





# CHURCH GATE CONSERVATION AREA

Draft Character Appraisal



(Draft Revised Church Gate Conservation Area Appraisal, September 2016)



Leicester  
City Council

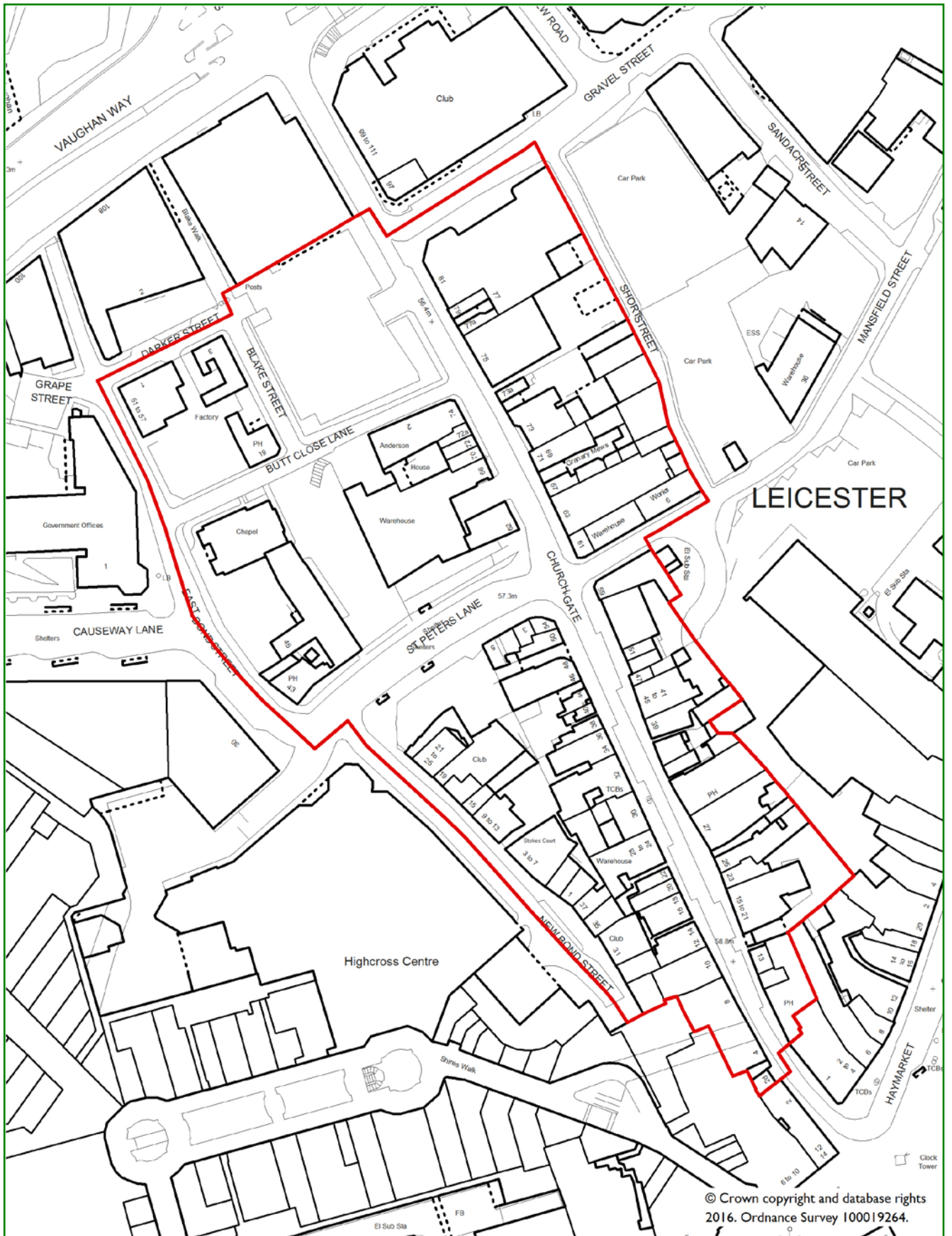




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Map 1. Boundary of the Conservation Area



# I.0 Introduction

I.01 Church Gate and its surrounding area has been close to the heart of the historic city since Roman times. From forming part of a route along the old City Walls to its current role as a bustling shopping street, it has been in continuous occupation ever since.

I.02 Church Gate is one of the few thoroughfares into the city which both was not significantly redeveloped in the Victorian era or twentieth century and as such gives a unique snapshot into the historic development of the city. It also contains a number of interesting buildings and spaces and provides a historic framing of the tower of St Margaret's Church in the distance. It was designated as a Conservation Area in 2006 to help preserve its distinct character.



*Church Gate looking towards City Centre*

I.03 Being a bustling commercial area, there has been continuous development pressures and changes in the area including the sad loss of some historic buildings and the development of the adjacent Highcross Shopping Centre. As such, the City Council has decided to review the appraisal and draft a new stand-alone management plan to set out the unique, historic character of the area and provide guidance for property owners and people with an interest in land within the area.

I.04 The purpose of this Character Appraisal is to set out and define the character of the Church Gate Conservation Area to help Improve understanding of the historic importance of the area, how this has shaped its unique character and how this can guide the future development of the area.

I.05 The new Church Gate Management Plan, published in conjunction with this character appraisal contains advice and guidance on how new development should take account of the conservation area.

## 2.0 Planning Policy Framework

2.01 Protection of the historic environment is extensively recognised for the contribution it makes to the country's quality of life, cultural capital and economic well-being. Public support for conservation areas as distinctive places that give identity to people and communities is well established. Legislation and policy guidance reflects this.

2.02 The concept of 'conservation areas' was first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 which defined a conservation area as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent change but to manage change in ways that maintain and strengthen an area's special qualities.

2.03 The definition remains unchanged in current legislation, set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act places duties on local planning authorities:

- To identify those parts of their area that are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas;
- To review past designations from time to time;
- To prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas;
- To pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications for sites within such areas.

2.04 The effect of designation means that planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings, with some minor exceptions. There are also stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land, and there is automatic protection for trees.

2.05 Government policy is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It requires the significance of heritage assets – both its historic buildings and historic areas – to be understood by local authorities and by those who propose change. Changes that cause harm to significance will only be permitted where the harm is outweighed by public benefits. Further guidance on the use of the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance and in guidance published by Historic England.

2.06 The protection and positive use of the historic environment within new development is a theme which runs through the City of Leicester Core Strategy. It is identified as a key component in spatial objectives 7 and 9. This is strengthened in a number of policies (see appendix 4). The Core Strategy also makes an explicit commitment to the preservation and enhancement of Leicester's heritage in Spatial Objective No.10. This is amplified in a wide-ranging policy (CS18) for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. There is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, and the policy expects new developments and conservation-led regeneration to reflect the character and value of the historic environment. Both local and national policy puts the emphasis on the enhancement of heritage assets and positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness that should be made through new development.



## 3.0 Location & Boundary Review

### 3.1 Location

The Church Gate Conservation Area (Map 1) is located in the City Centre immediately to the north-west of the Clock Tower. It comprises Church Gate itself and is bounded on the west side by East Bond Street, to the north by Darker Street, Butt Close Lane and Gravel Street and by Short Street/Mansfield Street to the east. It covers an area of 3.12 hectares.

### 3.2 Boundary Review

The original boundary was set as part of the designation of the conservation area in 2006, it has not been reviewed since.

