

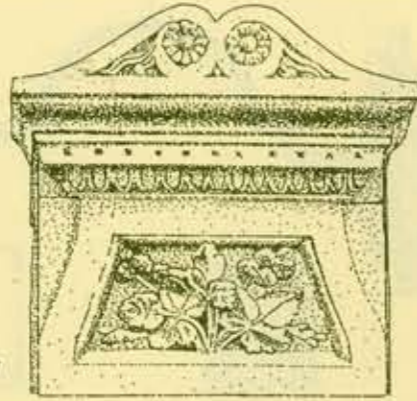
teenth century, but most of the existing evidence dates from the early seventeenth century, with a new brick front being added in the eighteenth century. A 1685 document leases to Johnathan Pyrke of Stourbridge "the house in the High Street of Stourbridge called or known by the name of the Talbot", and since then it has been a coaching inn and centre for local social activities.

### 12 The Post Office

The Post Office, on the opposite side of High Street, is a fine example of the use of red terracotta.

A number of buildings in Stourbridge use this material, particularly for facing purposes. Terracotta literally means "cooked earth", and was used widely in the Midlands from the 1880's. It originally came to England from Italy during the reign of Henry VII but had been known to the ancient Egyptians. It was used for complicated detailing on buildings, proving not only cheaper but longer-lasting than carved brick. Colours ranged from brown, through red (the usual colour) and green, to yellow and cream.

Due to its long-lasting properties, terracotta presents few maintenance problems, even a hundred years after its manufacture, unless the outer "fire skin" is damaged, when it will deteriorate rapidly.

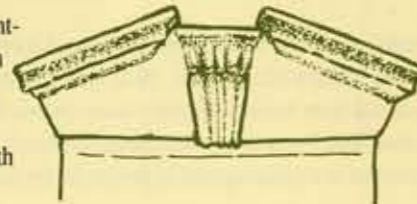


### 13 Bordeaux House

At the junction of Foster Street stands Bordeaux House, another fine period example of shop design and use of terracotta, though unfortunately, the ornate second floor was removed only recently, detracting from the building's original appearance.

### 14 Barclay's Bank

Opposite stands Barclay's Bank, a pleasant eighteenth century building which, despite its modern bank frontage at ground floor level, has a series of attractive windows at first and second floor level, especially to the High Street elevation, with segmental lintels and moulded keyblocks.



### 15 St. John's Church

Down to the end of High Street and turning left to face the Ring Road, St. John's Church can be seen. It is of sandstone with a slate roof, and has no tower but instead a kind of mini-tower called a fleche (French for arrow). It was built in 1861 by the Architect of the Law Courts in the Strand, London: George Edmund Street.

### 16 The Old Library

Stourbridge's former Library, now used by the Art College, on the corner of Church Street with the Ring Road, was built in 1905 with the aid of a £3,000 gift from the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. It demonstrates a liberal use of terracotta and stained glass, a classic example of High Victorian style.

### 17 All Saints' Church

The Catholic Church of Our Lady and All Saints, which can be seen across the Ring Road, was designed by Pugin the younger in 1864, replacing an earlier Catholic Chapel. This was a period of Catholic Church expansion, following the Catholic Emancipation Act.



All Saints Church

The route now proceeds along the Ring Road and right into Market Street. Before turning into Market Street, note the elegant late eighteenth century house, unfortunately rough-cast, with Ionic columns to the first floor, and its classical proportions.

### 18 St. Thomas's Church

St. Thomas's Church was built between 1728 and 1736 of brick with stone dressings, because of "the inconvenience suffered by the inhabitants of the town in having to go a long distance to the Parish Church (Oldswinford) by which Dissent was fostered". The Chancel was only added in 1890, as in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries chancels were considered "Popish". The large and attractive east window has had to be protected with reinforced plastic.

The interior is particularly attractive, the apse and screen designed by W.H. Bidlake in a happy mix of gothic and classical styles. Arrangements to view it can be made through the Church Office (Stourbridge 394185).

