



2. WESTBURY-ON-TRYM CONSERVATION AREA

DESCRIPTION

- (1) The Westbury-on-Trym Conservation Area takes within its boundaries the extended village of Westbury grouped around the River Trym, its valley and the road into Bristol from Gloucester, now High Street and Westbury Hill.
- (2) Along the River Trym is located the original settlement, an area of small vernacular cottages lining the shallow valley bottom along Trym Road with rural lanes such as Channels Hill and Chock Lane winding up the valley at its steep escarpments on the eastern boundaries. Two major early buildings dominate the character of the area, that of Westbury Church, still retaining its important rural character to the south and that of Canon's College; now having a more urban character being built up in the Victorian period along Church Road and College Road.



- (3) Many early walls and openings survive from these two major mediaeval groups.
- (4) To the east the Trym Valley and Channels Hill still retain a charmingly open character with Holmwood, its gardens and the un-built up Trym Valley being key elements of an unspoilt rural landscape. Landscape features of interest are contained within the Westbury Wildlife Park. Westbury Primary School occupies the crest but is well contained within generous grounds and is a low building within landscaped grounds.
- (5) To the west, High Street is a traditional village shopping street with many buildings of townscape merit culminating in the Edwardian focus around the War Memorial. A more unified group of Victorian shops follows up Westbury Hill where the road is flanked by many Georgian and Regency villas set in larger gardens on irregular plots. Contained in a triangle formed by Waters Lane, Westbury Hill and Eastfield Road is a much more densely defined area of Victorian cottages which also extends into Regency plots to the east and along Albert Place.
- (6) To the north of Waters Lane, behind the irregular cottage layout, lies a large area of open land whose character buttresses the open aspect of Westbury Church and has survived un-built upon to the present day. Finally at the north west corner of the Conservation Area along the River Trym and abutting Henbury Road is an attractive area of large, well built single villas enclosed within mature landscaped settings with the approach to the village emphasised by the mass of Trym Lodge, originally a fine Georgian house, still retaining its grounds to the High Street.
- (7) The village centre is a busy shopping focus to the Conservation Area and is a marked contrast to the mature landscapes still surviving on its outskirts making up one of the most loved of Bristol's villages.

KEY ISSUES

Traffic and Movement

- (1) The Conservation Area is heavily trafficked with queues forming at peak periods along Westbury Hill and High Street, with particular problems at its junction with Canford Lane.
- (2) The majority of through traffic is diverted along Falcondale Road, however a significant amount of motor vehicles clearly make use of Westbury Hill, High Street and Passage Road to go through the heart of the village. This is compounded by traffic from Horfield using East Hill and Waters Lane.
- (3) The two local car parks at the bottom of Westbury Hill and behind Carlton Court Shopping Mall are inadequate to cater for day to day demands by shoppers, except at week-ends. This leads to pressures of overspill parking lining both sides of the main shopping streets and the remaining cars seek parking space along adjacent residential streets.

Land Use

- (4) The plan of Westbury is a typical herringbone pattern with very narrow residential streets. These streets are lined in many cases by terrace housing or semi-detached houses with little or no provision for parking. There is a consequent conflict between residents and shopper car parking demands. In many cases the environment is dangerous, unsightly and degraded.
- (5) The mediaeval approach to the Holy Trinity Church is disfigured by intrusive car parking right up to the West Front.



- (6) Adjacent to Westbury's other major church, that of the Methodists, the traditional street pattern is disrupted for a great length by the intrusion of the shoppers' car park.
- (7) There is demand for office space both in the form of conversion of existing properties and redevelopment within the area.
- (8) There is pressure to seek to develop vacant land in the area for residential use, often in conflict with the character of the village.
- (9) In particular, the few surviving large properties with generous grounds are under constant threat from over intensive development.
- (10) There are a number of substantial but unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area, which could be threatened by either office or residential use being considered to the detriment of their fabric.
- (11) The heart of the village to the south of Holy Trinity Church and complementing its immediate setting has been the subject of many ill-considered development proposals. Its character needs to be protected.
- (12) There is a need to consider the protection of the Trym Valley both within the Conservation Area and in the north east.
- (13) Intensification of the uses of the Trym Valley now known as the Wildlife Park, could result both in new development and additional car parking, both of which could be detrimental to the character of this landscape.
- (14) Westbury-on-Trym, which owes its origins to the River Trym, has had this pleasant waterway, a potential feature of interest, badly culverted and obscured from the general view, in a number of important locations.

Townscape

- (15) One of the important features of Westbury-on-Trym is the character of the surviving Victorian and Edwardian features and shopfronts including the cast iron pillared features found at the northern end of the High Street.
- (16) Due to the hilly topography features such as roofs, chimneys and towers are particularly vulnerable.
- (17) The remaining open spaces form a beguiling backdrop to many views and can be spoiled by insensitive development.
- (18) There are many limestone rubble walls in the village which are subject to erosion and demolition for car parking and suffer from lack of maintenance
- (19) The quality of street furniture and paving does not properly reflect the character of the area.
- (20) The wooded character to the east of the Conservation Area should be conserved and enhanced, loss of tree cover has been evident over the last decade.

GENERAL ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES

- (1) The Conservation Area boundary needs to be reassessed in the light of altered perceptions as to the quality of building and spaces contiguous to the existing boundary. In particular the importance and extent of the valley of the River Trym needs to be reassessed and considered for inclusion.
- (2) An environmental traffic management scheme, including provision for cyclists and pedestrians, needs to be prepared in conjunction with the Highway Authority. This should address the issues of through traffic, and the needs of residents and shoppers within the area.



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- (3) Schemes need to be prepared to seek to enhance the setting of the following major village landmarks; Holy Trinity Church, Westbury College, Trym Lodge and the Methodist Church.
- (4) Intensification of office use within the area will be resisted except where development can be seen to be providing a significant contribution to the enhancement of the Westbury-on-Trym Conservation Area.
- (6) Any surviving large open grounds within the Conservation Area should be retained as open landscape. Of special merit would be the following:-
 - (a) *Holmwood House.*
 - (b) *Westbury Primary School.*
 - (c) *Holy Trinity Church's walled setting, and its associated Glebe land, now allotment gardens.*
 - (d) *Villas and large open grounds along Henbury Road.*
- (7) Unlisted buildings of character, especially those dating from the Victorian and Edwardian periods, should be retained and carefully reinstated. The Post Office is also of interest. The City Council's Conservation Principle P11 will be applied.
- (8) The open landscape character of the unspoilt Trym Valley is of paramount importance for the character of the Conservation Area. Any further development will be resisted.
- (9) Any opportunity should be taken to enhance and reinstate the character of the River Trym.
- (10) There will be a presumption in favour of retaining the existing character of the remaining Victorian shopfronts.
- (11) The most careful attention will need to be given to the design of new shopfronts to enhance the character of the shopping streets in the village.
- (12) The prominent nature of the existing roofscape, and architectural features such as towers, requires careful safeguarding. Conservation area Principles P14-P19 will be specially applicable within the Area.
- (13) Views of the important green spaces within the Conservation Area need to be retained, as do the green spaces themselves. Conservation area Principle P1 will be specially applicable within the Conservation Area.
- (14) The many limestone rubble boundary walls within the area are a special feature and these should be repaired and retained. Conservation area Principle P35 will be specially applicable within the area.
- (15) Encouragement should be given to the enhancement of street furniture within the Conservation Area.
- (16) Tree planting should be encouraged to the east of the Conservation Area and relate to traditional areas of landscape.