

TERESA DOLAN

The B4128 is one of the main trunk roads into Birmingham City Centre from the East. Visually and architecturally, it's a road of two halves – the first stretch from Lea Hall to Bordesley Green East, and the second stretch from Bordesley Green to Bordesley Middleway. The half-way point is a roundabout, a few hundred metres west of Heartlands Hospital.

These photos focus on the first half of the road, starting close to Lea Hall train station and ending at Heartlands Hospital. It's best summed up using the letter M.

First, there is Meadway. This section of the road, starting at the junction with Garretts Green Lane and Lea Hall Road, was named after the Meadway Tavern. Sadly the pub has long been demolished, replaced with a bland Asda supermarket, but the road name has survived.

Next there is McDonalds. The road starts and ends with a McDonalds store, and for good measure, has an extra one at the halfway point, in case you get an urge along the way.

Then there is Middle of the Road. For much of the route, the road is sandwiched between little service lanes, allowing residents to access their homes and park up safely, without endangering themselves or road users. When the service lanes disappear, grass verges spring up in the centre of the road.

M is also for Mid-century. Both sides of the road are lined with post war housing, which although functional is somewhat sterile, lacking the charm and character of Victorian terraces found elsewhere in the city.

But above all, there is Mundanity. This section of the road is mundane: it lacks identity, design, colour and energy. Apart from a small Asda, an even smaller Aldi, there are no meeting points, no areas of activity or social hubs. Bizarrely for 2023, there wasn't a single pub or coffee shop along the way. Without any unique or recognisable buildings, this stretch of the road could be any road in any town.