

Sparhawk Street

This is an ancient route predating the Norman layout of the town. It is clear on maps such as Warren's of 1776 that this street aligns with the front of the Abbey Church and indeed with Northgate Street to the north of the Abbey enclave. This is in effect the residue of the pre-Norman route that ran north-south through the earlier settlement near the River Lark wherein was later built the Abbey. This part of that route linked to the ancient market place at St Mary's Square and thence south via Southgate Street. It's significance as a location is extremely high.

The street is still full of interest even if the history of it was not so important. It has buildings of a very wide range of dates from the 16th C to the very modern with most periods represented in one way or another. The individual buildings are not all of the highest quality but together they are particularly significant as a handsome collection in an historic street. Interestingly the two ends of the street in St Mary's Square and Honey Hill do have buildings of the highest quality, and it is as if Sparhawk Street plays a supporting role as a link to the two areas of higher quality at either end. It is an urban environment which is a real pleasure to enjoy, particularly the views north to the new Cathedral Tower and the remarkably handsome Regency houses and, finally, St Mary's Church in Honey Hill. Turning southwards are views of the splendid brewery buildings. Perhaps, as much as, any this street helps reflect two of the town's most important activities - the church and the brewery.

It also has a wonderful historic name which can be traced back centuries.

Asphalt road finish with modern concrete paving flags and folksy modern 'heritage' style streetlights on columns, with hanging baskets at appropriate times of the year. Some modern cast iron bollards discourage pavement parking.

3a-3b Sparhawk Street

This is a handsome pair of semi-detached houses from the late 19th/early 20th C and in the 'Queen Anne' revival style made popular by such as Richard Norman Shaw and, relatively rare in central Bury.

The building has two storeys of red brick with a bracketed eave and clay tiled roof with brick stacks. The houses are the same design but handed. Each has two four over four sash windows at first floor level, with what appear to be operable louvred shutter in the French style. While at ground floor is a handsome projecting bay with tripartite sash windows and rather idiosyncratic shallow arched lead roof. No 3a seems to have had all its joinery replaced in recent times and thus the fenestration of the two houses appears slightly different. At No 3b the largest sash to the bay has a pointed arch which is another idiosyncratic element of the design, otherwise the bottom sashes are all single paned with the uppers being four or two paned. The entrance doors are set back within a porch which has a linked canopy and open arched frame. The door to No 3a is a modern replacement while that to No 3b appears original.

Plastic rainwater goods.

The houses are set back behind a low dwarf wall in red brick with a bonnet coping tile with the small front garden area being paved. The entrance gates are lost but there is at the extreme north end a gateway in a brick wall which has a boarded door, presumably leading to the rear garden of No3 a

These are a very handsome pair of houses in a singular design style, despite the loss of some original joinery (which overall has been replaced rather sensitively) they make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Sparhawk House, 4 Sparhawk Street

This is a modern property constructed as flats in two storeys of red brickwork with a dormered attic. It has a vehicular access to the rear with a large ground floor opening. It is in a sort of pastiche neo-Georgian style. It is perhaps too early to judge the long term value of the building in terms of the conservation area.



The Coach House

This is a late 19th C service building which, presumably, would have been the stable/coach house to one of the grander houses on St Mary's Square to the south. It has now been converted into a dwelling. It is a single storey but with attic accommodation with a gable to the west facing elevation and clay pantiled roof. The rear elements, with a cross wing, appear either to have been rebuilt or heavily restored in recent years. The street elevation has a single door opening at ground level with a casement at first floor with, to the north side, a pass door in a wall leading to the rear although this element may belong to No 3b adjacent. The rear parts have casement windows at both ground floor and first floor levels. The joinery all appears modern but appropriate enough.



Plastic rainwater goods.

While no great architectural statement the building has charm and some historic interest as it relates to an earlier time when the houses in St Mary's Square would have had service outbuildings. As a result it makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Greene King Buildings, Sparhawk Street

There are three blocks of tall buildings which are parts of the Greene King Brewery estate which form a terrace at the south end of Sparhawk Street and into St Mary's Square. Two of the blocks are in the former and one in the latter. The earliest one, which is listed, is in St Mary's Square and, perhaps, despite being more obviously industrial in nature, would be considered the most attractive and interesting as a part of the history of the brewery in its important setting in the town. Known as the 'Barley Store', it is believed to have now been converted to offices for the Brewery. Built of red brick and 5 storeys in height there are 2 projecting boarded sack hoists, in gabled form, on the main elevation. Fenestration is in the form of matching casements at each level. On the ground floor there is a boarded service door at each end with the threshold set above street level to facilitate loading/unloading.

The other two blocks, which are from the post war years, are handsome in their own right. These two blocks are both in three tall storeys of modern pink bricks and apparently offices over ground floors with more industrial uses. The block to the south has eight bays of fenestration with a ground floor which has four bays of panels of glass blocks enclosed by an artificial (?) stone frame to create a single architectural element. The northern block has eleven bays of fenestration and is set back behind the ground level elevation which follows the street line while the upper storeys are parallel with the block to the south. The ground floor construction here is in buff bricks and the four panels of glass block are all again framed with artificial stone but individually rather than as a single architectural element.



Windows are all metal framed casements with a central obscured panel. There are artificial stone copings to all brick walls and flat roofs are hidden behind parapets.

These are large modern commercial buildings in an important historic setting which is generally characterised by traditional domestic scaled buildings. However, they do make a strong positive contribution to the conservation area and this is for two main reasons:

The brewery use is an important feature in the conservation area. They are part of this use which has been part of this area of the town for centuries, and which remains one of the town's most important and widely known industries. They represent a part of this long tradition.

Despite being semi-industrial and much larger in scale than their neighbours, they sit well in the conservation area. They are well designed buildings and well built in excellent materials, and while they are much taller than the older buildings in their setting, the way the northern block addresses the street and acknowledges and plays down this disparity is very sensitively handled and helps them make a transition from the taller buildings on St Mary's Square, where there is a more open aspect, than in the more intimate Sparhawk Street.