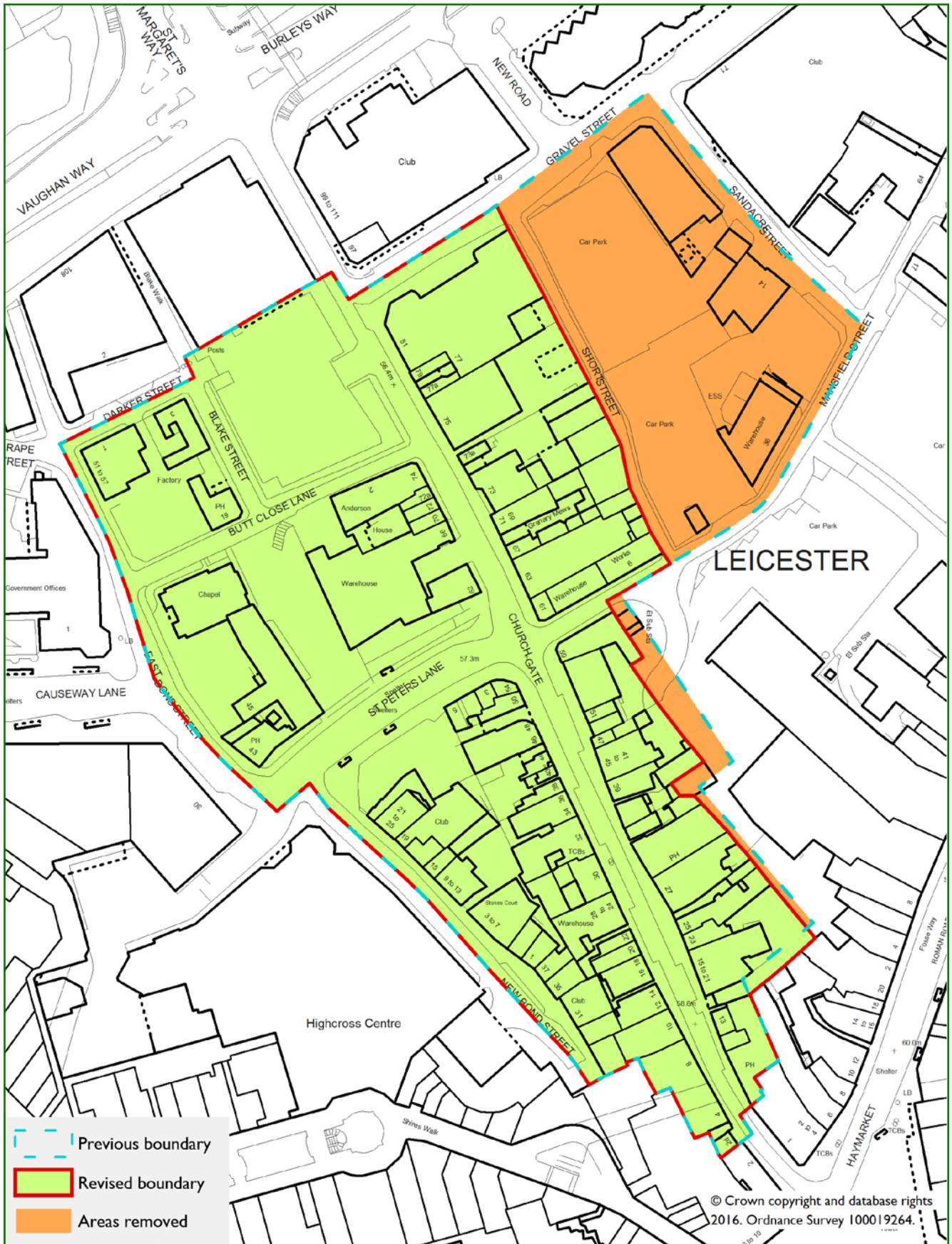
Since 2006 there has been a loss of the majority of the buildings in the formerly identified 'Industrial Zone' around Short Street. Sadly, the special character of this area is now lost to the point it no longer justifies special designation. As such it is proposed to remove this area from the Conservation Area.

The only other changes to the boundary relate to the tightening of the eastern boundary of the area to better reflect current and historic property boundaries.



*Victorian Porch to the Great Meeting House.*

A summary of changes to the boundary and can be found in appendix II.



Map 2. Changes to the Boundary of the Conservation Area

## 4.0 Definition of Special Interest

4.01 The Church Gate Conservation Area has a unique character within the City Centre of Leicester as it shows within its building stock, the development of part an important city thoroughfare from the Medieval Era to the present day. It shows how the importance of the route grew and waned and the different pressures put on the land within the area as the city grew and developed.

4.02 The building stock is less grand than many other City Centre streets, which in itself is interesting and as worthy of preservation. It shows how previous generations adapted and modified existing building for contemporary purposes and the increasing importance of industry and manufacturing to the city as well as housing for the workers.

4.03 Most of the streets have medieval origins but the majority of buildings date from the 19th century onwards, but there are some earlier known survivors and other buildings which may also preserve earlier elements hidden beneath later fabric. Although there has been some redevelopment, a number of historic buildings survive, often in groups, and it is the contribution of these groups of sometimes modestly designed buildings that helps create a distinctive townscape.

4.04 Along Church Gate and East Bond Street, the variety in the height and scale of the buildings creates strong visual interest and reflects the piecemeal development of the area over the past three centuries. Ranging between two and four-stories, the changes in roof lines and chimney heights create a varied, almost jumbled, skyline, with gable ends alternately visible. This is one of the area's strongest visual features.

4.05 As the area has developed organically, many of the building plots are irregular in size, some being quite deep. There are a number of outbuildings and former workshops at the rear of properties some of which are not readily visible from the street, while others can be glimpsed or accessed as small courtyards further adding to the area's character.

4.06 The remnants of the area's medieval origins can be seen in Church Gate and New Bond Street where many buildings still stand on the narrow plots that were a feature of urban form at that time. Traditionally an area of small businesses, the Conservation Area has nevertheless managed to retain that character. The few, more grandly designed, former industrial buildings that punctuate the street are now converted, horizontally and vertically, for shops and service uses. Generally, however, businesses remain small scale or specialist in nature.

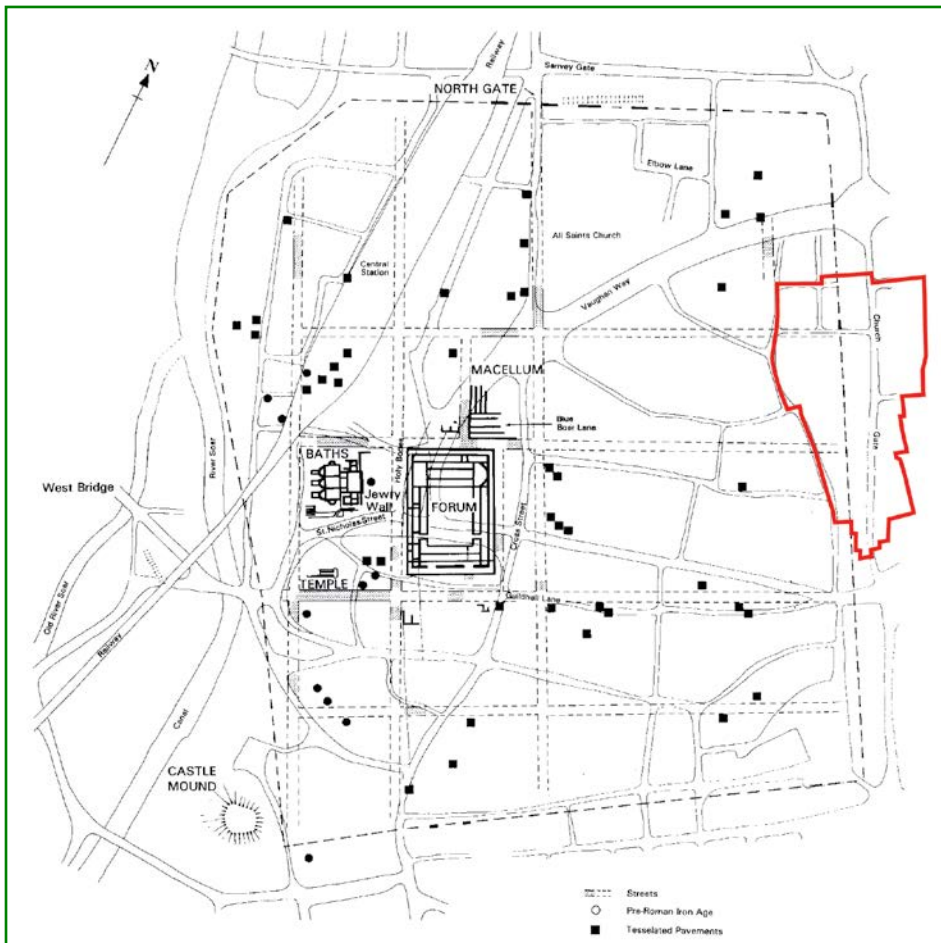
4.07 The area's special interest can be defined as follows:

- The area is of historic and archaeological importance, particularly as it relates to Leicester's early suburbs and the Roman and medieval town and represents the best surviving fabric of the former historic route from North to East Gates outside the City Walls;
- The area retains elements of its medieval character with narrow burgage plots set at the back of the footpath, as well as the narrow and sinuous character of the streets. The historic view of the tower of St Margaret's Church still defines the street of church gate looking north;
- The surviving building fabric within the area represents a rare surviving fragment of a wider area north of the city centre, much of which has been lost of twentieth century redevelopment;
- The area includes several listed buildings, including one of the town's earliest brick buildings (the Great Meeting Chapel) and an unusual timber warehouse (66 Church Gate) and a the Master Hosier's House a rare survival in the development of the hosiery industry which once defined the city; and
- It has historically interesting and important open spaces including one of only a few surviving churchyards in the city centre and the site of the former archery butts. The open spaces provide some of the most important green space and mature trees within the City Centre.

## 5.0 Historic Development of the Church Gate Area

### 5.01 Early Origins

The earliest history of the area can be traced back to Roman times when the layout of the town's defences were first established and lay just to the west of the present day Church Gate. When they were first established, in the late 2nd century, they took the form of an inner rampart with an outer ditch. By the height of the Roman occupation, in the late 3rd century, a wall had been added to the outer face of the rampart and a second ditch dug beyond the first. As the town in the interior began to be abandoned, from the mid-4th century onwards, the defences fell into disrepair.



