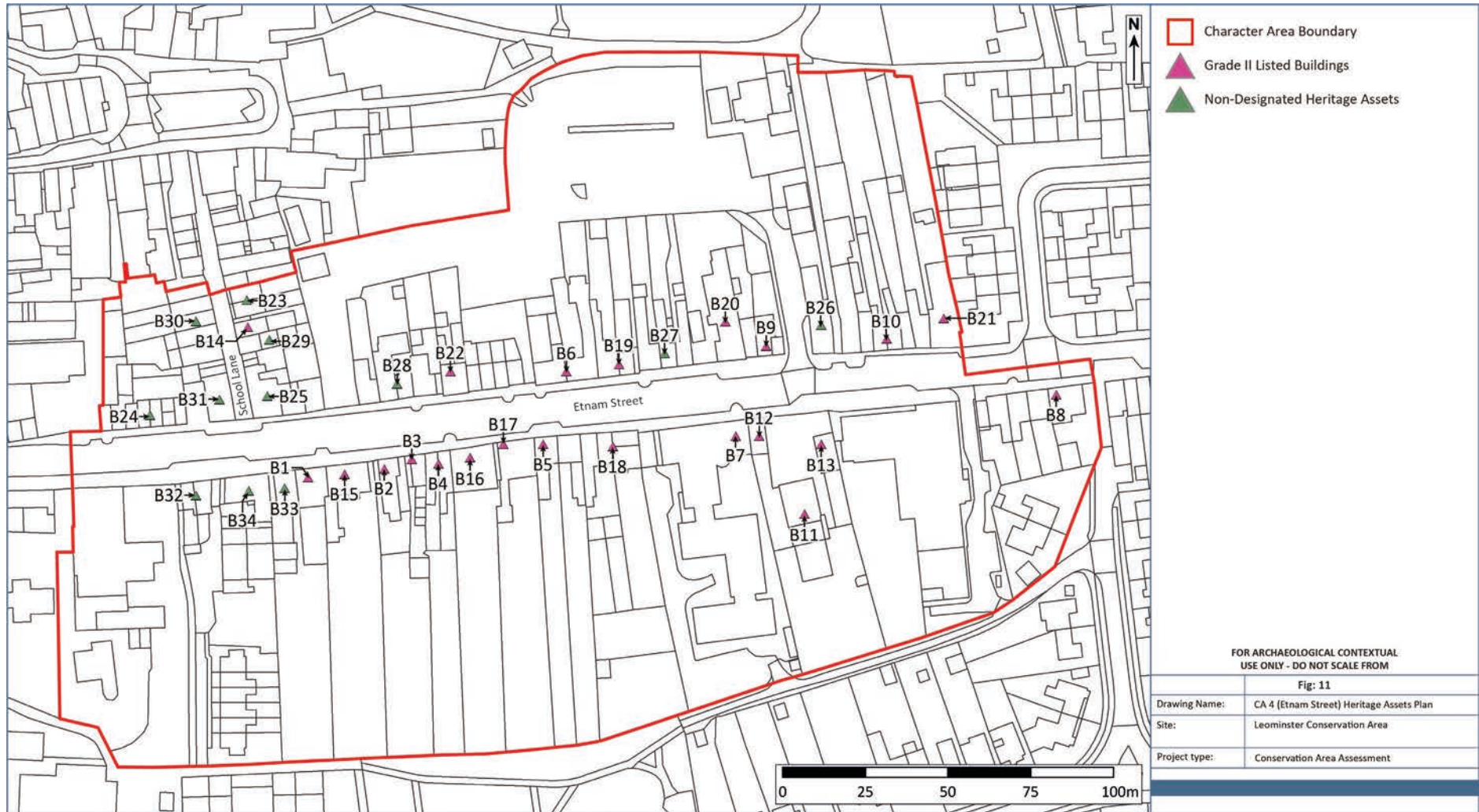
#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B17	1255395	32 & 34 Broad Street	II
B18	1255396	36 Broad Street	II
B19	1255401	44 Broad Street	II
B20	1255408	2, 2A & 4 Church Street	II
B21	1255409	3, 5 & 7 Church Street	II
B22	1255410	6 & 6A Church Street	II
B23	1255411	9 Church Street	II
B24	1255418	The Gatehouse	II
B25	1255422	Kembles	II
B26	1270313	28, 30 & 30A Broad Street	II
B27	1270316	38 Broad Street	II
B28	1270317	40 & 42 Broad Street	II
B29	1270323	The Frere House & Attached Wall	II
B30	1270343	Midland Bank	II
B31	1270344	The Grape Vaults Public House	II
B32	1270345	7 Broad Street	II
B33	1270346	12 Broad Street	II
B34	1270347	Antique Market Flats A & B	II
B35	1270348	16 Broad Street	II
B36	1270349	19 & 19B Broad Street	II
B37	1270350	21 Broad Street	II
B38	8815	27 Broad Street	Unlisted
B39	58269	8-10 Church Street	Unlisted

Table 5: CA 3 Broad Street and Church Street West - Table of Designated Built Heritage Assets (based on information contained in the National Heritage List for England)

#	HER Entry	Name
B38	8815	27 Broad Street
B39	58269	8-10 Church Street

Table 6: CA 3 Broad Street and Church Street West - Table of Non-Designated Built Heritage Assets (primarily based on information contained in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record)

7.5 CA 4: Etnam Street



- *Summary Description:*

7.5.1 This character area comprises the majority of Etnam Street, extending east as far as the junction with Caswell Crescent to the south (which roughly denotes the point where the line of the medieval town ditch crossed the street), together with the southern half of School Lane. It may be described in broad terms as an historic suburb that is now predominantly residential (comprising a mixture of terraced houses, flats and residential homes) with commercial elements focused towards the western end of the street (including along the southern portion of School Lane).

- *Summary of Historic Character*

7.5.2 Etnam Street is a broad linear east-west thoroughfare of medieval origin (*Plate 14*), representing an historically important access route continuing east from the town towards the Worcester Road (A44).

7.5.3 Its layout still strongly reflects its historic medieval origins, although its architectural character is chiefly Georgian with some earlier surviving 16th/17th century elements.

- *Summary of Historical Development*

7.5.4 The street was probably laid out in the 13th century as a southern extension of the medieval town; excavations to the rear of Nos. 43-45 in 1997-8 revealed evidence of occupation deposits and features dated between c.1250 and 1550.



Plate 14: General view looking west along Etnam Street

- *Plan Form/Spatial Layout*

7.5.5 Both sides of the street were originally lined with narrow medieval burgage plots, most of which survive intact along the south side (excepting the tenement plots occupied by the Baptist Chapel and the Waverley House care home), with their southern extent defined by the former line of the medieval town ditch, the course of which is largely preserved by the existing public footpath running to the rear.

7.5.6 The burgage plots along the north side appear to have begun roughly to the east of 25-29, respecting an earlier block of north-south-aligned plots fronting onto Corn Square, which were probably laid out in the mid-late 12th century. Most of the burgage plots associated with the houses lining the north side of the street have been heavily truncated by late 20th century car park and housing development

7.5.7 The narrow footway of School Lane, running north-south from Etnam Street to Corn Square, appears to postdate the creation of Etnam Street in the 13th century and cuts directly through the block of earlier north-south aligned burgage plots at the west end of the street. It appears to have been established by no later than the 15th century, based on the evidence of extant buildings. The south end of the street is flanked by a series of two-storey brick cottages of late 18th/19th century date that have been converted to commercial premises with the insertion of glazed shopfronts.

- *Built Form*

7.5.8 Most of the buildings are three-storey, with smaller, discrete groupings of two-storey properties, most notably the terrace of early 19th century houses at Nos. 56-62 and a row of two-storey commercial premises along the north side of the street between School Lane and The Bell Inn. Most buildings face directly onto the street, with a small number of houses built on backland sites behind the street frontage.

7.5.9 The south side of the street is heavily lined with houses with relatively few gaps between buildings, the chief exceptions being the Baptist Chapel with its open courtyard, the vehicular entrance to Norfolk House and a Victorian carriage entrance at Nos. 44/44a, as well as a garage forecourt at the west end of the street. On the north side, there are more pronounced gaps between buildings, with several narrow lanes leading off the street frontage (School Lane, Duke's Walk), as well as an access road and alleyway leading to the large modern car park to the rear of these properties.

7.5.10 Limited modern infill along the south side is particularly represented by the substantial block of retirement apartments at Norfolk House, built in Neo-Georgian style in 1992 in keeping with the character of the adjoining late Georgian townhouses, as well as the late 1970s residential care home at Waverley House, which was further enlarged in the early 21st century.

- *Building Materials*

7.5.11 The predominant building material is red brick, with a number of earlier timber-framed buildings, some of which were encased in brick in the 18th/19th century. Welsh slate is the material used for roofing the majority of the late Georgian houses, although there are some examples of plain tile roofing (including the Leominster Baptist Chapel) and other properties have modern composite tile roofs.

- *Streetscape*

7.5.12 The streetscape is predominantly residential and leafy in character. The footways are of varying widths and are paved with a mixture of concrete paving slabs and asphalt, with several mature trees (mostly limes) set either on the footways or on buildouts projecting intermittently into the street, which demarcate on-street parking areas. The trees frame long axial views along the street to the east (with glimpsed views looking out towards open countryside) and looking westwards back into town towards South Street.