The Georgian terrace almost opposite is also particularly attractive.

### 19 31-39 Market Street

Further down Market Street, on the right past the junction with Talbot Street, is a pleasing row of shops in the red brick and terracotta style.

### 20 Stourbridge Institute

Across the street is the Stourbridge Institute and Social Club, founded in 1843 "to afford information on a variety of interesting subjects especially among the labouring classes". It moved to its present site in 1857. The original building was extended early in the twentieth century, shops being added to flank the entrance in 1937. The doorway and detailing above form Stourbridge's best example of Art Deco, a style popular in the 1920's and 1930's, and typified by the Hoover building in West London. The doorway and window above are of particular architectural interest and warrant protection.

### 21 The Town Hall

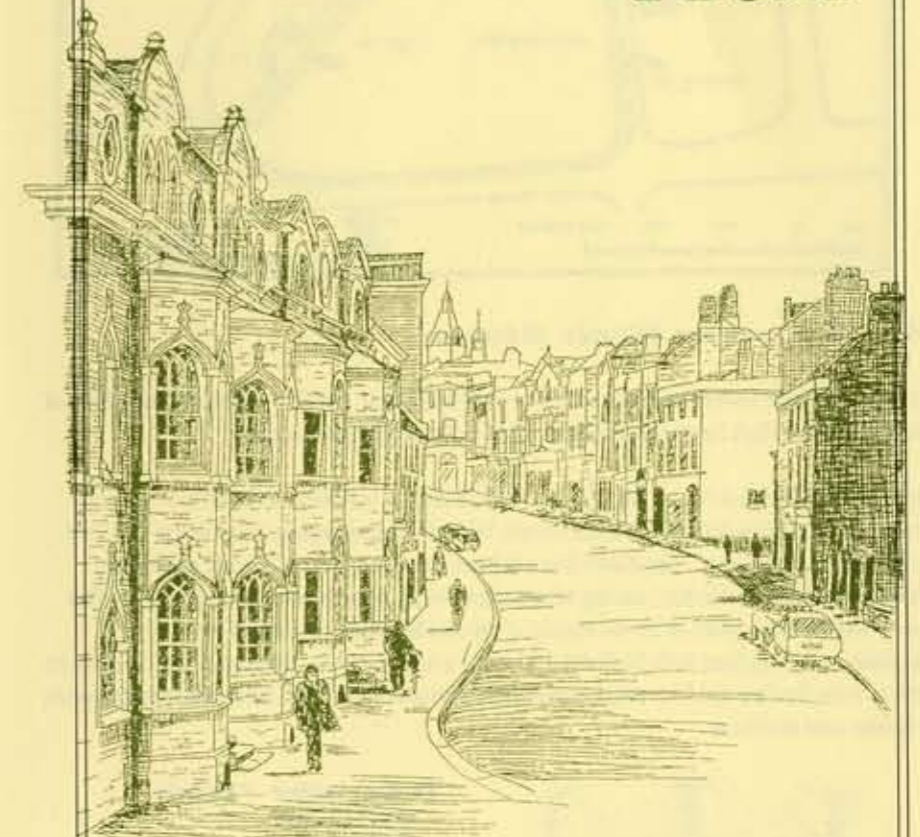


Further along on the left, the Town Hall dominates the view. It stands on the site of the Old Corn Exchange, being built by public subscription to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. Designed and built by the Stourbridge Architect Thomas Robinson in the then fashionable materials red brick and terracotta, much of which was produced locally. A Corn Exchange, Fire Station, Council Chamber and Municipal Offices were added in 1888. Note the cupola and the imposing tower. The Town Hall is rather grandiose for its current use but remains an important and imposing architectural feature in Stourbridge.

### 22 The Old Bank

Finally, back at the Crown Centre, look across the road to the Yorkshire Bank, with its imposing domed belvedere. This was the Old Bank, the words still being visible on its original fascia.