Map 3. Roman Town: John Wachter

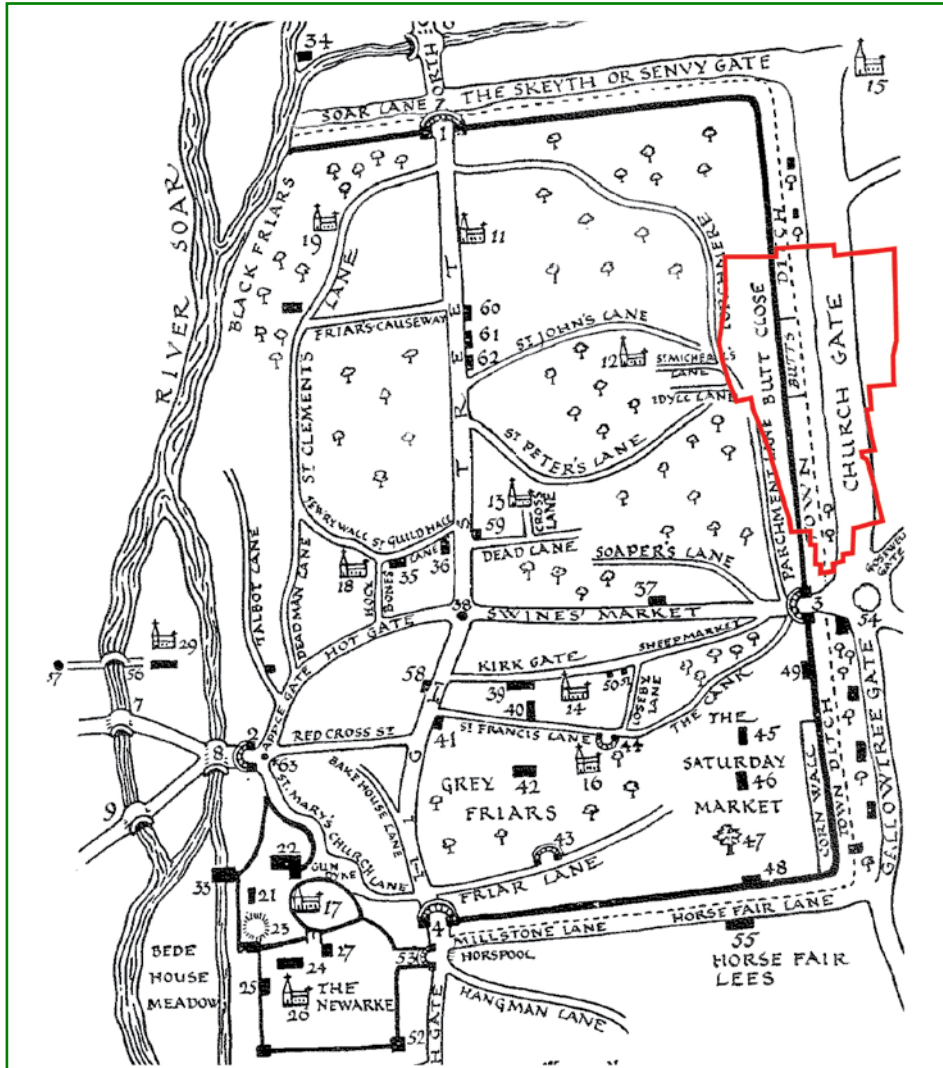
5.02 It is likely that the town only began to be re-occupied in the 7th or 8th century, by which time Leicester was a part of the Saxon Kingdom of Mercia. Sometime afterwards efforts were made to re-establish the town defences. Whatever measures were taken to maintain the defences, they were insufficient to ward off the Danes, so that by the late 9th century the Danes held the town as one of the Five Boroughs that dominated the East Midlands until the early 11th century. It was probably during this time that the first church was established beyond the north-eastern corner of the town defences. It is not clear why a church came to be founded in this unusual location, but the present church of St Margaret stands on a similar location and is almost certainly one of the churches listed under the various entries for the town in the Domesday Book.

5.03 The name Church Gate likely dates back to the Danelaw. The 'Gate' in 'Church Gate' derives from the Danish word 'gata' for "road". The road itself originated as a lane that ran just outside Leicester's eastern boundary walls and linked St Margaret's Church with the town's East Gate. After the Norman Conquest in the 11th century the bishopric moved from Dorchester back to the East Midlands but centred on Lincoln. However, the Domesday survey records that the Bishop of Lincoln retained two churches in Leicester, one of which may well have been St Margaret's.



**5.04 Medieval Era**

A suburban extension of the town in the Church Gate area is documented from the late 13th century and tenements are recorded abutting the town walls and ditch in the late 14th century, although the extent of the development is not known. For most of the Middle Ages the town defences were kept in good repair but extra-mural (outside the walls) suburbs began to develop centred on the market that had sprung up just outside the town's eastern gate. One of these suburbs began to spread northwards, to the east of the town defences. From the 15th or 16th century onwards, save for a brief period of restoration during the Civil War, the town defences again fell into disrepair.



**Map 4. Medieval Leicester**

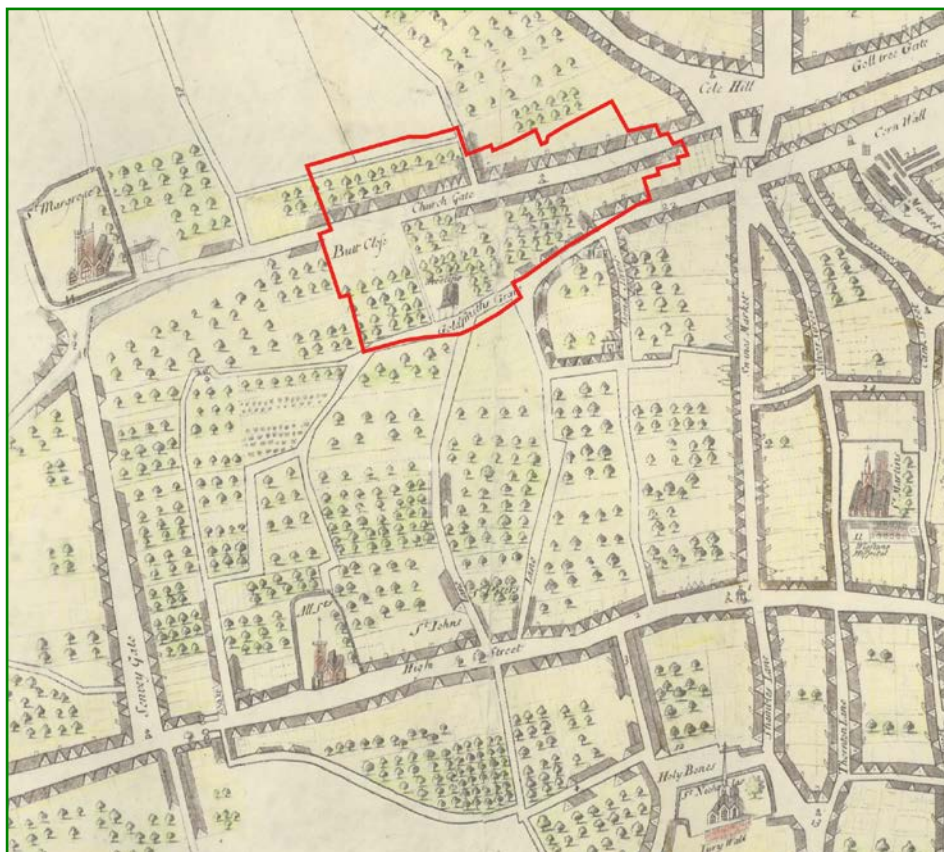
5.05 In 1493 a King's commission records that the wall was broken and that stones had been removed. It is likely that at that time the ditches were being filled in and that buildings were being built on top of them. People in search of building stone would rob it from the town wall and the owners of properties within the town were starting to encroach onto the rampart. But this time the decline of the defences went hand-in-hand not with a period of decline, but with one of steady growth. In 1478 the first written reference to the name "Church Gate" is found, when it was recorded as a lane leading onto Sanvey Gate, which ran east-west just outside the north wall

**5.06 16th to 18th Centuries**

5.07 In the 16th century Elizabeth I had donated an area of open land to the freemen of Leicester for archery practice. On this 'butts' or shooting marks were erected and the

activity is recorded in the name Butt Close Lane which now approximately runs along its southern edge. The space where the archery range was located survived until the early 19th century. A survivor from the 18th century is No. 11-13 Church Gate (the date 1711 can be seen at first floor level) and indicates the modest scale of development on Church Gate at that time.