7.5.13 Towards the west end, the character changes from chiefly residential to commercial, as evidenced by a series of two-storey premises with modern shop frontages extending along the north side of the street to the west of the Bell Inn and Watson's motor showroom on the south side.

- *Architectural Character*

7.5.14 The architectural character is primarily defined by a series of fine late 18th/19th century brick buildings in a restrained Georgian style comprising both large townhouses and rows of modest houses and terraced dwellings, a significant proportion of which are Grade II listed. The majority of these properties have exposed red-brick exteriors with some being stucco-clad or whitewashed. There is evidence of earlier timber-framed buildings, some of which are concealed by later Georgian frontages.

- *Built Heritage Assets (fig. 11; Tables 7-8)*



Plate 15: View northeast showing timber-framing in west gable end of Nos. 43-45 Etnam Street

7.5.15 There are 21 number of listed buildings within the character area and a further 12 considered as non-designated heritage assets. The earliest surviving fabric may be represented by a reused moulded beam of 15th century date within No. 43-45, although the form of the exposed timber-framing in the west gable

end, incorporated within an early 19th century brick exterior, suggests a probable 16th or 17th century date for its construction (*Plate 15*).

7.5.16 Several other examples of 17th century timber-framed houses hidden behind later 18th/19th century frontages include Nos 3-5 (odd) on the north side and No. 32, where the stuccoed late Georgian façade conceals elements of an early 17th century house.

7.5.17 Located roughly midway along the north side is a notable group of early timber-framed buildings situated within truncated burgage plots, comprising The Chequers Inn (No. 61) of 16th/early 17th century date and Nos. 63-67, probably of 16th century origin. Both buildings have jettied upper storeys (underbuilt in the 19th century). This important group of early timber-framed buildings forms an especially distinctive and picturesque element in the streetscape, contrasting with the two-and-a-half-storey late 19th century shop premises of brick with elaborate faux-timber framing at No. 73 (*Plate 16*).



Plate 16: View looking northwest towards the Chequers Inn and Nos. 63-67 Etnam Street (of 16th/17th century date) with No. 73, a late Victorian building to right of picture

7.5.18 Of particular significance is a group of substantial late 18th/early 19th century three-storey townhouses along the south side from Nos. 18 to 46 (even nos.), excluding the modern apartments at Norfolk House, which are distinguished by their symmetrical front elevations with fine Neo-Classical architectural detailing including pedimented and pilastered doorcases, moulded parapets, slate roofs and sash windows (*Plate 17*).



Plate 17: View southwest showing Grade II listed late Georgian townhouses at Nos. 18, 20 & 22 Etnam Street

- 7.5.19 Leominster Baptist Chapel, Manse and Almshouses of 1771, towards the west end of this group of late Georgian townhouses, are ranged around three sides of an open courtyard set back from the street frontage. They represent a particularly well-preserved group of late 18th century nonconformist religious buildings, all built of red brick, with the chapel being a particularly fine composition within its pedimented façade.
- 7.5.20 The houses along the north side chiefly consist of modest late Georgian houses and terraces that are comparatively less elaborate in their architectural detailing, although there are some notable survivals, including the Bell Inn (early 19th century), Nos. 43-45 (a pair of early 19th century houses incorporating the remains of a timber-framed jettied building of 16th or 17th century date) and Nos. 77-85 (odd), a row of late 18th/early 19th century houses including the former Dukes Arms public house at its western end (*Plate 18*).
- 7.5.21 Notable non-designated built heritage assets include No. 73, originally built c.1890 as a temperance hotel and later converted to use as a bakery and a café, which may be regarded as the most prominent Victorian building, which is constructed of brick with faux-timber framing at upper-storey level with a steeply pitched roof with elaborate gabled dormers.
- 7.5.22 Other unlisted buildings of note include the Leominster Folk Museum, converted in 1971-2 from a Railway Mission Hall of 1855, and the former White Swan public house at the corner of Etnam Street and School Lane, an imposing three-storey brick building of mid-19th century date currently used as a fish bar, which retains old pub signage to the rear of the premises.



Plate 18: View looking northeast showing row of Grade II listed houses at Nos. 77-85 Etnam Street including the former Dukes Arms public house

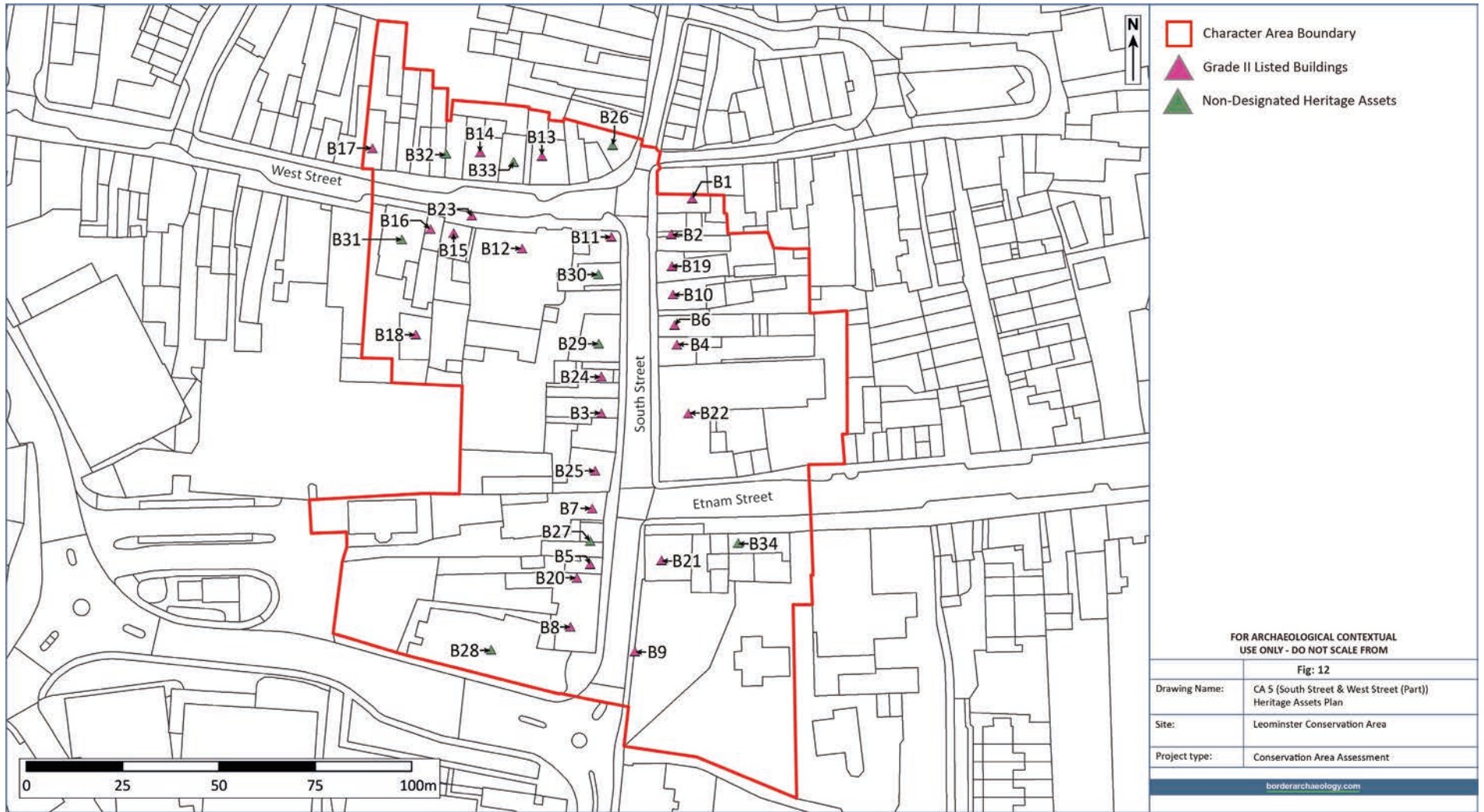
#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B1	1255434	18 & 18A Etnam Street	II
B2	1255435	22 Etnam Street	II
B3	1255436	24 & 26 Etnam Street	II
B4	1255437	28 & 30 Etnam Street ALL GRADE 2	II
B5	1255438	36 & 38 Etnam Street	II
B6	1255439	43 & 45 Etnam Street	II
B7	1255440	46 Etnam Street	II
B8	1255441	56-62 Etnam Street	II
B9	1255442	63, 65 & 67 Etnam Street	II
B10	1255443	Fattys Public House	II
B11	1255445	Leominster Baptist Church	II
B12	1255446	1 & 2 Marlow's Court & Attached Wall	II
B13	1255464	The Manse & Attached Outbuildings	II
B14	1255487	19 School Lane	II
B15	1270295	20 & 20A Etnam Street	II
B16	1270296	32 Etnam Street	II
B17	1270297	34 Etnam Street	II
B18	1270298	Veterinary Surgery	II
B19	1270299	47 & 49, Including The Leominster Gun Room	II
B20	1270300	Chequers Inn	II
B21	1270301	Number 87, Including Leominster Antiques	II
B22	1270310	Bell Inn	II

Table 7: CA 4 Etnam Street - Table of Designated Built Heritage Assets (based on information contained in the National Heritage List for England)

#	HER Entry	Name
B23	8867	15-17 School Lane
B24	8868	1-9 Etnam Street
B25	8869	17 Etnam Street
B26	58268	73 Etnam Street
B27	58280	51-55 Etnam Street
B28	58281	31-37 Etnam Street
B29	58283	Marches Cottages, School Lane
B30	58284	12-20 School Lane
B31	58285	15 Etnam Street
B32	58287	12-14 Etnam Street
B33	58288	18a Etnam Street
B34	58289	Leominster Folk Museum

Table 8: CA 4 Etnam Street - Table of Non-Designated Built Heritage Assets (primarily based on information contained in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record)

7.6 CA 5: South Street/West Street (part)



- *Summary Description*

7.6.1 This character area encompasses the northernmost portion of South Street, extending south from the crossroads with High Street, Corn Street and West Street (historically known as the Iron Cross) as far as the junction with Westbury Street and the eastern part of West Street.

