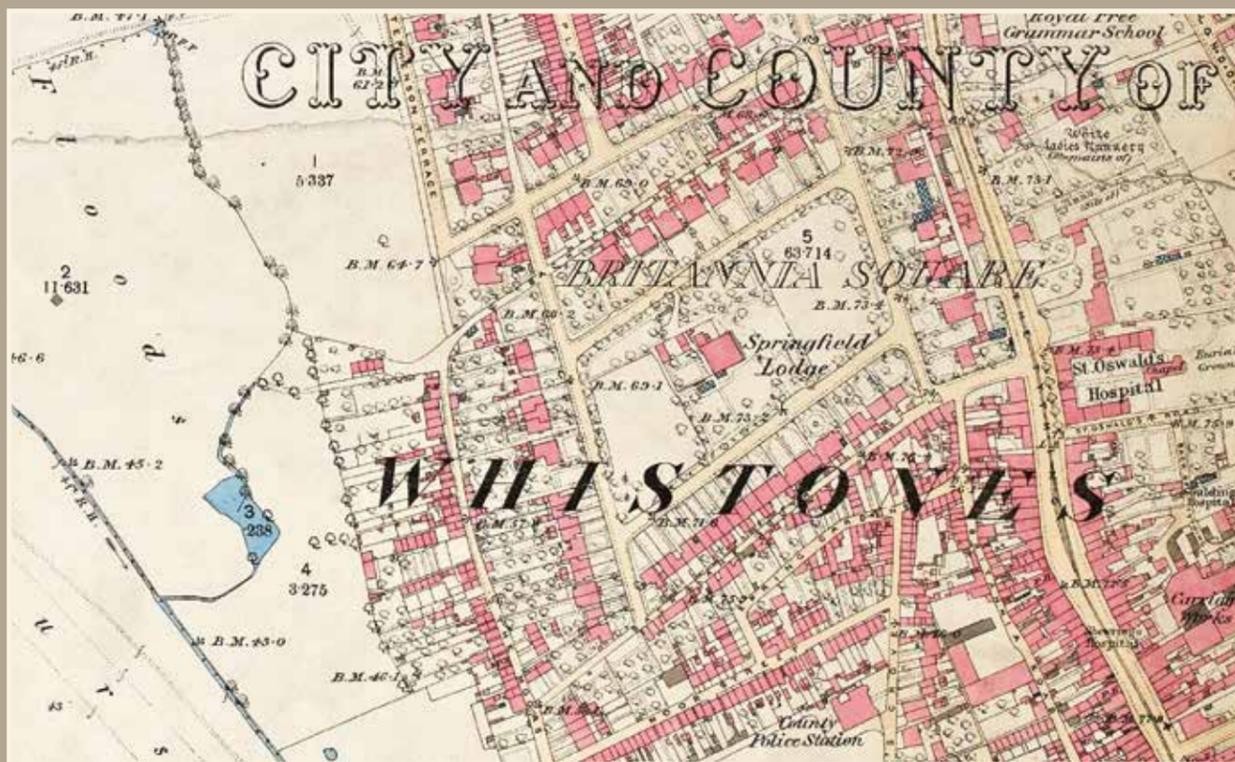


# Britannia Square 1815-2015

In December, Britannia Square in Worcester celebrates its bicentenary. Ian Terry, Secretary of Britannia Square Residents' Association, touches upon its fascinating history



Reproduced from the 1888 Ordnance Survey map. The original copy of the map is held by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, The Hive, Worcester.



**Clockwise from top left:** Springfield; Albion House and an extract from the 1888 Ordnance Survey map with Britannia Square in the centre.

Britannia Square has been described as the only Georgian square in England still entirely in residential use. Worcester City Council has recognised the special contribution the Square makes to the architectural heritage of the city by awarding it the status of a Conservation Area, which includes the adjacent roads of Albany Terrace, Stephenson Terrace and York Place.

In Roman times, the area where Britannia Square now stands was used for growing flax and a settlement there included baths and religious buildings.

The origins of Britannia Square and Albany Terrace lie in the conversion of the leasehold of Pound Farm, owned by the Diocese of Worcester, into freehold building plots that were auctioned off in stages between 1807-1817 by William Handy, who also bought and developed some of the plots. Mortgages are known to date from 1815 and houses were being offered for sale by 1818.

By 1829, the Worcester Directory listed 15 residents, including three clergymen, several gentlemen and widows, two apothecary surgeons, a tea dealer and Professor Louis Harvey d'Egville, a dancing master.

Britannia Square and Albany Terrace have a consistent architectural style, dictated by covenants specifying a slate roof, plastering with Roman Cement and no piggeries! The building and infilling of plots took place over many years as speculative development for the gentry of Worcester City, or for people desiring a town house for entertaining in the season; indeed one of the houses has a large mirrored ballroom.

Springfield was built in the centre of the Square in 1829 and was first occupied by Harvey Berrow-Tymbs, the owner of the world's oldest newspaper, *Berrow's Journal*. The residents of Britannia Square were scandalised, not because their view had been ruined, but because the occupier was 'in trade!' Since that time, Springfield has been a school and boarding house for the Alice Ottley School and is now the junior school of the Royal Grammar School, Worcester.

By the time the highly detailed Ordnance Survey map of 1888 was published, development was essentially complete. ■

The character and heritage of the Conservation Area is preserved by the very active Britannia Square Residents' Association, subscribed to by more than half of the residents. Details can be found at: [www.britanniasquare.org](http://www.britanniasquare.org)

The Britannia Square Residents' Association was founded in 1973 to preserve, protect and enhance 'the character, environment and amenities of the Conservation Area known as Britannia Square and, so far as relevant, the immediate surrounding areas for the benefit of the residents of the City of Worcester and, to this end, to cooperate with or make representations to the appropriate local or other authorities and to take any other appropriate action'.

The original covenants have been effective since Britannia Square and Albany Terrace retain their distinctive period appeal of Roman Cement stucco, slate roofs and no known piggeries.