5.08 By the 18th century, and due primarily to the restriction created by the East Gate, Sanvey Gate and Church Gate had become the main coach route into the town from the north. For example, the former Fish & Quart Hotel (now 63 Church Gate) originated as a coaching inn. Leicester was still a relatively small town and there was little incentive or need to build on its more unattractive parts, such as Church Gate. An important exception was the construction in 1707



Map 5. Roberts Map of 1741



Map 6. Fowlers Map of 1828

of the Great Meeting Chapel on East Bond Street. It is possible that East Bond Street (or “Goldsmith’s Grave” as it is shown on Roberts’ map of 1741 (Map 5)) was chosen because non-Conformists, with their radical political and religious views, had to maintain a discreet presence in the town. A ‘backland’ site would have been seen as an ideal location.

5.09 Roberts’ map also indicates that most of the northern half of the walled town consisted of open land. A single row of buildings fronted onto the southern end of Church Gate and East Bond Street (then known as Swine Market) with back lanes leading into open land, possibly laid out as orchards and gardens.

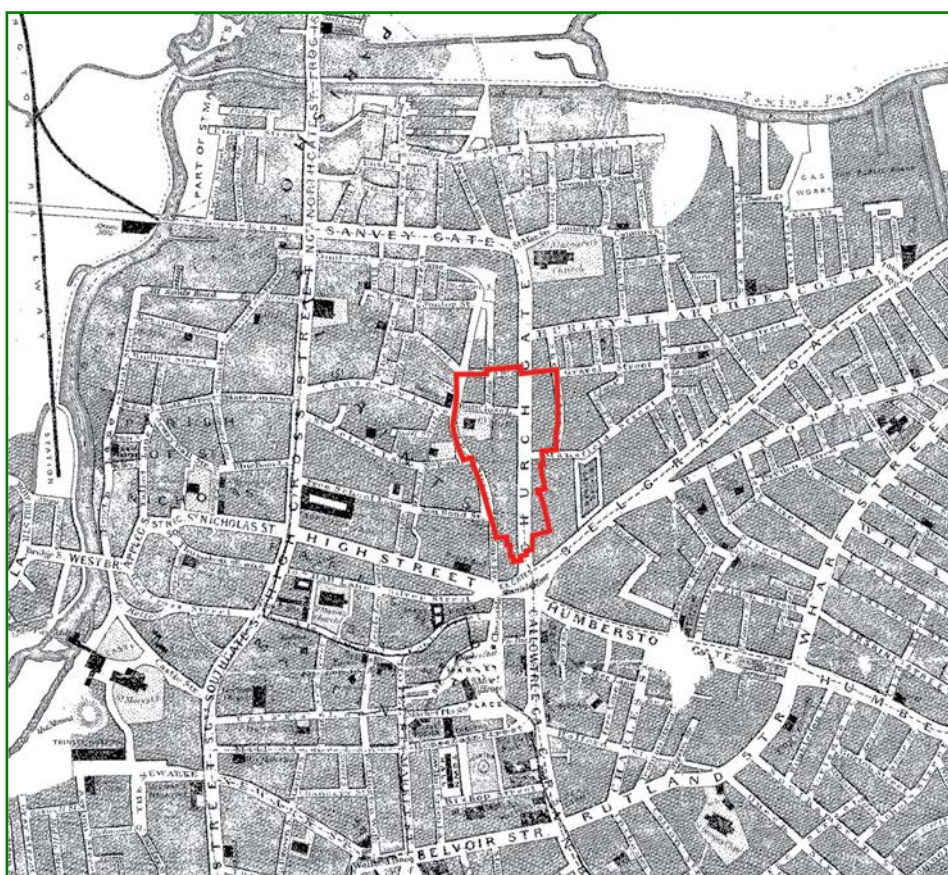
5.10 By the time the East Gate was finally removed in 1773 the centre of the town had gravitated from the High Cross towards East Gates and Church Gate. The improvement of the Harborough Turnpike route to London, which ran via Gallowtree Gate, had also encouraged development at the southern end of Church Gate. The site of the present Clock Tower was therefore a major junction. Originally a mound known variously as the Berehill or Berehill Cross (medieval) or the ‘Barrell Crosse’ (Speede’s map of 1610), the 1741 map shows a group of buildings (Coal Hill) in the centre of the crossroads, just outside the East Gate. Assembly Rooms with shops on the ground floor (referred



to historically as the “Old Haymarket”) were built on the site in 1750 and these were not demolished until 1862 when the building became too much of an obstacle to traffic; it was replaced by the Clock Tower in 1868. The 1741 Map shows that while Church Gate and Sanvey Gate are routes, they are not as important as Highcross Street and High Street, which have buildings all the way along.

5.11 Although the street pattern had been established, there was still only a limited amount of development in the area at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fowler’s map of 1828 (Map 6) shows a single line of buildings fronting Church Gate, with back lanes and open land to the rear. St Margaret’s Church still stood in open fields. Many of the properties on the east side of Church Gate, notably beyond Mansfield Street, still reflect the burgage plot layout with a narrow plot and outbuildings accessed by a rear lane. Apart from Great Meeting house, the only other building that is identified is St Margaret’s church school, built on the site of the archery butts in 1809 (and demolished in 1928). However, development had commenced to the east of Church Gate along Archdeacon Lane and the first buildings along Mansfield Street can be identified at this time.

5.12 By 1828 Fowler’s map (Map 6) shows the importance of Church Gate as a thoroughfare, showing it as longer and wider than the High Street. Church Gate, uniquely for a thoroughfare, did not extend directly out of the city at this point, instead, the route north took a right-angled turn along Sanvey Gate towards the North Gate which was the main river crossing. This also shows that as the town grew in the later Georgian era the importance of Church Gate as a thoroughfare also grew, most likely as a less inhibited transport route than the medieval Highcross Street. The surrounding area to the north has yet to be developed being shown as open pastures and orchards.



Map 7. Spencer’s Map of 1879

### 5.13 Victorian Era

The growth of the boot and shoe and hosiery industries from the 1830s onwards led to the expansion of Leicester and the widespread development of the area. The majority of buildings in the conservation area date from the 1840s onwards. The hosier’s house and workshop at 3 Darker Street dates from this period and is a rare example of the small-scale industry that dominated the town until it was gradually out-competed by larger factories. Spencer’s map of 1879 (Map 7) suggests that land on either side of Church Gate had now been developed.

5.14 With the development of industry, development pressure increased for both industrial premises and for housing to accommodate the influx of workers arriving from

the countryside. Evidence of this can be seen to the east of Church Gate, where a largely lower working class district developed around Burleys Lane, with numerous small and cramped housing courts.

5.15 The increase in plot density can also be seen on Church Gate with the factory at the rear of 39 Church Gate and the courtyard of buildings at the rear of 67-71 Church Gate. The 1886 Ordnance Survey Map (Appendix III) shows that larger scale industrial uses had become established in the area. These included hosiery and footwear, some of which buildings survive, as well as heavier industrial works. The west side of Bond Street was dominated by Fielding Johnson's Bond Street Mills, which remained until the early 1970s. Surviving industrial buildings include those at 30 and 32 Church Gate as well as 75 and 74-76 Church Gate.

5.16 Earlier industrial buildings were built solely as factories, but later ones incorporated retail units on the ground floor.

5.17 Trade directories and the 1st edition (1886) of the Ordnance Survey (Appendix III) provide more detail and indicate a number of small-scale commercial businesses operating along Church Gate, most likely with the proprietor living above.

There were also a number of inns and workshops and some housing courts to the rear. A horse tramway was laid along Church Gate in 1875 reflecting its importance as a route. In 1902, a scheme to widen and upgrade the High Street was completed; it was substantially rebuilt as a grand shopping street incorporating the new electric trams. This diminished the importance of Church Gate as a route. Further to this, the rapid suburban expansions of the Victorian era increasingly attracted trade and investment to the arterial routes, particularly around the railway terminals; Church Gate gradually lost its importance as a city thoroughfare but remained an important shopping street.

5.18 Of the other streets in the Conservation Area, Butt Close Lane is shown simply as a lane on Roberts' plan of 1741. It cuts across the line of the town wall and ditch, which today is marked by the rise in level. By 1886 there was a terrace of buildings along the whole of the north side, of which only The Salmon public house at the corner of Blake Street now survives. On the south side, the burial ground of the Great Meeting Chapel now provides the only open space in the area. On the east side of Church Gate, Mansfield Street is shown as a lane within open land on the 1741 plan, but is named on the 1828 map, with buildings shown along the north side.

### **5.19 Twentieth Century into the new Millennium**

The main impact on the Conservation Area and the wider city centre in the 20th century was the increasing influence of the private motor car. The earliest influences can be seen in the appearance of vehicle garages, two of which survive, although altered, at 81 Church Gate and 7 East Bond Street.