- *Summary of Historic Character*

7.6.2 This area may be described as forming the western and southern components of the original urban settlement as established during the early to mid-12th century. It is now largely commercial in character, including a mixture of shops, several cafes and office premises, a post office/newsagent's shop and a long-established public house.

- *Summary of Historical Development*

7.6.3 Both West Street and the northern part of South Street (known variously as South End or Turnbull Street) appear to be early components of the urban layout of Leominster, probably dating to the early to mid-12th century. West Street and South Street represent the western and southern arms extending out from the Iron Cross, the original crossroads laid out as part of the planned urban settlement (*Plate 19*). A long-established horse and pony market was held in South Street at the junction with Etnam Street, dating back at least to the 18th century. There are limited residential elements, chiefly represented by flats over or to the rear of commercial premises.

7.6.4 Historically, several inns and hotels were clustered in this area, reflecting its location at an important, long-established crossroads, where the old north-south road from Ludlow to Hereford met the coach road running east-west from Worcester to West Wales. Of these, the Duckers Bar (originally the Queen's Head public house) is the only remaining public house, the others having been converted to shops, while the Talbot Hotel is the sole remaining large hotel in the town centre since the recent closure of the Royal Oak at the junction of South Street and Etnam Street.



Plate 19: View looking west along West Street from Iron Cross, at the junction with South Street

- *Plan Form/Spatial Layout*

7.6.5 Both sides of West Street are laid out with long narrow burgage plots (partially truncated by modern car parks to the north and south), which are probably of 12th century origin, while the plots along the northern part of South Street are larger and more irregularly spaced, suggesting that these may be slightly later.

7.6.6 At the south end of the character area is a large irregularly shaped plot at the corner of Etnam Street and South Street, defined along its west side by a Grade II listed 17th century brick wall, on which stands Dutton House (formerly known as Stafferton House), a substantial 16th century detached house concealed by a 19th century stucco façade. The plot differs markedly in size from the adjoining burgage plots and it has been plausibly suggested that this was a high-status residence, possibly representing the townhouse of one of the bailiffs responsible for the administration of the manor and liberty of Leominster.

- *Built Form*

7.6.7 In terms of built form, there is a degree of contrast between South Street and West Street. South Street is lined uniformly on both sides with substantial, tall three-storey late Georgian townhouses fronting onto the street (the sole exception being the corner buildings on the Talbot Hotel), which lend this frontage a distinct sense of uniformity and verticality (*Plate 20*).

7.6.8 The built form along West Street is more varied, consisting of a two- to three-storey properties ranging broadly in date from the 17th to 20th century, with one single-storey building to the immediate west of the Talbot Hotel. This variation in building form, scale and roofline is particularly apparent in the conjoined buildings forming the Talbot Hotel at the corner of West Street and South Street. In contrast to South Street, there are also some commercial premises within narrow courtyards to the rear of the street frontage.

- *Building Materials*

7.6.9 The predominant building material is red brick, with some exteriors either painted white or stucco-clad. There is also evidence of timber-framing, much of which is concealed behind later 18th/19th century brick frontages. The chief roofing material is Welsh slate, although there are several buildings roofed in plain tile or composite tiling.

- *Streetscape*

7.6.10 Both West Street and South Street are somewhat narrow thoroughfares, densely lined within buildings with few gaps (the exception being the vehicular access to the Talbot Hotel). West Street is a one-way street with buildouts for loading/unloading areas; the carriageway is paved with tumbled concrete blocks giving it a semi-pedestrianised character, while the footway is paved with large concrete slabs. The Grade II listed telephone kiosk outside the Talbot Hotel is a piece of street furniture that contributes positively to the streetscape in West Street.

7.6.11 South Street is a slightly wider two-way street with narrow concrete pavements. Two trees are planted in front of the Talbot Hotel at the east end of West Street but South Street lacks tree-planting.



Plate 20: View north-northwest showing west side of South Street, predominantly late Georgian in character

- *Architectural Character*
- 7.6.12 The architectural character is primarily defined by late 18th/early 19th century buildings (mostly Georgian townhouses with late 19th/20th century shop frontages inserted), two historic inns, the Talbot Hotel and former Royal Oak, and the detached residence of Dutton House, all three of which are substantial buildings occupying prominent corner plots. However, it may be noted that a significant number of buildings within the character area conceal evidence of earlier timber-framing of 16th/17th century date and a pair of intact 17th century cottages survive along the north side of West Street.
- *Built Heritage Assets (fig. 12; Tables 9-10)*
- 7.6.13 Most of the properties in West Street and South Street are designated as Grade II listed buildings. Along the north side of West Street, the architectural character is defined by three-storey buildings with painted brick frontages of 18th/early 19th century date, most of which conceal earlier 17th century timber-framed cores, such as No. 6 (formerly the 'Elephant and Castle Inn' now the Central Bakery) and No. 10 West Street (formerly the 'White Hart Inn').
- 7.6.14 A short row of Grade II listed cottages of 17th century date with 20th century shopfronts at Nos. 16-22 (even nos.), although much altered, represent a relatively rare example of early post-medieval domestic buildings that were not substantially re-fronted in brick in the Georgian period. Modern rebuilding is evidenced by the pair of late 20th century two-storey shop premises at Nos. 2-4 West Street.



Plate 21: View southwest showing the frontage of buildings comprising the Talbot Hotel

- 7.6.15** The south side of West Street is dominated by the extensive series of 17th-20th buildings forming the Talbot Hotel, an historic inn originally dating back to the early 17th century (*Plate 21*). The core building comprises Nos. 5-9, originally three houses, which was remodelled in the 18th century and then expanded to incorporate other adjoining properties to the east and west. This complex history is reflected in the varying proportions, roof forms and external detailing of the buildings, incorporating timber-framed, painted brick and rendered frontages and a variety of window forms, including bow and canted bay windows.
- 7.6.16** The properties extending along both sides of South Street mostly consist of 18th/early 19th three-storey townhouses with characteristic features, such as sash windows and dentilled eaves, many of which were remodelled at a later date with the insertion of late 19th/early 20th century glazed shopfronts with moulded hoods, fascia boards and pilasters. Nevertheless, the uniformity of scale and detailing lends the street a particular coherence and integrity in architectural terms.
- 7.6.17** Notable examples along the east side of the street, where all the properties have had shopfronts inserted, include No. 1 South Street, a corner house of mid-18th century date that was re-fronted in 1925; Nos. 13-15 South Street, originally a six-bay townhouse of late 18th century date subdivided into two properties (probably in the late 19th century) with glazed late Victorian shopfronts.
- 7.6.18** At the south end of this row of late Georgian buildings, prominently sited at the northwest corner of South Street and Etnam Street, the former Royal Oak Hotel is a substantial three-storey coaching inn of brick construction with a stuccoed ground floor with rusticated detailing, shouldered window surrounds and a moulded cornice with low pediment (*Plate 22*).



Plate 22: View looking south-southeast towards the former Royal Oak Hotel and Dutton House at the junction of South Street and Etnam Street

- 7.6.19** The existing hotel was built c.1820-37 on the site of an earlier inn dating back at least to c.1749, with a three-bay extension to the north of c.1840-50 and ranges of outbuildings to the rear. The Royal Oak is a landmark building featuring noticeably in views looking both north and south along South Street and west from Etnam Street. It has taken on a somewhat neglected condition since its closure in 2015.
- 7.6.20** Dutton House (formerly known as Stafferton House) at the southern end of the character area is a substantial detached house with a Tudor Gothic frontage of c.1850 concealing a late 16th century timber-framed building.
- 7.6.21** Late Georgian three-storey townhouses along the west side of South Street similarly predominate; some of these have been converted to shops, as evidenced by the presence of late 19th/early 20th century glazed frontages. However, the exteriors of several of the houses have survived intact; notable examples include No. 14, a five-bay townhouse of late 18th century date (formerly the County Library) with sash windows under gauged brick headers and a fine central doorcase with open pediment carried on Tuscan columns, and a series of late 18th /early 19th century properties at Nos. 22, 24-26 and 28 South Street, with sash windows and well-preserved doorcases with fluted Doric and Tuscan pilasters.
- 7.6.22** Several of these Georgian brick frontages also conceal evidence of earlier 17th century timber-framed cores, including No. 8 (Bell Court), Nos. 10-12 and No. 16 South Street.



