

DUDLEY: PROUD OF THE PAST, POSITIVE FOR THE FUTURE

Medieval Dudley



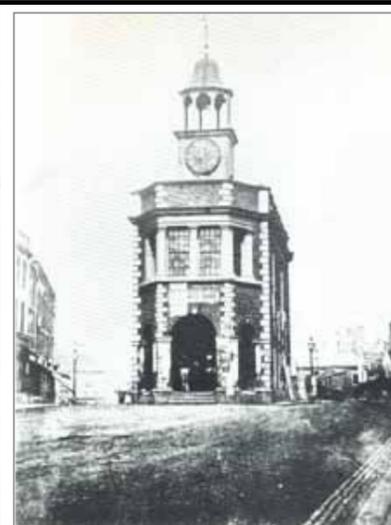
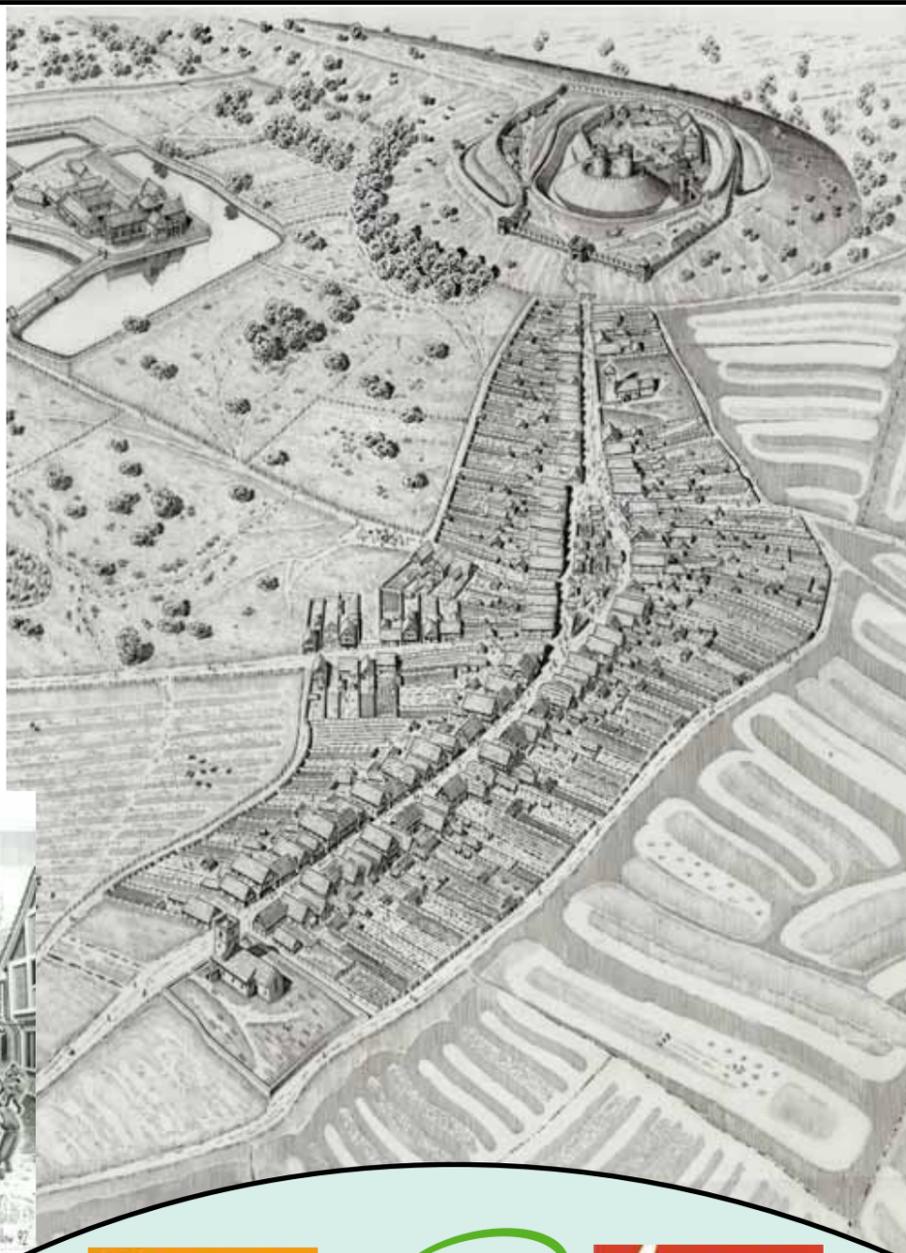
Modern Dudley, steeped in history, has a market town atmosphere lacking in other shopping centres. This should come as no surprise, it was planned that way, probably by Gervase Pagenal, Lord of Dudley in the mid 12th century.

He would certainly recognise the medieval framework underlying today's layout, the broad medieval market place nestling between the towns two churches, the shop frontages with strips of land to the rear which formed the regular "burgage" plots" Gervase offered for rent, the medieval "back lanes" of Tower Street and King Street, servicing the rear of the burgages and setting the limit of the medieval town.

Centre The imaginative reconstruction drawings show Dudley as it may have looked in around 1400.

Even today many of the towns property boundaries have a "reversed S" shape which suggests the new burgage plots borrowed their boundaries from the arable fields of Anglo-Saxon Dudley. This curving shape is typical of strip landholdings in medieval fields and reflects the gait of the yoked oxen used for ploughing. Try walking down Long Entry with this in mind!

Dudley Market is first mentioned in 1261, when Roger do Somery sued Dean Giles of Wolverhampton for setting up a rival market there. It was finally agreed that Wolverhampton could keep its market, as long as Dudley folk could use it free of charge.



In 1653 a new Town Hall was built in the centre of the market, attached to the row of shops known as "middle row", which had encroached on to the market place due to lack of space in the old medieval town.

By 1860, however, nocturnal activities beneath the Town Hall's open arches were said to have become an affront to public morals and it was demolished, being replaced by the present fountain in 1867.



The opening of the fountain by Georgiana, Countess of Dudley