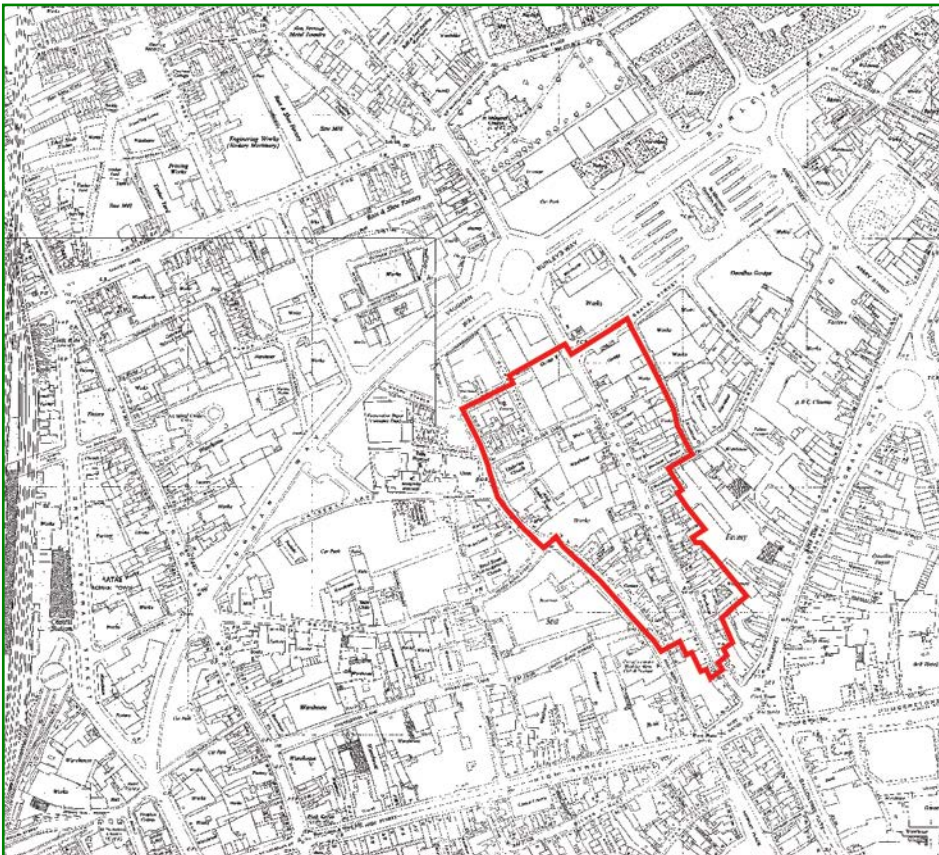
More drastic changes took place in the post-war era as the national surge in private car ownership left the city's largely medieval street pattern unable to cope.

The city's answer, similar to many other places, was to use increased planning powers to implement a central ring road system. Originally conceived in the 1930s, construction started in the 1950s, with the widening of Burleys Lane into Burleys Way, which terminated in a new roundabout at the end of Church Gate. In the 1960s Vaughan Way was created to link this new roundabout to St Nicholas Circle.

The intent of this road was to allow traffic to bypass the overly-congested Clock Tower, however in doing this, much of the historic street pattern was swept away and the end of Church Gate, including St Margaret's Church, was effectively severed and the long-standing historic route between the East and North Gates, along Church Gate and Sanvey Gate, was lost as is shown in map 8.

5.20 Another prevalent theme of the post-war era was the clearance of 'slum' housing. Up until the 1930s the wider area is characterised by narrow streets of small houses, one-room deep. By the early 1960s most of these streets have been cleared, as had most of the housing courts in the rear yards of properties along Church Gate as part of a city-wide programme.





Map 8. The Ordnance Survey Map of 1963

Increasingly, the area shifted from being a mix of residential and commercial to one which was solely commercial in character. The fact that Church Gate had become a secondary shopping location could explain why there was only a limited amount of redevelopment at that time. Its use remained for commercial shopping. Infill developments from the 1960s and 1970s were built as purpose-built shops with storage above – the area was no longer desirable for manufacturing.

5.21 In the 1970s the former Fielding Johnson factory, which ran between East Bond Street and Church Gate was demolished and the road linking St Peters Lane and Mansfield Street was built to link the ring road to Mansfield

Street, further isolating the northern end of Church Gate. This road was built significantly wider than the adjacent streets and the effect was to cause a significant visual separation between the north and south elements of the west sides of Church Gate and East Bond Street.

5.22 In the late 1980s work began on the new city shopping centre, the Shires, which later became the Highcross. This was largely centred in the streets at the rear of High Street, but also had a significant impact on the Church Gate area as part of the rear wall of one of the ‘anchor’ department stores was built along the west side of East Bond Street. More crucially, to enable direct access from the Clock Tower, the centre cut-across the end of New Bond Street, meaning access to High Street could only take place by going through the centre. In the early 1990s an additional entrance to the centre was created at the top of Church Gate.

5.23 In 2006 work began on a significant westwards extension to the shopping centre. The most dramatic element of this was the stopping up of the former historic line of St Peters Road and its replacement with new units and a new service yard. Despite significant changes to the character of the area throughout the twentieth century the Church Gate conservation area remains close to the centre of commercial activity in the city and retains a unique, intimate and historic character.

## 6.0 Assessment of Special Interest

### 6.01 Prevailing and Former Uses

This section will consider the factors which combine to create the special character of the conservation in greater detail. As set-out in the historic development of the area, the uses within the Church Gate Conservation Area have evolved with the economy of the city.

6.02 Until the Victorian Era, it is largely unknown what the exact use of the properties in the area was, with the exception the Great Meeting House, which has remained in use for non-conformist worship. Of the other buildings:

- The master hosiers house on darker street is an example of small-scale industrial and residential use combined;
- The 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix III), indicates a number of coaching inns and public houses, most of which have now changed use or been redeveloped;
- A key feature in the later Victorian era is the development of factories for industrial production. A number of substantial buildings remain;
- While smaller dwellings have mostly been lost, larger residences have generally survived as the ground floors have been converted to retail use; and
- Most 20th Century properties, which were typically built as purpose built retail units with storage above.

6.03 In the present day, Church Gate and East Bond Street remain as predominantly commercial streets with ground floor retail units. There has been a recent increase in the number of upper floors which are used as residential flats. The number of shoppers and pedestrians on Church Gate creates a very active and busy 'feel'. However, its small-scale intimate character is changing as shops are amalgamated together to create larger retail units.

6.04 There is a marked contrast between the daytime and night-time activities and uses in Church Gate. While the area is predominantly used for retailing in the daytime, longer licensing hours and new businesses have led to the establishment of a strong night-time economy in the wider area. The concentration of nightclubs and bars contribute much towards both real and perceived problems of public safety. This has impacted on the image of the area, largely to its detriment.

6.05 Church Gate is currently a busy bus route and St Peter's Lane and Mansfield Street is an important through-route for buses connecting to Charles Street, the Highcross Shopping Centre and the Central Ring Road. This has the benefit of ensuring the area is well connected, but can cause conflict between pedestrian and vehicles. Gravel Street and Church Gate is also a key route for pedestrians accessing St Margaret's Bus Station, which is further along Gravel Street outside the conservation area.

6.06 In contrast, the environs of The Great Meeting Chapel and Butt Close Lane have retained a quieter, more reflective character that is reinforced by the 'greener' aspect created by the mature trees.

### 6.07 City Centre Context

The Conservation Area is adjacent to the High Street Conservation Area, which covers the former Eastgates Coffee House at the southern end of the street as well as the former buildings that formed the junction of New Bond Street and High Street. It is likely that High Street would have borne a resemblance to Church Gate before it was widened and re-built on a grand scale in Edwardian times. Now the difference between the streets is marked demonstrating why they form distinct conservation areas with different characters.

6.08 In terms of built form, Church Gate is perhaps most similar to parts of the Market Place and Greyfriars Conservation Areas as they contain much of the city centre's historic building stock. The main difference being that those conservation areas were both within the city wall and developed as commercial streets in that way while Church Gate developed as a transport route into the centre. Church Gate also developed a more industrial character in Victorian times.

### 6.09 Character Zones

Although the area is small, two distinct zones can be identified, each of which has particular features or townscape characteristics that set it apart from adjacent area and add to the experience of the area to those passing through it. The zones are identified below and will be used in the assessment of the area's architectural character and key buildings:

- The 'Commercial Zone' - Church Gate and Bond Street; and
- The 'Quiet Zone' around The Greet Meeting Chapel and Butt Close Lane.

### 6.10 Architectural Quality and Built Form

The majority of the conservation area has a tight built form with buildings constructed at the back of the footway and on narrow burgage plots. Most of the buildings are 2 or 3 storeys high, but the height generally derives from the former uses with housing being smaller scale than the industrial uses for example.