Plate 23: View looking northwest towards the Clifton Cinema at the junction of South Street and Westbury Street

7.6.23 The former Clifton Cinema, now a bingo hall, at the south end of this row of Georgian buildings is a substantial brick building in Art Deco style (erected in 1935-6 to designs by Birmingham architect Ernest Roberts, a prolific designer of cinemas in the West Midlands during the interwar period). The cinema has an imposing stuccoed concave entrance frontage with a large glazed window with deep moulded architrave, at right angles to which is a stepped blank wall against the Georgian terrace. Although unlisted, it has a distinctive architectural character while its prominent corner location ensures it forms a key element in views looking north along South Street and west along Westbury Street (Plate 23).

#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B1	1255489	3 South Street	II
B2	1255490	5 & 7 South Street	II
B3	1255491	10 & 12 South Street	II
B4	1255492	15 South Street	II
B5	1255493	22 South Street	II
B6	1255509	13 South Street	II
B7	1255511	16 South Street	II
B8	1255513	28 South Street	II
B9	1255520	Wall at Dutton House	II
B10	1255522	Queens Head Public House	II
B11	1255526	1 & 3 West Street	II
B12	1255527	Talbot Hotel	II
B13	1255528	6 West Street	II
B14	1255529	10 West Street	II
B15	1255530	11 & 13 West Street	II
B16	1255531	15 West Street	II
B17	1255532	16-22 West Street	II
B18	1255533	Outbuilding 15m to S of Number 17 (Not Included)	II
B19	1270259	9 South Street	II

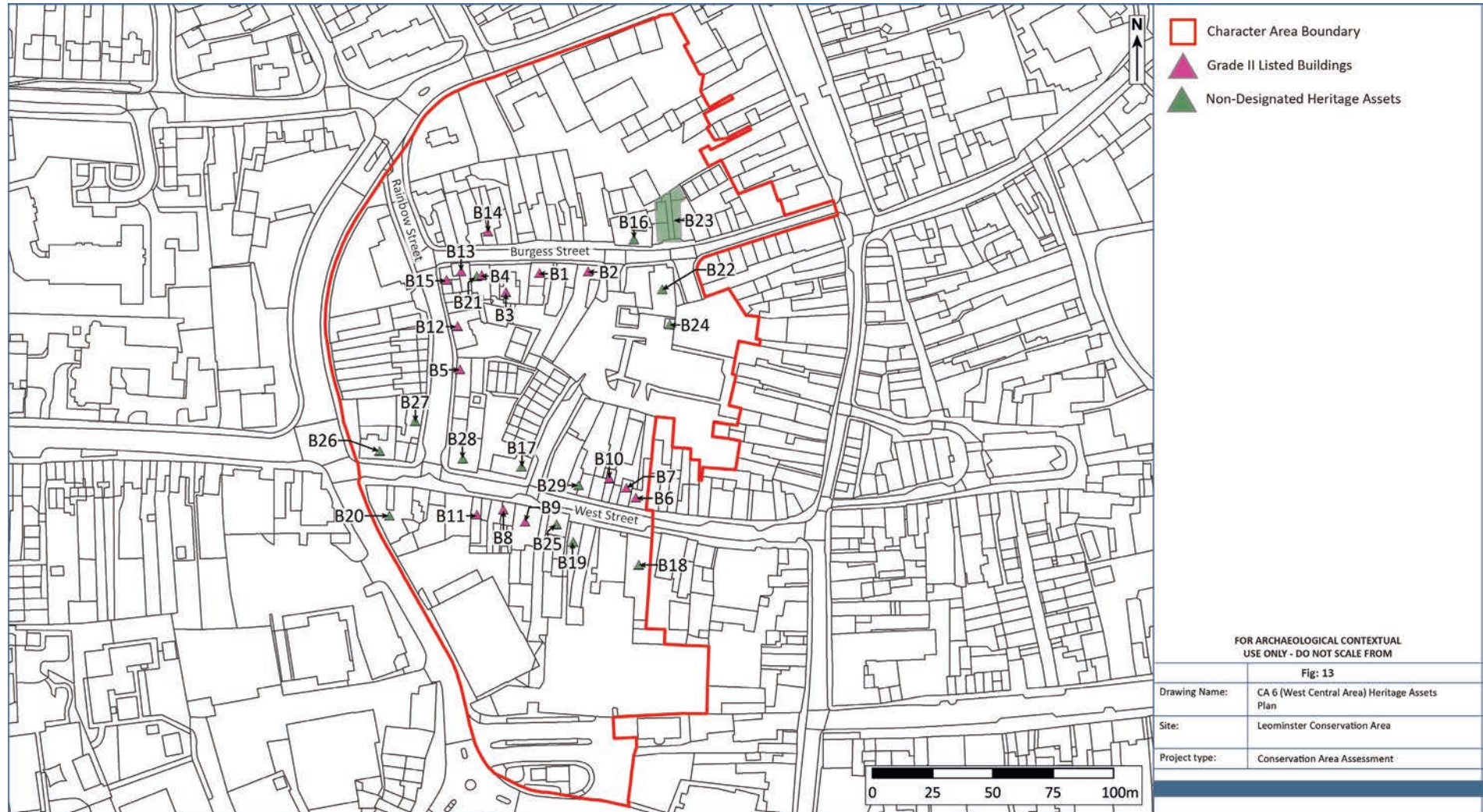
#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B20	1270260	24 & 26 South Street	II
B21	1270265	Dutton House	II
B22	1270267	Royal Oak Hotel	II
B23	1270274	K6 Telephone Kiosk	II
B24	1270287	8 South Street	II
B25	1270288	County Library	II

Table 9: CA5 South Street and West Street (part) - Table of Designated Built Heritage Assets (based on information contained in the National Heritage List for England)

#	HER Entry	Name
B26	8852	38 High Street
B27	8902	16A to 20 South Street
B28	52075	Former Clifton Cinema, Top Ten Bingo, 30 South Street
B29	58253	6 South Street
B30	58254	The Ducker Bar
B31	58255	17 West Street
B32	58261	12-14 West Street
B33	58262	8 West Street
B34	58286	2-4 Etnam Street

Table 10: CA5 South Street and West Street (part) - Table of Non-Designated Built Heritage Assets (primarily based on information contained in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record)

7.7 CA 6: West Central Area



- *Summary Description*

7.7.1 This character area encompasses Burgess Street, Rainbow Street and the westernmost part of West Street, its eastern limits being defined by the boundaries of truncated burgage plots along Broad Street, High Street and South Street. The northern, western and southern boundaries of the character area are demarcated, respectively, by New Street (south side), Cursneh Street/Dishley Street (east side) and Westbury Street, forming the inner relief road laid out in the late 1970s.

- *Summary of Historic Character*

7.7.2 This area may be described as a key component of the historic town centre which remains chiefly commercial in character, although there are also residential elements located along Rainbow Street and the western end of Burgess Street and more recent infill housing development between Burgess Street and West Street, to the west of the Central Car Park.

7.7.3 There are several important governmental/public institutional buildings, most notably the library at the east end of Burgess Street and the Job Centre occupying part of the large complex of converted buildings at Lion Court.

- *Summary of Historical Development*

7.7.4 Historically, this character area formed the western and northwest components of the medieval borough. West Street formed part of the original street layout established in the early-to-mid-12th century, while Burgess Street and New Street represent a slightly later phase of urban development that can be assigned to the 13th century, postdating the later northward extension of the market place represented by Broad Street.

7.7.5 Both New Street (*Novus Vicus*) and Burgess Street (*Burgeyslone*) are recorded in documentary sources as being in existence by the late 13th century. Burgage plots were laid out to the north and south along the western portions of Burgess Street and New Street; the eastern boundaries of these plots respected (and thus postdated) the rear boundaries of the burgage plots fronting the west side of Broad Street.

7.7.6 The origins of Rainbow Street and Westbury Street remain unclear but they link elements of the medieval street system and may thus be of late medieval or early post-medieval origin. A watching brief in 1993 during construction works on land to the rear of the Greyhound Inn, close to the corner of Rainbow Street and Burgess Street, revealed evidence of medieval and early post-medieval occupation deposits and a series of medieval pits rich in pottery, animal bone and environmental material.

7.7.7 Although the alignment of the principal streets as shown on Galliers map of 1832 remains relatively legible, there has been a degree of 19th century building activity as evidenced by the Victorian residential terraces and commercial buildings along Rainbow Street and the series of mid-late 19th century chapels and institutional buildings along both sides of Burgess Street.

7.7.8 Mid-late 20th century development has significantly eroded the historic character of the area, with the construction of the Inner Relief Road and the laying out of the central car park in the late 1970s and the demolition of the densely packed rows of houses which once stood along the south side of New Street to make way for warehouses and a Territorial Army drill hall. More recent development is represented by

the public library of 1992-3, Hinton Court (2004) and the block of three-storey offices/warehousing at Hinton Terrace (2011).

- *Plan Form/Spatial Layout*

7.7.9 Although the street plan still largely reflects its medieval/early post-medieval origin, the associated pattern of narrow burgage plots as shown on 19th century maps of this area had been altered by mid-late 20th century development.

7.7.10 Properties lining the south side of New Street were demolished and cleared by c.1967, while the construction of the inner relief road in the late 1970s truncated the west end of New Street at the junction with Rainbow Street. By 1977, the central car park had also been laid out between Burgess Street and West Street, resulting in the removal of a significant proportion of the burgage plots in this area, although a small block of tenement plots flanking the west end of Burgess Street appears to have survived intact.