# Stourbridge Heritage Trail



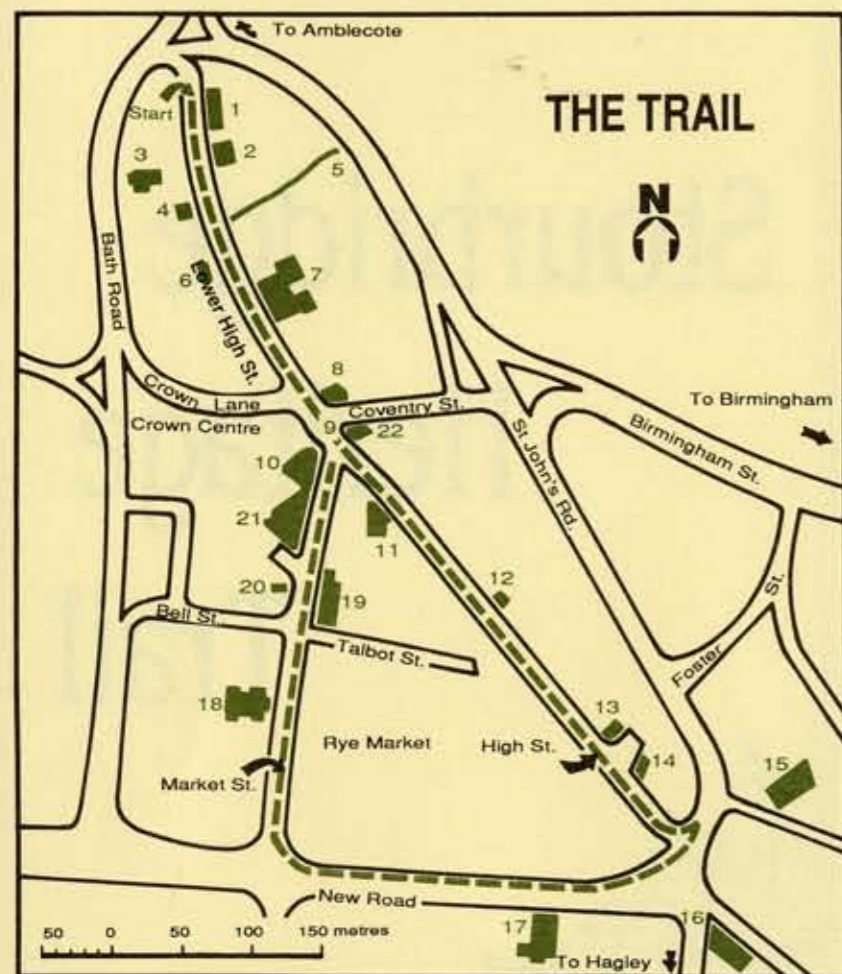
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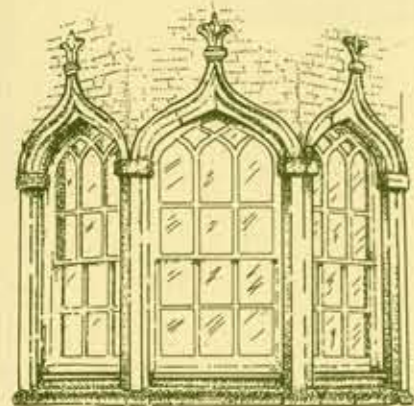
Much of old Stourbridge still remains, despite unsympathetic alterations and demolitions and the construction of the Ring Road. This trail is intended to help you appreciate some of the older and more interesting buildings of the town, including some which you might not otherwise notice.



### 1 7 Lower High Street

Coming out of the underpass at the end of Lower High Street, the view up the hill has plenty of interest. Lower High Street has been described as Stourbridge's best street.