In terms of architectural styles the former houses are predominantly 2-3 storeys and built with classical proportions but are relatively plain in detailing. Typical detailing can be found above and around the windows, on the chimneystacks where they remain and under the eaves.

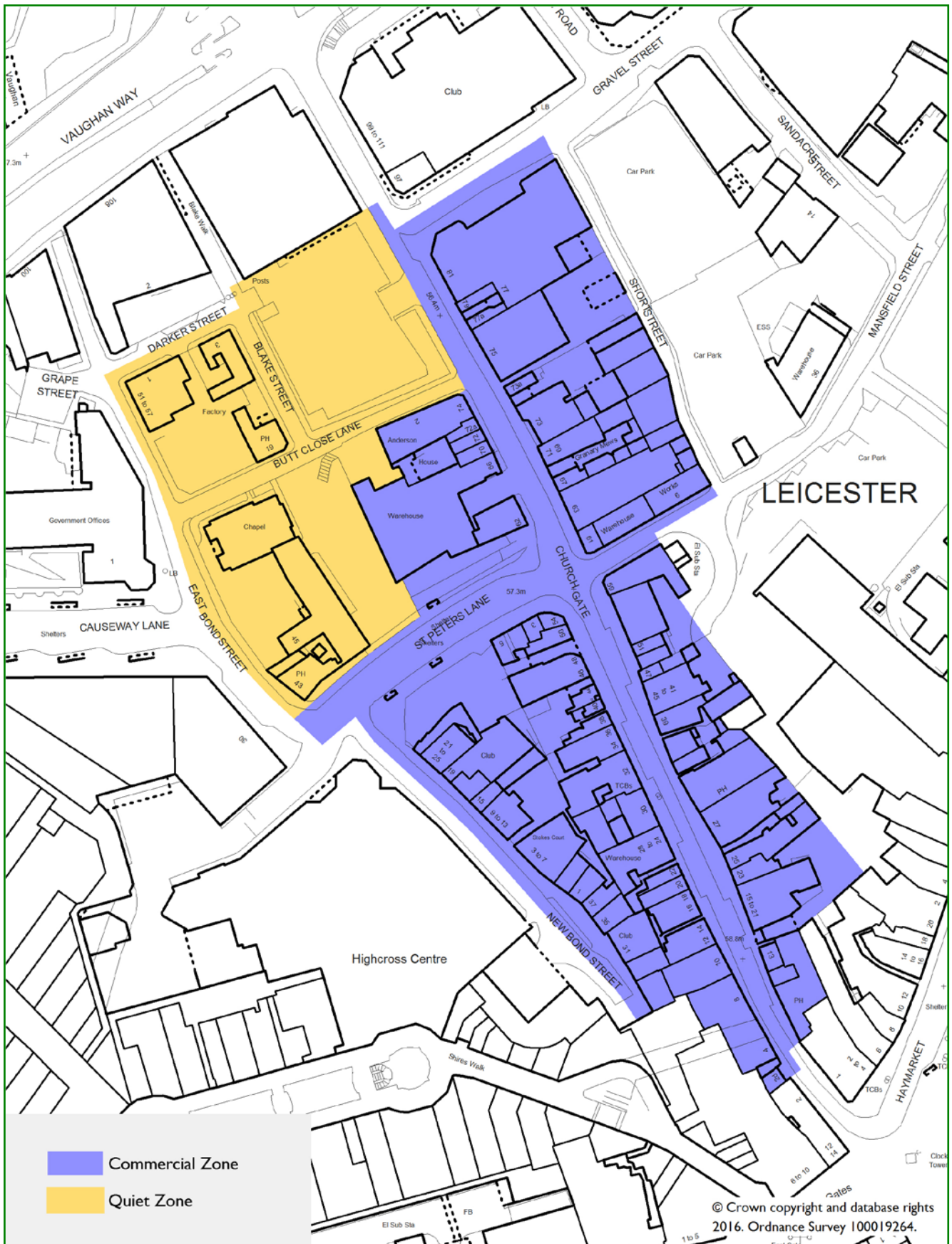
The large Victorian former factories and warehouses tend to be 4-5 storeys high and typically have greater levels of embellishment. The styles vary depending on the era in which they were built, but all have a certain level of decorative facades.

The other architectural style which appears is Art Deco – associated with the buildings, which were built for automotive uses in early twentieth century.



Former Great Meeting School,  
now Charles Berry House





## Map 9. Zones



## 6.11 Materials

While there is a range of architectural and building styles within the area, there are some materials and features that are common on a number of properties that help define the character of the area. Careful use of these materials can help define the character of the area, ensure this character is not lost and that new development harmonises with its surroundings.

## 6.12 Brick

The majority of buildings in the Conservation Area are built of brick. The earliest buildings are likely to have been built of locally made bricks, which have a distinctive warm orange-red colour; the first floor of 11-13 Church Gate is an attractive example of early brickwork.

6.13 The development of the railway network from the 1840s onwards allowed bricks and other building materials to be imported from further afield. As a result, there is a noticeable distinction between the local orange-red bricks of the early buildings and the regular sized, machine-made darker red bricks used in the later Victorian buildings. This contrast in colour and size of the bricks is apparent when comparing the older 11-13 Church Gate with the later 15-21 Church Gate.



25 East Bond Street: an example of a red-brick former factory now converted to residential and commercial uses.



Brick and stonework on 13-21 Church Gate.



Unusual chimney detail at 27 Church Gate.



Good quality bricks laid in decorative patterns helps form a strong positive character for the area and contribute towards its local distinctiveness.

### 6.14 Stone

The use of stone as a building material is not typically found within the Conservation Area, although stone detailing is used on some of the grander buildings. The boundary wall to the Great Meeting Hall on Butt Close Lane is an unusual but decorative use of stone, which encapsulates the history of the area. The view of St Margaret's Church looking south means a prominent stone building strongly contributes to the character of the area, without actually being located within it.

### 6.15 Timber

Timber is still the most commonly used material for windows frames and roof eaves in the Conservation Area. This traditional material can be worked into decorative and deep profiles which add interest to the area. Timber was the traditional material used for shopfronts and access doors to upper floors. At the rear of 66 Church Gate, the unique and spectacular warehouse is constructed entirely in weather-boarded timber throughout its upper four storeys.



*The restoration of traditional windows to the upper floors of 39-45 Church Gate has helped restore lost character and contributes greatly to the overall character of the area.*

### 6.16 Slate

Early buildings would likely have had Swithland slate roofs and some may remain in rear outbuildings. With the coming of the railways, Welsh slate became more widely used from the middle of the 19th century onwards and is the predominant roofing material in the area. Welsh slate cleaves more easily than local Swithland slate and roofs covered in it are noticeably less rugged. Natural slates provide a depth and variation in colour and shade, which is extremely difficult to synthesise.



*Brick and Stone detail: Butt Close Lane Wall*



*Chimneys and pots on Church Gate.*



### 6.17 Metal

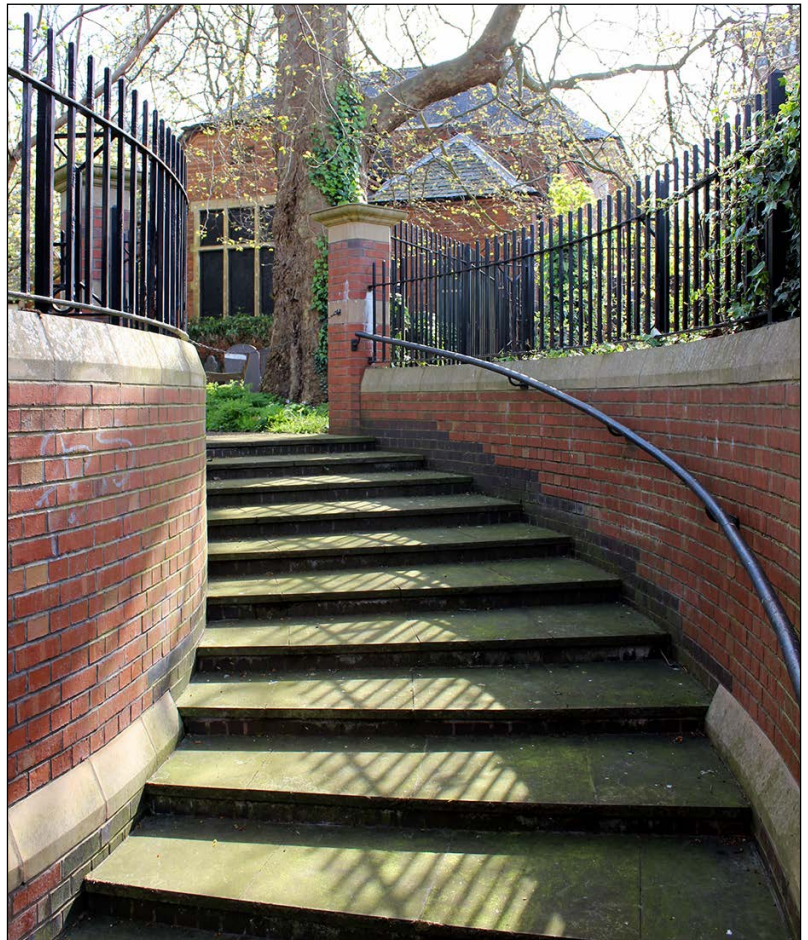
Although not prevalent within the Conservation Area, metal in various forms is an interesting and decorative feature. It is used for roofs, decoration and to define boundaries.