7.7.11 To the south of West Street, the expansion of the cattle market site adjoining Dishley Street (first established in the 1920s) and the construction of the supermarket, car park and bus station in the 1990s resulted in the truncation of the burgage plots in this area.

- *Built Form*

7.7.12 The built form is quite varied in terms of height and roofline, which reflects somewhat piecemeal development over time and the impact of 19th and (in particular) late 20th/early 21st century building and clearance activity.

7.7.13 Within the west half of West Street, the built form consists of a mixture of three-storey late 18th/19th century buildings (including an inn and townhouses with later shopfronts) and late 20th century commercial premises with broad glazed frontages, with several two-storey commercial premises and a former public house of late 19th century date at its western extremity.

7.7.14 Rainbow Street has both commercial and residential elements, the east side being lined with several 17th/18th century two-storey dwellings at the corner with Burgess Street, adjoining which is an early 19th century three-storey public house (The Greyhound), followed by a substantial two-storey former merchant's premises (Hinton's General Stores).

7.7.15 The west side of Rainbow Street is decidedly residential in character, comprising a terrace of late 19th century polychrome brick (West Place) adjoined by a later row of early 20th century brick terraced houses, both of two storeys, with a large detached two-storey house of early to mid-19th century date further to the north, at the junction with Burgess Street (West Lodge), set within its own walled grounds extending west as far as Cursneh Road.

7.7.16 Burgess Street mostly comprises a mixture of residential, commercial and institutional buildings, mostly of one or two storeys, with the exception of the recent three-storey block of offices/flats at Hinton Court (2004). It is distinguished by the presence of several former institutional buildings and chapels of 19th century date which have since been converted for use as commercial and office premises (*Plate 24*).

7.7.17 The outer limits of the character area, adjoining the inner relief road, have undergone the most noticeable changes. Along the south side of New Street, the built form is dominated by the large blocks of three-

storey offices/commercial premises in Neo-Georgian style at Hinton Terrace (2011) adjoined by a warehouse with a red brick pedimented façade (The Granary - 2003) and the former drill hall (now Antiques Centre) of 1960s date, with its broad horizontal frontage with part-glazed and concrete tiled upper storey.

7.7.18 There are also several large modern car parks within this character area lending parts of it a somewhat open character. These include the Central Car Park, a large public car park and loading zone to the west of High Street, between Burgess Street and West Street and another car park associated with the local supermarket between West Street and Westbury Street (occupying the site of the former cattle market), to the south of which is the bus station. There is also private car parking to the south of New Street associated with the extensive commercial and office premises at Lion Court, Hinton Terrace and Chapel Walk.

7.7.19 A number of gaps within the street frontages include accesses to the Central Car Park from West Street and Burgess Street, pedestrian access to the supermarket south of West Street and several pedestrian and vehicular access to the complex of offices and commercial premises between New Street and Burgess Street, as well as a narrow driveway leading to mews premises in Rainbow Street (Greyhound Mews).

- *Building Materials*

7.7.20 The predominant building material is brick, with some exteriors clad in roughcast or stucco. There is some evidence of timber-framing in Burgess Street, most notably at Grafton House and several buildings at the west end of the street. Welsh slate is the most common roofing material, although there are some buildings with plain or composite tile roofs.



Plate 24: View looking east along Burgess Street, showing a series of 19th century institutional buildings and Grafton House

- *Streetscape*

7.7.21 The streets within this character area are fairly narrow (reflecting their origins as part of the medieval street layout) and are all one-way thoroughfares with (mostly) narrow footways on both sides and controlled street parking areas in Rainbow Street. The carriageway at the western end of West Street is paved with tumbled concrete blocks up to the junction with Rainbow Street; in Rainbow Street, the footways are a mixture of concrete and asphalt, while those along Burgess Street are wholly of asphalt.

7.7.22 The footways along New Street, Cursneh Road, Dishley Steet and Westbury Street (forming the inner relief road) are paved with interlocking concrete blocks with concrete and asphalt in places. There is relatively little greenery, apart from a pair of trees opposite the junction of West Street and Rainbow Street and further tree- and hedge-planting within the grounds of West Lodge at the junction of Rainbow Street and New Street.

- *Architectural Character*

7.7.23 The architectural character is somewhat varied and lacking in cohesion, partly due to the significant impact of late 20th century development. Several timber-framed buildings of late 14th to 17th century date remain in Burgess Street while Rainbow Street and the western portion of West Street are predominantly 19th century in character. The northern part of the character area is chiefly dominated by late 20th/early 21st century development.

- *Built Heritage Assets (fig. 13; Tables 11 & 12)*

7.7.24 Although there are fewer designated built heritage assets in this area (15 in total, all Grade II) compared to adjoining character areas (to some extent reflecting the impact of modern development, particularly along the south side of New Street), several 19th century buildings may justifiably be regarded as non-designated heritage assets that contribute positively to the streetscape.

7.7.25 The earliest surviving building is represented by Grafton House, a three-bay, two-storey late medieval hall house, probably of late 14th/15th century date occupying a prominent, isolated position on the south side of Burgess Street (*Plate 25*). The jettied upper storey is timber-framed with cusped braces, which appears to have been underbuilt in brick. Designated as Grade II, it represents one of the oldest surviving secular buildings in the town and is of considerable character and architectural and historical interest.



Plate 25: Burgess Street (south side) looking southeast towards Grafton House

- 7.7.26** A series of former institutional buildings to the west of Grafton House range in date from the late 18th to the 19th century and are built in a variety of architectural styles, which add considerable interest to the street scene. These include the Grade II listed former Police Station, a two-storey red brick building of late 18th/early 19th century date with an adjoining single-storey Magistrates Court (built c.1886) of red brick with polychrome brick dressings and a distinctive roof. Further to the west is the Grade II listed Penny Bank of c.1870, a detached single-storey brick building in Italianate style set back from the street frontage; it represents a rare survival of a late Victorian savings bank. Immediately west of this is the original Wesleyan Chapel, a plain single-storey rectangular brick and stucco-clad edifice of 1841.
- 7.7.27** At the west end of Burgess Street is a cluster of Grade II listed two-storey properties with late 18th/early 19th century roughcast or stucco frontages concealing 17th century timber-framed structures, comprising Nos. 19-19A Burgess Street and Nos. 19B & 21 (south side) and Nos. 30-36 (north side).
- 7.7.28** The eastern part of Burgess Street offers comparatively less architectural interest, being dominated by the tall red brick façade of the Buttercross arcade and Public Library, although there are two prominent former chapels of 19th century date, roughly opposite each other, which, although unlisted, form distinctive elements within the street scene. On the north side is the former Wesleyan Chapel of 1861, a red brick building in Gothic style with an ornate south window, north apse and bellcote with an attached Sunday School to the rear of 1895; the ground floor was heavily altered and converted to a shopping arcade in 1990. Opposite this is the former Congregational Chapel (now a warehouse and shop premises), a tall red brick building with ashlar stone dressings built in 1866-7 in Decorated Gothic style, with a prominent square turret and low stone spire.
- 7.7.29** Rainbow Street has two listed buildings on the east side, including the three-storey former Greyhound Inn and attached coach house of early 19th century date (*Plate 26*), and immediately to the south, the ornate Victorian façade of Hinton's General Stores built in 1888, with three pedimented gables with finely carved

brick detail and mosaic panels and ornate tripartite windows at ground level, with cast-iron columns and hooded fanlights flanking the central entrance, to the rear of which is a range of 18th century date.



Plate 26: View east-southeast of corner of Burgess Street and Rainbow Street, including the former Greyhound Inn

7.7.30 West Place on the opposite side of the street comprises a row of four two-storey cottages probably dating from c.1890-1910 of red brick construction, with yellow brick dressings and a curved central pediment; a rusticated stone pier adjacent to the terrace represents the vestiges of the entrance to the Livestock Market, which was established there in 1829 and moved c.1920, when the existing terrace of six two-storey brick cottages was erected on the site (*Plate 27*).



Plate 27: View of West Place on the west side of Rainbow Street, looking northwest

- 7.7.31** Further to the north, opposite the junction with Burgess Street is West Lodge, a substantial unlisted two-storey detached red brick villa of 1829, altered and extended c.1870, set within its own tree-lined grounds and bounded by a brick boundary wall; it features noticeably in views along New Street and Cursneah Road towards the edge of the Conservation Area.
- 7.7.32** The western end of West Street has been heavily altered by modern development, with the insertion of late 20th century commercial premises on both sides, as a result of which its character is perhaps not as coherent in comparison to the eastern end of the street. However, there are two small groups of late Georgian buildings on the north and south sides of the street, including the Black Swan Inn and several adjacent three-storey townhouses, with inserted late 19th/early 20th century shopfronts.