Just past the Woolpack Inn is No. 7 Lower High Street. It was built in the 1770's in a style known as Strawberry Hill Gothic after Horace Walpole's trend-setting house of the 1740's at Twickenham, Middlesex. The distinctive windows are very typical of the late eighteenth-century fondness for 'Gothic', having what are known as 'ogee' or double-curved tops. This house was for many years in the ownership of the Bradley and Foster families the local ironmasters, having been built by Gabriel Bradley, a hop-merchant. His son, John, founded the firm of John Bradley and Co., which remained in business until 1982. Restored in recent years, it is now used as offices



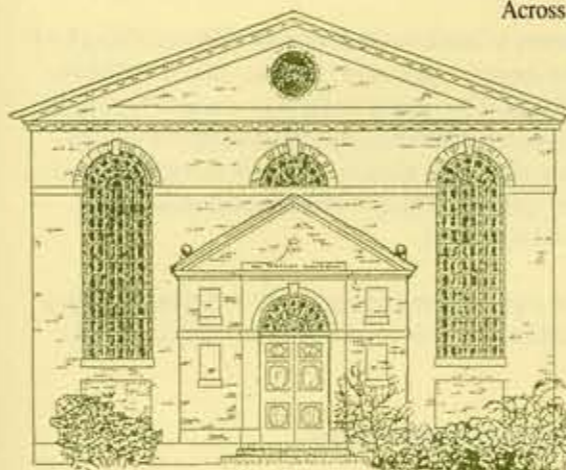
### 8 Lower High Street

No. 8 Lower High Street, next door, is known as Stourhurst and has been for years just a roofless facade. Built in the late eighteenth century, of red brick with stone dressings, its most distinctive features are the attractive Palladian or Venetian windows. Only the facade remains in anything like original condition, but is an important feature in Lower High Street.

## 2 Timber-framed buildings

On the gable end of No. 15 could be seen the 'footprint' or trace of the building which originally occupied the site. The timbers of this footprint are now in safe keeping.

### 3 The Unitarian Church

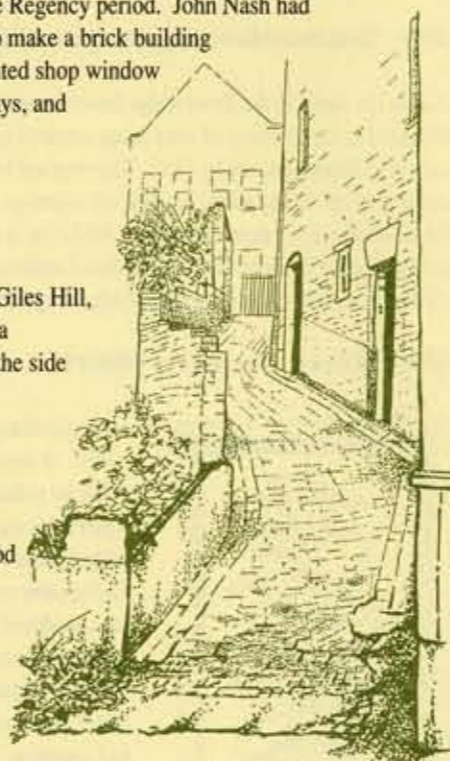


Across the road, a little up the hill, is the Unitarian Church, built in 1788 by the congregation which originally met in a Dissenters' Chapel at the rear of what is now Nickolls and Perks' off-licence. The land for the Church was purchased and the building erected for £1,204 15s 5 1/2d.

The style is a typical non-conformist eighteenth century red-brick box. Above the doorcase is the Latin inscription "HIC TEMPLUM AEDIFICATUM" (this Chapel was built in .....). Inside, it still has its original pews.

### 4 170 Lower High Street

Further up on the same side, No. 170 Lower High Street is a seventeenth century building which received a new front in stucco during the Regency period. John Nash had helped popularise the use of stucco, intended to make a brick building appear to be faced with stone. The double-fronted shop window is original, which is a rare thing to find nowadays, and particularly worthy of continued preservation.



Giles Hill

### 5 Giles Hill

Across the road, the narrow little passageway, Giles Hill, climbs up and across to the Ring Road, almost a continuation of Wheeler's Passage which is at the side of 170 Lower High Street.