Some examples of metal in the area include the decorative cast iron gate piers to 66 Church Gate and the shopfront surrounds at 72 and 75 Church Gate. Metal railings have been effectively used around the Great Meeting Chapel and graveyard to provide a sense of security whilst retaining an air of elegance.

### 6.18 Glass

Glass is an important element in the built environment, both in terms of its function and in its use as decoration. It makes patterns, forms reflections and creates transparency.

A variety of glazing styles can be found throughout the Conservation Area. Although not frequently used, the leaded curved panels at 29 Church Gate add greatly to the interest of the building. Similarly, stained glass can be found in the oculus window in the mansard roof of 73 Church Gate.



*Effective combination of stone, brick and metal creating an attractive rear entrance to the churchyard.*

### 6.18 Other materials

Other materials occur in small quantities across the Conservation Area. Stucco is used to great decorative effect on 66 Church Gate. Plastic, in the form of replacement windows, has appeared in some parts of the Conservation Area; however, this is an unsympathetic material, not suitable for a historic area.



*Cast Iron gate pier at 66 Church Gate.*



*Iron Pilaster at 62 Church Gate.*



*Unusual use of stucco at 66 Church Gate*



*Leaded glass at 75 Church Gate.*

## 6.19 Public Realm

The public realm comprises the public highway and land maintained by the city council.

Very little historic fabric survives relating to the public highways due to the constant need to maintain an upgrade the highway network. From the mid twentieth century the roads were re-laid with tarmac to accommodate motor vehicles and highway restrictions became increasingly stringent.

Notwithstanding this, there are elements of the public realm which do survive from earlier eras and add to the historic character of the area.

These typically fall into two categories:

1. Surfacing materials; and
2. Street furnishing.

### I. Surfacing materials

There are two historic surfacing materials that are present within the conservation area.

#### Mountsorrel 'Granite' Kerbstones

These distinctive kerbstones have been used within the city since the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They are made from local form of granite which was originally quarried in nearby Mountsorrel and have a characterful pink colour and textured surface both reflecting both their age and quarrying method.

They are a distinctive and important part of the historic street scene and greatly add to the historic character of the city.

#### Granite Setts

Granite setts, often incorrectly referred to as cobbles, formed the surface for the many of the city centre streets until the advent of tarmac surfaces in the mid twentieth century.

Once commonplace across the city, they are now only found in isolated areas. Unlike the kerbstones, they tend to have a smoother and browner finish and are often very small in size. Their worn and polished appearance make them attractive and historic features of the conservation area.

Within the area they can be found along the gutters of some roads and are likely to remain under much of the tarmac. These setts in their historic context add greatly to the historical appreciation of the area as well as its visual appearance.

In some parts of the area, granite setts have been re-laid out of context in decorative patterns as part of public realm works. Typically, these are in the footway and mark out street furniture such as lamp-posts. Where they are devoid of historic context, setts do not have the same importance.



*This Mountsorrel Granite Kerb on Blake Street – provides a strong and characterful edge to the pavement.*





*Far left. Granite setts marking a vehicular entrance on Butt Close Lane.*

*Left. Granite setts in the gutter along East Bond Street.*

*Above. Granite setts laid out of context on Church Gate.*

## 2. Street Furniture

Historic street furniture typically dates from the 19th and early 20th Centuries and is made of cast iron. It can encompass all objects located in the public highway for public benefit. Most common are street lighting columns, stench pipes, bollards, street nameplates and drain covers.

Pieces were generally commissioned by the Corporation of Leicester from local foundries and are often of a unique bespoke style.

Cast iron is brittle in nature and prone to shatter when struck with a forceful enough blow. It is also heavy to move and relatively inflexible in this respect. As such they have mostly been replaced with more flexible mild steel alternatives.

Where historic furnishings do survive they can add greatly to the character of an area as unique historic features.

Some items of cast-iron or metal street furniture are replicas and date from the late 20th century. These don't have the same intrinsic historic interest but may still add to the character of the area.



*A 'Wright's Foundry' column on Church gate dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and made in a local foundry.*



*A cast iron bollard on Church Gate dating from the 1980s.*

## Character Zones

The public realm treatment within the Church Gate Conservation Area falls into three character zones.

### I. The Commercial Zone

This area was comprehensively re-paved in the mid 1980s as part of an improvement scheme. Red paviours, laid in a herringbone pattern were used for both the carriageway and pavements and raised circular brick planters were used for tree planting. In 2006, the carriageway was replaced with black-top tarmac when the street was modified to accommodate buses. A number of the planters were removed at this time.

The section of Church Gate south of St Peters Lane always had black top in the carriageway.

The street furniture used as part of the improvement scheme was typically cast-iron, either historic or replica painted black and gold. This was used for the lamp standards, hanging basket holders and many bollards.

Other than a small number of historic lamp standards and some decorative use of small granite setts there is no evident historic fabric visible within the public realm; the granite kerbs have been lost.

Since the comprehensive redevelopment, the public realm has been updated in line with contemporary city designs and a number of styles of street furniture are present within the street. This leads to a discordant and cluttered feel that detracts from the character of the area.

The red paviours do not have historic precedent and now have a dated and worn feel and many are now uneven through wear and have been patch-repaired with black tarmac all of which detracts from the character of the area.

The historic street lamp columns retain their interest, but the granite setts have lost their context when being re-laid and may not have been original to the area.



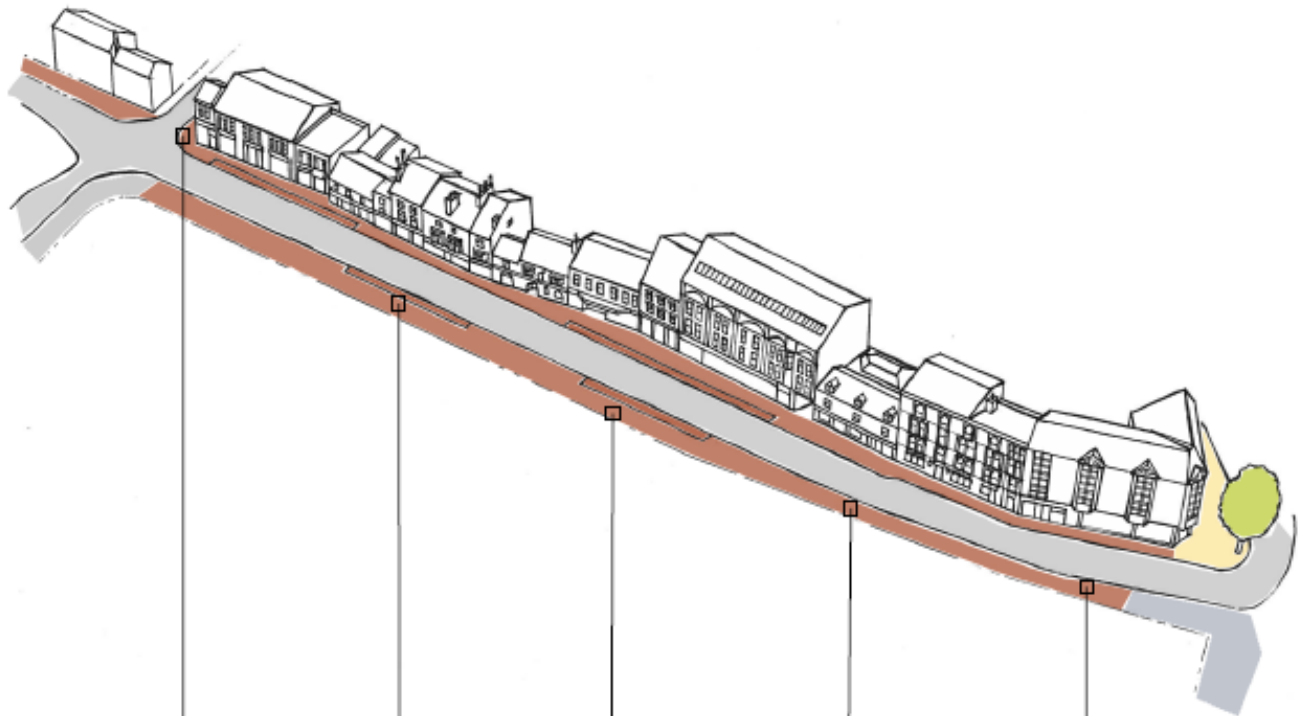
*The 1980s resurfacing remains the predominant surfacing on Church Gate.*



*The 1980s public realm scheme extends to New Bond Street where a seating and planting area is still present. While dated in style it is in a reasonable state of repair.*



# Public Realm Strategy : Commercial Zone



Co-ordination of street furniture will bring a unity to the street scene and should have the same design approach as other parts of the city center. Views to be capitalised on with appropriately placed seating. Alternatives to raised planters to introduce greenery is preferred; the existing should be removed. Free standing poster and map relocated to a more appropriate part of the area.