#	NHL£ Entry	Name	Grade
B1	1255403	15 Burgess Street	II
B2	1255405	Grafton House	II
B3	1255406	Premises Occupied by Powell, Price & Company Limited	II
B4	1255407	Shock Supply Company Limited	II
B5	1255483	Rainbow Social Club & Institute	II
B6	1255536	24 West Street	II
B7	1255537	26 West Street	II
B8	1255538	35 & 37 West Street	II
B9	1255539	Black Swan Inn	II
B10	1270272	28 West Street	II
B11	1270273	39 West Street	II
B12	1270282	The Greyhound Public House	II
B13	1270321	19 & 19A Burgess Street	II
B14	1270322	30-36 Burgess Street	II
B15	1334960	19B & 21 Burgess Street	II

Table 11: CA 6 West Central Area - Table of Designated Built Heritage Assets (based on information contained in the National Heritage List for England)

#	HER Entry	Name
B16	8836	Outbuilding, Burgess Street
B17	8885	42 West Street
B18	8888	19 West Street
B19	8889	27 West Street
B20	8891	Golden Cross Inn, 49 West Street
B21	16306	Wesleyan Chapel, S Side of Burgess Street
B22	19535	Congregational Chapel
B23	19536	Wesleyan Chapel (Site Of), N Side of Burgess Street
B24	22117	Electricity Generating Station, West Street
B25	58256	29 & 30 West Street
B26	58257	48-52 West Street
B27	58258	1-4 Fosters Corner
B28	58259	44 - 46 West Street
B29	58260	30 - 40 West Street

Table 12: CA 6 West Central Area - Table of Non-Designated Built Heritage Assets (primarily based on information contained in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record)

8 Pressures and General Condition

The character of the town centre has been affected in recent years by broad patterns of social and economic change together with a marked increase in online shopping. These developments have impacted the retail sector in particular resulting in the loss of some of the town's older businesses and the resultant dereliction of premises or their change of use. There has been an increase in outlets such as charity shops and other sometimes unimaginative and short-lived ventures.

Boarded-up shopfronts remain an issue and detract from an overall impression of modest prosperity. In the case of 'landmark' buildings, long-term vacancy entails a serious loss of character, engendering a sense of decline and decay. But on the positive side, where premises have been repurposed to cater for real demand, particularly from the leisure market, a new range of cafes and food outlets, pubs/bistros, ethnic food stores and mobile phone shops has proved beneficial in reinvigorating the town centre. J.D Wetherspoons (Dukes Head Inn), which occupies the former Post Office building in Corn Square, provides good example of the positive and sympathetic reutilization of a redundant building in a prominent town centre location.

Outside the town centre, established commercial development along the bypass (A49) and Mill Street (A44) is considered to have had a negative impact on views of the priory church tower and care should be taken to protect such 'gateway' views in future. Little significant commercial development has taken place within the conservation area or on its periphery but the Pinsley Road residential area has recently expanded eastwards with the construction of Pinsley Mill Gardens, a substantial development of houses and three-storey apartment blocks overlooking the conservation area, railway and bypass. Any further increase in housing provision is likely to exert significant pressure on existing town centre facilities and the historic core remains under threat from new retail, leisure and office development and a further erosion of the medieval/early post-medieval plan form.

The appearance and condition of buildings is generally very good but several areas in need of improvement have been identified:

- General run-down appearance and condition of some individual buildings, including several prominent examples, with the upper floors of some commercial premises showing signs of neglect and underuse;
- The condition of the roads and streets in the town centre is generally poor with areas of significant surface deterioration. Town centre paving has been lost in places and patched with unsympathetic tarmac repairs, creating a poor impression; surface depressions have formed where paving blocks have sunk due to inadequate bedding;
- Inappropriate treatment of individual shopfronts that detracts from the character of the area, particularly in the central core and the west central area;
- Unoccupied commercial premises, particularly conspicuous on the corner of South Street/Etnam Street.

9 Issues

9.1 Buildings at Risk

The following Listed Buildings are potentially at risk:

- The Late 18th century Royal Oak Hotel (Grade II-List Entry No. 1270267), a large three-storey former coaching inn of rusticated stucco and brick situated in a highly visible corner location at the junction of

Etnam Street and South Street. The building has remained unoccupied for a considerable period and is showing clear signs of decay and dereliction, with peeling paintwork and deteriorating window frames. Its poor condition and position at a 'gateway' into the retail centre inevitably engender a sense of urban decay;

- No. 1 The Gatehouse (part of Nos 6 and 6A Church Street) (Grade II-List Entry No. 1255410), a large elegant 18th century house shows signs of peeling paintwork affecting walls and window and door frames.

9.2 Priory Precinct

Grange Court (Grade II*), previously occupied by council offices, has undergone restoration and is now a Community, Enterprise, and Heritage Hub. Much of the Victorian interior introduced when the old market hall was reconstructed in the mid-1850s has been removed. Some recent peripheral development has also taken place to the southeast, with the opening of Pinsley Road Gardens, a large and prominent development of houses and three-storey apartment blocks on the site of the historic Pinsley Mill.

9.3 Burgage Plots

Burgage and tenement plots are an important component of the medieval borough of Leominster. Many have been destroyed or truncated by unsympathetic development, particularly in the central west area (New Street, Burgess Street and West Street) and on backland sites at Etnam Street. The survival of existing medieval plots remains under threat from further development.

9.4 Shopfronts

There is a significant number of surviving late 19th and early 20th century shopfronts with fine detailing within High Street, Broad Street, Drapers Lane, South Street and West Street, which contribute positively to the architectural and historic character of the conservation area. However, the vertical rhythm of the streetscape is interrupted in places by modern laminated fascias which tend to be brightly coloured and eye-catching but aesthetically out of keeping with the historic character of the street. This is particularly applicable to High Street, South Street, West Street and Rainbow Street.

9.5 Street Scene

Generally, Leominster's street scene makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Street furniture is limited giving the town centre an uncluttered feel. Plant tubs are sited unobtrusively to avoid impeding pedestrian traffic flow and these, together with bollards, railings and bins, adhere to a consistent and attractive design suggesting the influence of a 'Victorian aesthetic', as does the overhead signage installed at either end of Drapers Lane to good effect. Blackboards, tables and chairs outside cafes and bistros are generally tasteful and lend the area a continental feel.

Most of the narrow streets and lanes converging at Corn Square are fully pedestrianized, allowing users unhurried passage to and from the central hub; pedestrianization is particularly beneficial to visitors, who are able to view the town at a leisurely pace. Corn Square itself remains in shared use and is open to traffic daily apart from Fridays, when market stalls are set out. Traffic is limited to cars and light commercial vehicles and its impact further mitigated by speed humps, with on street-parking reserved mainly for disabled drivers.

A note of caution may be sounded, however, regarding the use of modern laminated signage over some shops and takeaways in the High Street, which is entirely out of keeping with more traditional shopfronts in terms of design and materials. Care should be taken in this respect to resist the any further erosion of character. The generally poor condition of the roads, especially in the town centre, is an issue of some concern. Whilst the use of paving blocks may be seen as preferable in aesthetic terms to a tarmac surface, these have not generally withstood repeated vehicular use resulting in uneven surfaces and a patchwork of unsightly makeshift repairs.

10 Proposed Boundary Changes, Inclusions and Exclusions

General considerations underlying proposals to change conservation area boundaries include the following:

- To include areas of special architectural or historic interest that would contribute to the character of the conservation area;
- To include areas of the landscape that form an integral part of the historic built environment and contribute to the character of the conservation area;
- To exclude neutral or intrusive areas that do not contribute to, or, detract from, the character of the conservation area;
- To exclude areas of the landscape that do not form an integral part of the historic built environment;
- To align the conservation area boundary with recognisable features such as field boundaries, property boundaries, roads, lanes or public footpaths, and to maintain coherence of the boundary.

10.1 Proposed Inclusions

- An extension to the northern end of the character area to include the northern portion of Bridge Street, extending northwards of the junction with Vicarage Street up to the Kenwater Bridge, and the southernmost end of Bridge Street as far as Paradise Court.
- This area retains its historic coherence and distinctiveness as an area of medieval and post-medieval urban development, representing a northern extension of the historic core of the town linking it to the Marsh, an outlying suburb of medieval origin. It may be said to have a distinctly transitional character as a 'bridgehead' settlement at the crossing of the River Kenwater which is particularly appreciable in views both looking northwards from Broad Street and looking southwards into the town along Bridge Street.
- Although the construction of the large public car park south of the Kenwater Bridge has removed all trace of the burgage plot layout on the E side of this area, the pattern of burgage plots along the western side of Broad Street is well-defined and has survived essentially intact. The predominant architectural character is Georgian although several of properties retain evidence of timber-framing (both externally and internally) hinting at earlier origins.
- This proposed extension to the Conservation Area contains a significant number of Grade II listed buildings of 18th/early 19th century date (all three-storeys high, brick-built and mostly stucco-clad) lining the west side of Broad Street, including Pinsley House (early to mid-18th century) and Nos. 31-45 (Odd Nos). Immediately north of the Kenwater are several substantial 16th-18th century houses of brick, masonry and timber-framed construction (mostly of two storeys) flanking the southern end of Bridge Street, including Kenwater House, of late 17th/early 18th century date.