### 6 Polychrome Brickwork

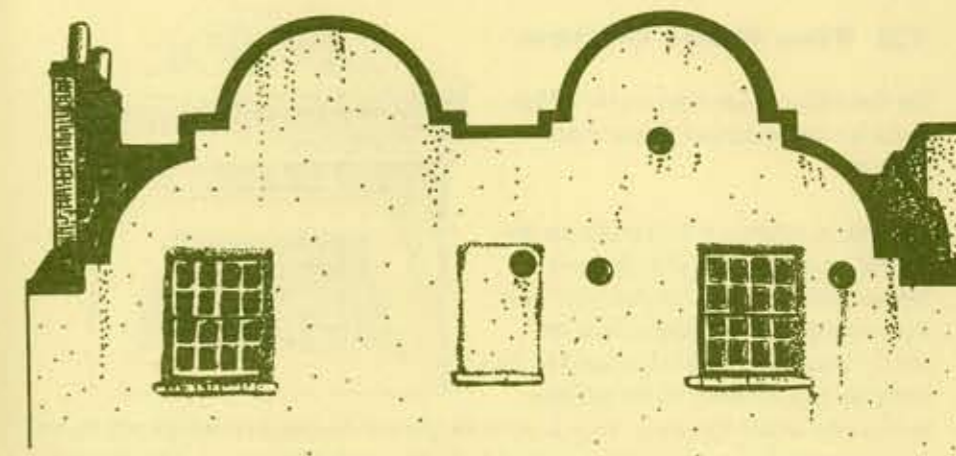
Numbers 164 to 168 Lower High Street are good examples of buildings with polychrome brickwork. This was a favourite Victorian decoration. Though patterned brickwork had been used in Britain for centuries, the Victorians popularised (and, some would say, debased) the art, with their smooth, hard, machine made bricks.



### 7 King Edward VI College

Across the street, King Edward VI College occupies a site where children have been taught since 1430, though the school's charter was granted by Edward VI in 1552, ordaining that "there should be forever a Grammar School at Stourbridge". (Samuel Johnson attended the school from 1725 to 1726, and it became a Sixth Form College in 1976.) The present buildings date from 1861, the Hall from 1930.

Recently the stonework has been cleaned, improving the appearance considerably, and some stonework renovated and replaced, using limestone from one of the working quarries near Bath. The row of portrait busts along the front of the building is noteworthy.



### 8 Nickolls and Perks

At the top of Lower High Street, where it joins Coventry Street, is Nickolls and Perks' wine shop. This building was called the Board Inn from 1797 up until 1968, but even earlier it had been a private house and Grocers' shop. A meeting-house for Dissenters was built behind the house in 1698 but was burnt down by rioters in 1715, however its original plaque can be found in King Edward VI College Hall.

Two very distinctive features are the Dutch gables, popular also from the late seventeenth century. Also, noteworthy are the wall-plates, which indicate how the building has to be held together, literally, to prevent its walls moving outwards.

The building's timber frame may be seen on the Coventry Street elevation.

### 9 The Town Clock

Nearby, across the road, stands the Town Clock, made of cast iron at John Bradley's Ironworks in 1857. Note the fluted column. Up until 1972 the clock had been wound manually twice a week from a loft in Stourbridge Market Hall, but now the mechanism is electric. This clock forms a prominent and pleasing central feature in the middle of Stourbridge.



### 10 The Old Market Hall

Numbers 4 to 6 Market Street were formerly part of the Market Hall. This was built in 1827, a period when many architects were still fascinated by "Classical" architecture, based on Greek and Roman styles. It was too expensive to build in marble, or in the white limestone of the Mediterranean, so instead they used stucco over brick. Stucco was used at the time to imitate stone. Note, however, that the sides of the building are in red brick! Columns were also used, as in Greek and Roman temples. These are Doric, one of three main varieties. The building has recently been renovated, and now forms an attractive setting for modern shop units.



### 11 The Talbot

Many British Inns share the name Talbot, usually after the family name of the Earls of Shrewsbury, who owned land locally, the Inn sign often showing a Talbot, the old English hunting dog, used as the family badge. The building, which is grouped around two courtyards, is probably pre-seven-