

The Potteries Tile Trail Fenton

The Potteries Tile Trail is a pilot project that aims to celebrate tiles and architectural ceramics to be found in locations across Stoke-on-Trent. It aims to promote the city's built environment as well as its internationally significant tile and architectural ceramic industry.

The collection has been created in partnership with a volunteer research team, the local community and a wider constituency of online contributors. The trails can either be accessed using this digital document (PDF) or via our dedicated Historypin channel using the website or smart phone app. The digital documents can be printed out if required.

We have created a series of six introductory 'tile trails' - one for each of Stoke-on-Trent's famous six towns (Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton and Longton). The trails are aimed at local residents and visitors alike. They offer a selection of varied and interesting examples of ceramics to be found in buildings and public spaces in each local area. We hope the trails encourage more people to explore and enjoy the city's wonderful 'in situ' ceramics. We also hope they contribute to the collection by adding comments and photographs to the Historypin collection.

The Potteries Tile Trail project has been led by the national **Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society** (TACS) and funded by a grant from the **Heritage Lottery Fund** (HLF) All Our Stories initiative.

Further details about the project and trails can be found at:
www.thepotteriestiletrail.org



1 Christchurch Street

Ashleworth Terrace is a showcase of decorative terracotta, moulded brickwork and tiles. The frontage includes impressive doorway designs, commemorative plaques and individual doorsteps. Built in 1891 - this fine row features twelve relatively high status houses that were let to middle class tenants including several pottery manufacturers, schoolmasters and commercial travellers. William Meath Baker built these homes.

The Baker family is synonymous with Fenton's development as a town and is responsible for many of the public buildings as well as residential and commercial property in the area. The Baker family was hugely important to Fenton. Although the family had roots in Shropshire - William Baker - an architect - bought 'Fenton Culvert' which was an estate and manor that included a pottery factory. His son William Baker (IV) developed the potworks, a colliery, claypit and brickworks. They also continued to farm some of the land. On his death in 1865 - the unmarried William Baker left his considerable estate to his brother Reverend Ralph Bourne. William Meath Baker was the only son of Reverend Ralph Bourne.



2 Church Terrace, Christchurch Street

The tiles spell it out! "Church Terrace" is a row of six houses built in brick and with some stone ornament. This Victorian terrace was constructed

by William Baker and provided accommodation for teachers and church staff.

3 City Road (Doorway)

What better way to welcome customers entering your commercial premises than presenting them with an exquisite mosaic? Designs can be found across Stoke-on-Trent and vary hugely from business names to the building number. They are certainly distinctive and often unique to the building they grace which makes them even more historically important and valuable.



The design, cuts and installation are all part of the art of mosaic. It requires high levels of creativity and skill from all involved. It is worth studying designs up close to appreciate the 'andamento' or movement and flow of tesserae (pieces).



4 City Road (Doorway)

The remnants of a patterned tile design can still be seen in the entrance doorway of this commercial property. It has clearly seen better days - however the central focal point tile is still in situ as are some of the patterned border pieces. Nice to see all is not lost - yet!



5 Fountain Street

The Fire Station is located at the corner of this commercial site (James Kent). It was one of the main former locations for various incarnations of Baker's pottery. The potworks flourished under William Baker's management and by the middle of the nineteenth century had almost 500 employees. It was the biggest firm in Fenton. This wonderful purpose-built Fire Station includes decorative terracotta signage including the date it opened 1909.

The Potteries Tile Trail **Fenton** continued



6 Hitchman Street (Doorstep)

This doorstep design is created using stock 'off-the-shelf' tiles (plain and patterned). However - there are still an amazingly huge variety of permutations to be found across the city in residential and commercial properties.



7 Hitchman Street

Beautiful terracotta and moulded brickwork decorate this prominent commercial property at the head of Hitchman Street and fronting City Road. It is a fine example of what can be found in this interesting wider commercial and residential neighbourhood. This relatively high status and high quality development was funded by William Meath Baker and built in the late 1880s. Hitchman Street was named after Baker's Aunt.



8 City Road

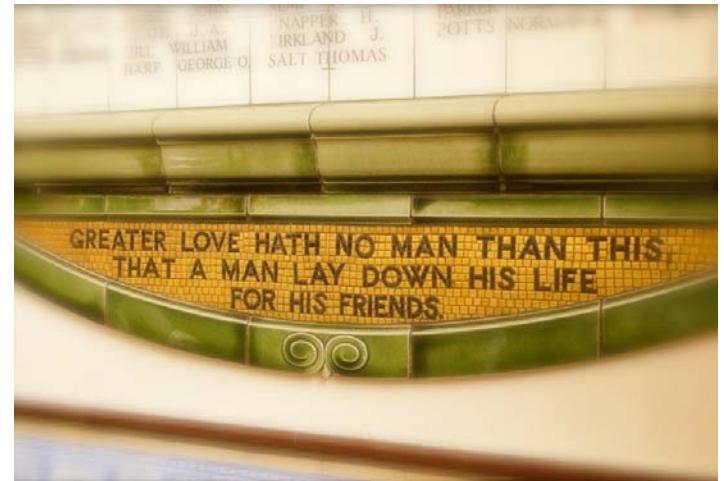
These architectural details are indicative of the relative status of this residential and commercial neighbourhood. The location was also important being close to (and in part fronting) Victoria Square (now the roundabout and related road junction connecting Victoria Road and City Road). It perhaps also offers an insight into the mindset of the main investor - local philanthropist William Meath Baker - who built this property in the late 1880s.



9 Baker Street (Sign)

The town's fine library is located on Baker Street (sadly now closed). Meath Baker donated the land and it was enabled by a Carnegie trust donation - the only known investment of its kind in Stoke-on-Trent.

The library forms part of Fenton's grand cluster of public and civic buildings in this area and in the main funded by the Meath Baker family. Each of The Potteries' six towns has a different but similar collection of buildings that form their own focus. It is these locally distinctive clusters of buildings that together make Stoke-on-Trent so unique and special. It is vital that we preserve and look after each and every one of these important buildings to be found across the city. The Potteries is truly a world heritage site - ask any local!



10 Fenton Town Hall, Albert Square

There are beautiful and important tiles and architectural ceramics throughout this former town hall (now sadly empty). There is a very important WW1 commemorative tablet in the main staircase. This large ceramic roll of honour made by Minton commemorates the 498 local men who lost their lives between 1914 and 1918. This bespoke commission is thought to be Minton's only WW1 memorial. It is frankly scandalous that this fine Victorian town hall is not even listed and therefore lacks protection and is vulnerable to unscrupulous future development. Many people feel strongly that the major civic and public buildings that form the heart and soul of each of the towns should be afforded the highest possible preservation status.