10.2 Potential Areas considered for possible Inclusion but not currently proposed

Two further areas were considered for possible inclusion within the Conservation Area; these being as follows:

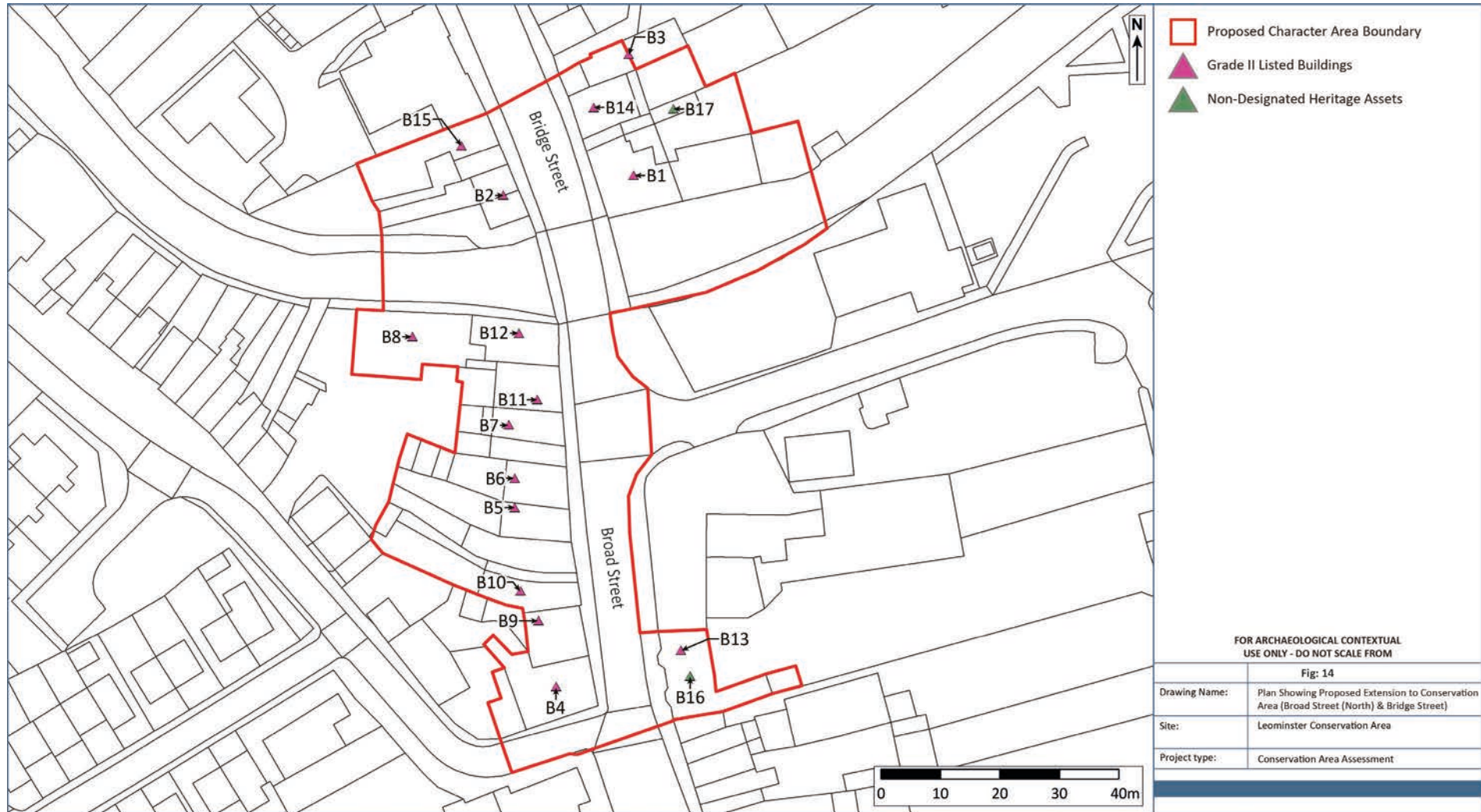
- An extension of South Street from the Masonic Hall on the east side of the road adjacent to the mini-roundabout at the Westbury Street junction as far as the junction with Coningsby Street to include two early 19th century Grade II listed properties; returning along the west side to incorporate the Black Horse Inn (Grade II) and No 72 South Street (Grade II);
- An extension of the boundary of the existing Etnam Street Character Area (CA 4) further to the east as far as the White Lion public house, a 16th century timber-frame and plaster building, and four additional listed buildings ranging in date from the 16th to 19th centuries.

However, it was concluded that, while they certainly include heritage assets of architectural interest, it was difficult to justify their inclusion as distinct character areas within the Conservation Area, their lack of cohesiveness and distinctiveness in terms of plan form and architectural character.

10.3 Proposed New Boundary

The following boundary is proposed, based on the above inclusions and exclusions (*fig. 14; Tables 13-14*):

- From the northern extent of the present Broad Street character area, extending north along the east side of Broad Street, crossing the Kenwater Bridge and continuing along the rear of the Bridge Street frontage (east side) as far as the modern development of Paradise Court, then turning west to return south along the west side of Bridge Street and Broad Street to reconnect with the existing character area boundary.



FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTUAL
USE ONLY - DO NOT SCALE FROM

Fig: 14

Drawing Name:	Plan Showing Proposed Extension to Conservation Area (Broad Street (North) & Bridge Street)
Site:	Leominster Conservation Area
Project type:	Conservation Area Assessment

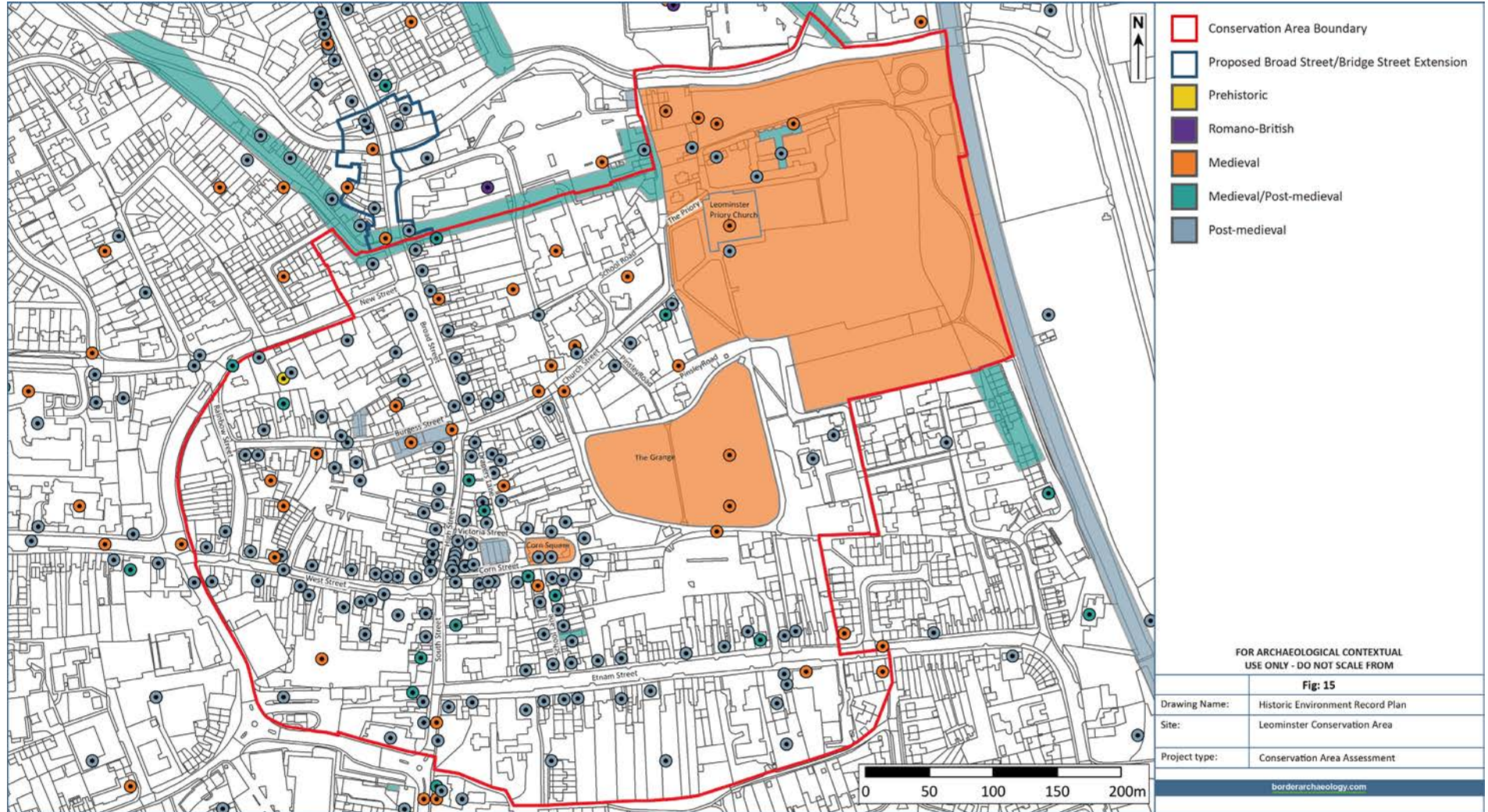
#	NHLE Entry	Name	Grade
B1	1255358	Kenwater House	II
B2	1255359	3 Bridge Street	II
B3	1255360	Building N of & Adjacent to Moat House	II
B4	1255394	Pinsley House	II
B5	1255397	37 Broad Street	II
B6	1255398	39 Broad Street	II
B7	1255400	Waterloo House	II
B8	1255402	Former Assembly Room at Rear of Number 45	II
B9	1270314	31 Broad Street	II
B10	1270315	33 & 35 Broad Street	II
B11	1270318	43 Broad Street	II
B12	1270319	45 Broad Street	II
B13	1270320	Rossendale Guesthouse	II
B14	1270336	4 Bridge Street	II
B15	1270337	5 & 7 Bridge Street	II

