

STRATFORD ROAD PART 2 (AREA 3)

PRUE EVANS

1 - Mushtaq's. A smart "Sweet Shop," which means an extensive range of Pakistani sweets, puddings, desserts, and usually samosas and other savoury snacks. Sparkhill has a more prosperous feel, better looking shops, less scruffy cafes and a sense of a small town as the road rises towards the Adult Education Centre, the square building on the left of this picture.

2 - Indoor shops. Loads of small pretty businesses, in one venue, some spread over the wide pavements.

3 - St. John's Church. Until 1894 Sparkhill was part of the Parish of Yardley. This ancient parish has a Saxon foundation with a connection to Pershore Abbey. A striking sight, on the corner of St John's Road, and across the road from Durham Road, a route used by many between Small Heath and Balsall Heath.

4 - So much variety and colour as the road approaches its "town centre".

5 - Guru Nanak Gurdwara, a Sikh Temple along with the Sparkhill Pool & Fitness Centre, both recently built boldly sandwiching the old Library.

6 - The Community Library. Baths can just about be seen on the left.

7 - The route sweeps past the park and residential area down to another high street section of busy shops, takeaways and cafes.

8 - Hall Green. this is a new sign on the River Cole, the start of the Shire Country Park. Hall green is more upmarket, with another high street area, Health Centres, semi-detached housing, a large college and a train station.

9 - Bridge over the River Cole, just showing the College Arms behind.

10- The Robin Hood Pub, aka the Toby Carvery, near Birmingham's boundary is an iconic place. Overlooking a very large traffic island, and with a Waitrose just up the road it signals the suburban feel of this last section.