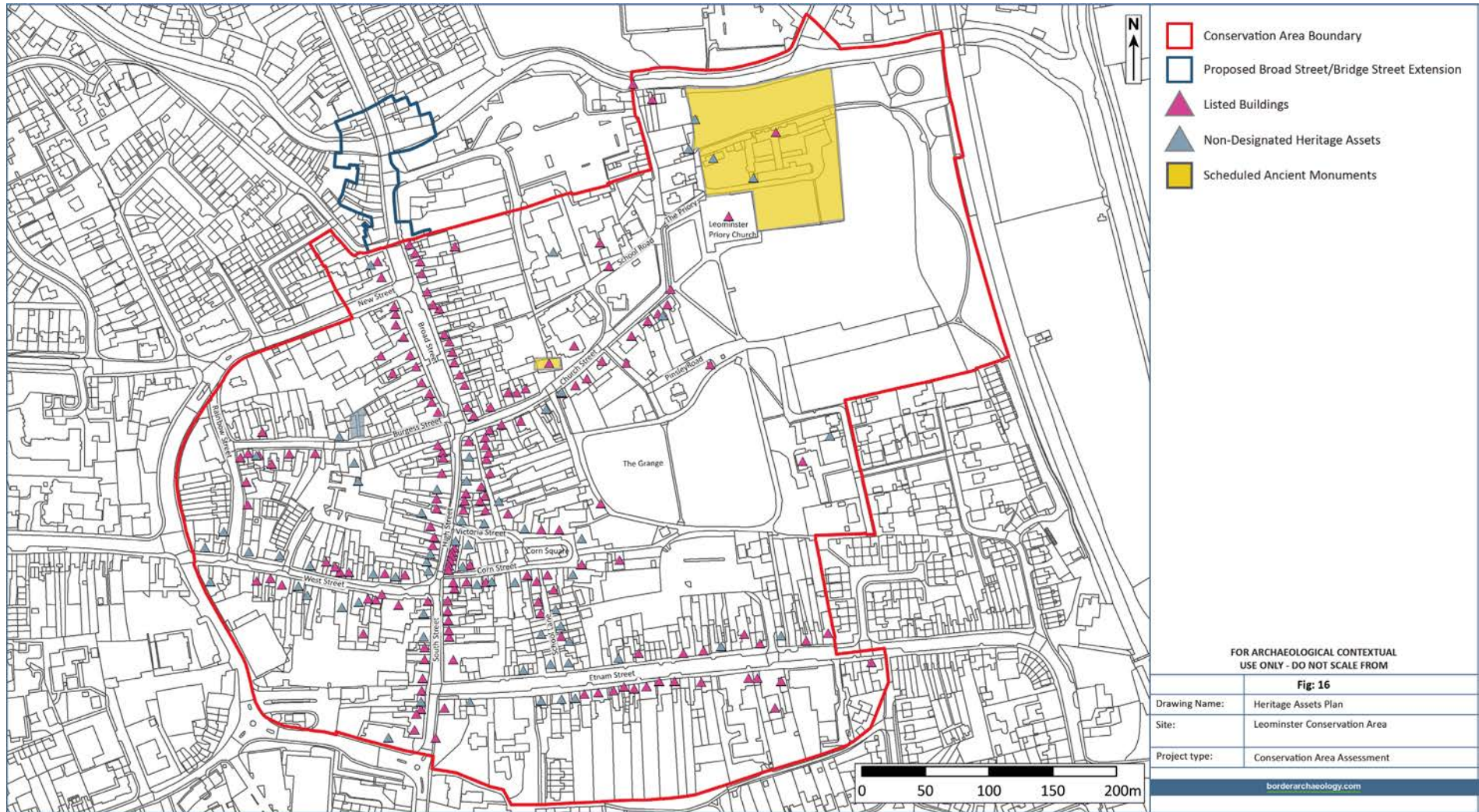
Table 13: Proposed Broad Street (North) and Bridge Street Character Area: List of Designated Heritage Assets (based on information contained in the National Heritage List for England)

#	HER Entry	Name
B16	12208	46 Broad Street
B17	8805	Outbuilding, 4 Bridge Street

Table 14: Proposed Broad Street (North) and Bridge Street Character Area: List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets (primarily based on information contained in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record)

11 Appendix 1: Plans of Conservation Area showing Historic Environment Record data & Heritage Assets





12 Appendix 2: Supporting Information

12.1 Project Background

The Conservation Areas (Herefordshire Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 23 2015) defines *a conservation area as an area of special interest, not only due to the buildings, but also to the interaction between buildings, open spaces around them and natural features such as trees. Together these form distinct areas of quality and interest.*

Leominster Town Centre was first designated as a Conservation Area in 1969 and is one of 64 conservation areas in the county. A map of each area can be found on the council's website. These vary in size and character but all share the distinction of being an area of special interest. Herefordshire Council is committed to the preservation and sustainable management of trees, and we aim to enhance and develop the resource. Trees are specifically protected when they have a Tree Preservation Order on them. Works to trees in conservation areas are controlled.

This designation covers the historic core of the market town which was established in the medieval period and has significant associations with the monastic foundation of Leominster Priory, but also includes well-preserved Georgian and Victorian elements. This conservation area status is a legal recognition that the area has special architectural and historic interest and there is a presumption that the historic character and appearance of the area should be preserved and enhanced. An appraisal was undertaken in 2008 to review the special qualities of the conservation area and to consider evidence in support of adding additional areas to the designation, amending area boundaries or removing areas. The boundary has again been reviewed during preparation of this appraisal. The existing conservation area boundary is shown in the appraisal.

12.2 Overall Aims and Objectives of the Appraisal

The overall purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal will be:

- To clearly define the special interest of the Leominster Town Centre Conservation Area; and
- To identify those elements which contribute to its special interest in terms of archaeology, built heritage and natural environment.

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the national, regional and the local planning policy framework, in particular:

12.3 Legislative and Planning Policy Framework

12.3.1 National

1. This appraisal has been prepared in the context of national planning guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) Chapter 16 and related guidance published online in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). Regard has also been had to other legislation and to plans and strategy documents produced by the Council and other organisations. NPPF sets out Government policy and guidance on the protection of Conservation Areas and other elements of the historic environment.

The revised NPPF sets 12 core planning principles which include a commitment to ‘enhancing and improving the places in which people live their lives’ and to ‘conserve heritage assets *in a manner appropriate to their significance*’; NPPF incorporates provisions for Conservation Areas in Chapter 16, as follows:

NPPF Chapter 16 para. 190. *Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.*

191. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest

NPPF Chapter 16 para. 194 states that *20. Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for:*

d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

NPPF Chapter 16 para. 197. *In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

NPPF Chapter 16 para. 206. *Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. 207. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole*

Other relevant legislative and planning policy background includes the following:

2. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Part II Conservation Areas defines conservation areas as: “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” and ensures that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area

This appraisal identifies the special interest and character of the Leominster Conservation Area and proposes additional areas for inclusion in the Conservation Area as determined with respect to guidance designed to preserve or enhance its character or appearance.

Section 69 Designation of conservation areas states:

(1) Every local planning authority—

(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority's area which is not for the time being designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area.

(4) The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge.

and

Section 71 Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas states:

(1) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

3. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Relevant local planning policy documentation will also be referred to, including the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 (Adopted 2015).

12.3.2 County and Local Plans

4. The Council's policy and direction with regard to the future development of the county are set out in the adopted Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031, the strategic planning framework designed to meet the county's development needs up to 2031, which supersedes and replaces the Unitary Development Plan 2007. The Strategy renews a commitment to the historic environment and acknowledges its value to the county through the designation of Conservation Areas. This appraisal is consistent with the overall policy aspiration to 'protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to enhance quality of life and support tourism.'

The Leominster Neighbourhood Plan 2019 sets out objectives for the delivery of a number of Key Aims designed to achieve the Council's Vision for Leominster, of which Objective 4:

... seeks to retain Leominster's distinctive identity and to create a Leominster with a distinct identity we will seek to achieve the following:

i. Protect valued landscapes and improve those in need of enhancement.

ii. Retain and enhance our distinctive town centre and its buildings.

iii. Avoid the label 'could be anywhere'.

iv. Protect heritage assets and particularly listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

v. Improve the public areas, particularly in the town centre.

vi. Protect important views

These policies safeguard the special qualities and character of conservation areas and ensure their preservation by:

Refusing permission to:

- Demolish any building or structure the loss of which would harm the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- Extend or alter a building in such a way as to damage its character or appearance;
- Undertake development which would harm its setting or character or appearance;
- Undertake development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of historic plots, layouts and street pattern, important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the conservation area;
- Erect signage which would degrade the special character or detract from the appearance of the conservation area.

By the same token, new development must:

- Respect its context in design, including scale, form, proportion and detailing;
- Use materials consistent with those that are traditional to that part of the conservation area and maintain a similar mix;
- Reflect the general pattern of building in that part of the conservation area;
- Incorporate boundary walls, railings and hedges in the development in a similar way to those already in existence in that part of the conservation area and ensure that they use similar materials and detailing or species, as relevant;
- Use signage that respects the character of the buildings and quality of the historic environment in their siting, size, materials and design.