Traffic Regulation Signs should be kept a minimum, located on existing supporting columns and should be reviewed against the latest regulatory updates.

Hanging baskets provide seasonal points of interest and become unnecessary structures in the street scene when not used, creating street clutter. Existing supporting structures should be removed. Phone boxes to either be removed if unused or refurbished to a higher standard.



Most street light has been located onto the facade of buildings. A mixture of mock Victorian and modern lighting is used on the street plane. A common theme that adds historical value and points of interest would be highly beneficial to the historical character.



Varied styles of paving along with damaged blocks have created an unattractive appearance to the public realm. Taking the historic setting into consideration, high quality natural materials or resin bonded gravel with a sympathetic colour scheme is preferred.



Example of surfacing approach used on Applegate in the City Centre

## 2. The Quiet Zone

This area was not overhauled in the 1980s and the streets have a more traditional feel with a black-top carriageways and pavements. Unlike the commercial zone historic features survive, in particular the Mountsorrel granite kerbstones in the much of the area as well as some of the setts, which can be seen through gaps in the tarmac. These features add greatly to the historic character of the street.

A number of traditional cast-iron street nameplates survive in this part of the conservation area which further contributes to its historic character.

Despite retaining some key historic features, the public realm is feeling well-worn in the area and would benefit from being sensitively renewed.

## 3. St Peters Lane

The wide expanse of St Peters Lane does not share the character of either of the other zones, its wide carriageway and pavements and lack of street frontages lead to a feel of a street dominated by the carriageway. Unsurprisingly for a street with no historic precedent, there is no historic fabric present within this street.

Overall the effect is not pedestrian friendly although views into the quiet zone do anchor it within the wider conservation area.

## General Comments

Throughout the conservation area there is a proliferation of road signs and bollards to deal with the one-way system and general traffic management. While this is legally required to manage vehicles it has created a cluttered feel; this is further exacerbated by the lack of co-ordination between the furniture.

A clear example of this can be found on Butt Close Lane where large directional signs dominate part of the section of the listed wall to the Great Meeting House.



Corner of Butt Close Lane and Blake Street – granite kerbstones are visible as is a traditional nameplate.



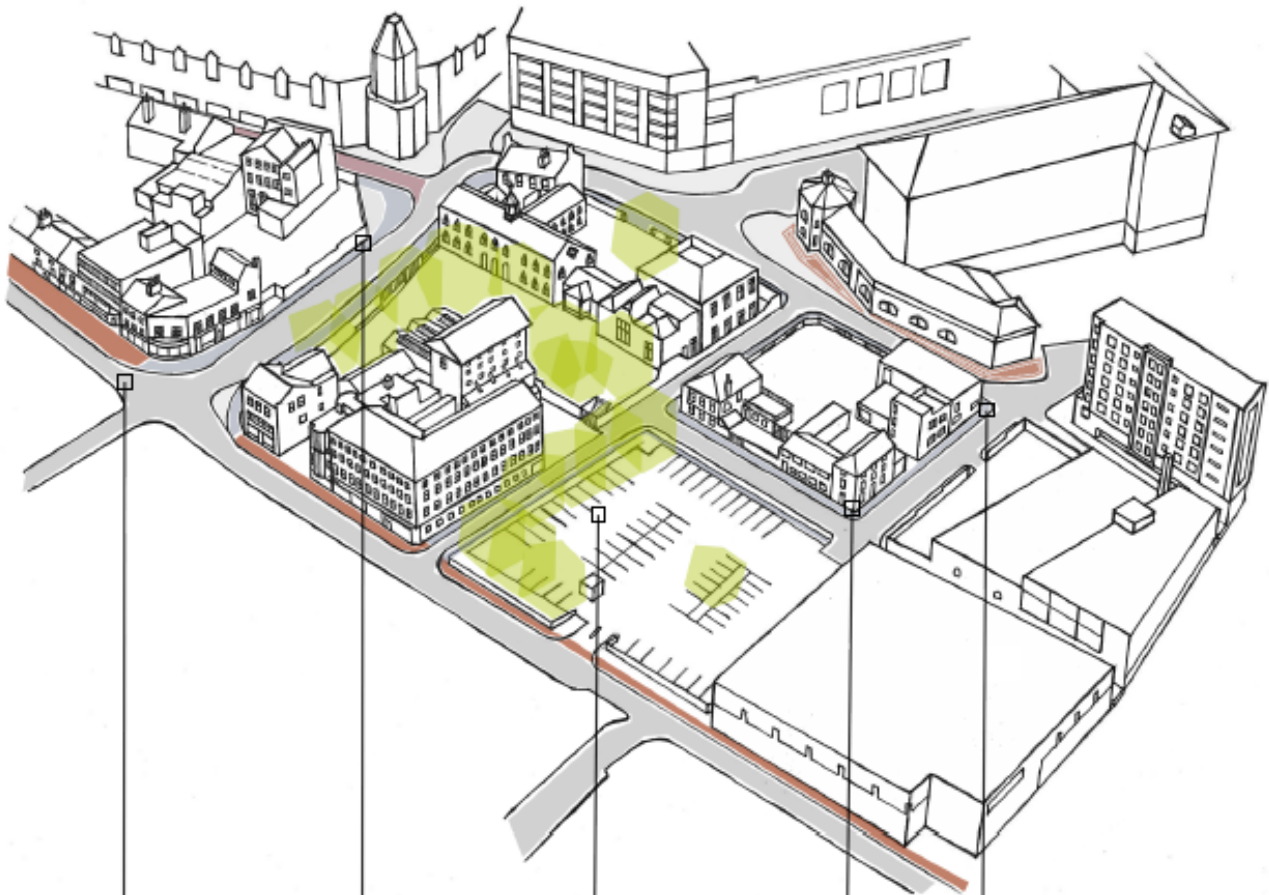
The public realm on St Peters Lane does not share the same distinctive character of the other areas.



Left. Large modern signage jars with the historic character of the listed wall.

Above. Historic street nameplate would benefit from re-painting

## Public Realm Strategy : Quiet Zone



Vehicle traffic and a the one way system in place both street markings and highway signs are needed for the area. However, number of signs and marking width should be kept to a minimum and reviewed when when necessary.



Bus stops help with accessibility to the area. They do not hinder the character area. If moved due care could be taken in choosing a new location .



Private open spaces can add to the character of the area if an sensitive landscaping scheme is implemented. Existing trees should be kept and maintained. New trees planted must of a proportional size to the area and provide year long interest without blocking key views. Trees that are lost to be replanted with a suitable replacement.



Cast-iron street nameplates are visible around the entire conservation area. These should be retained and refurbished to keep the historic character of be surroundings.



Architectural lighting should be carefully considered if installed to highlight key areas of a building. Potential uncovered cellar lights to be reinstated to add to the historic character.



## Road Markings

Similar to the signage, road markings are needed to control the flows of traffic within the area. Efforts have been made on Church Gate to narrow the yellow lines to minimise their impact which is welcome.

The junction of Church Gate and St Peters Lane however, is dominated by white lines which add to the cluttered and confusing feel of this junction.

## Street furniture

There is a wide range of street furniture in the area which includes lamp standards, hanging basket holders, poles for traffic regulations, phone boxes, bike stands and phone boxes among other things. The lack of co-ordination in respect of location and design detracts from the character of the area giving a cluttered feel.



*Narrow yellow lines, Church Gate.*



## 7.0 Area Analysis

The following passages contain a brief assessment of all buildings within the area. This is not exhaustive, the intention is to draw attention to the most important features of the buildings however features may still have importance even if not mentioned.

7.01 Map 10 sets out the character of the buildings as well as undeveloped land and key views Map 9 sets out the two distinct character areas found within the conservation and which are considered in more detail below:

### 7.02 The Commercial Zone

The commercial zone encompasses the shopping streets of Church Gate, East Bond Street and New Bond Street, as well as a small section of Mansfield Street and St Peter's Lane. It is characterised by back of footway buildings, many built on historic burgage plots and most of which have a commercial use in some or all of the building.



*The boundary wall on Butt Close Lane is made of a of stones and bricks of varied styles and likely dates from the 18th Century.*

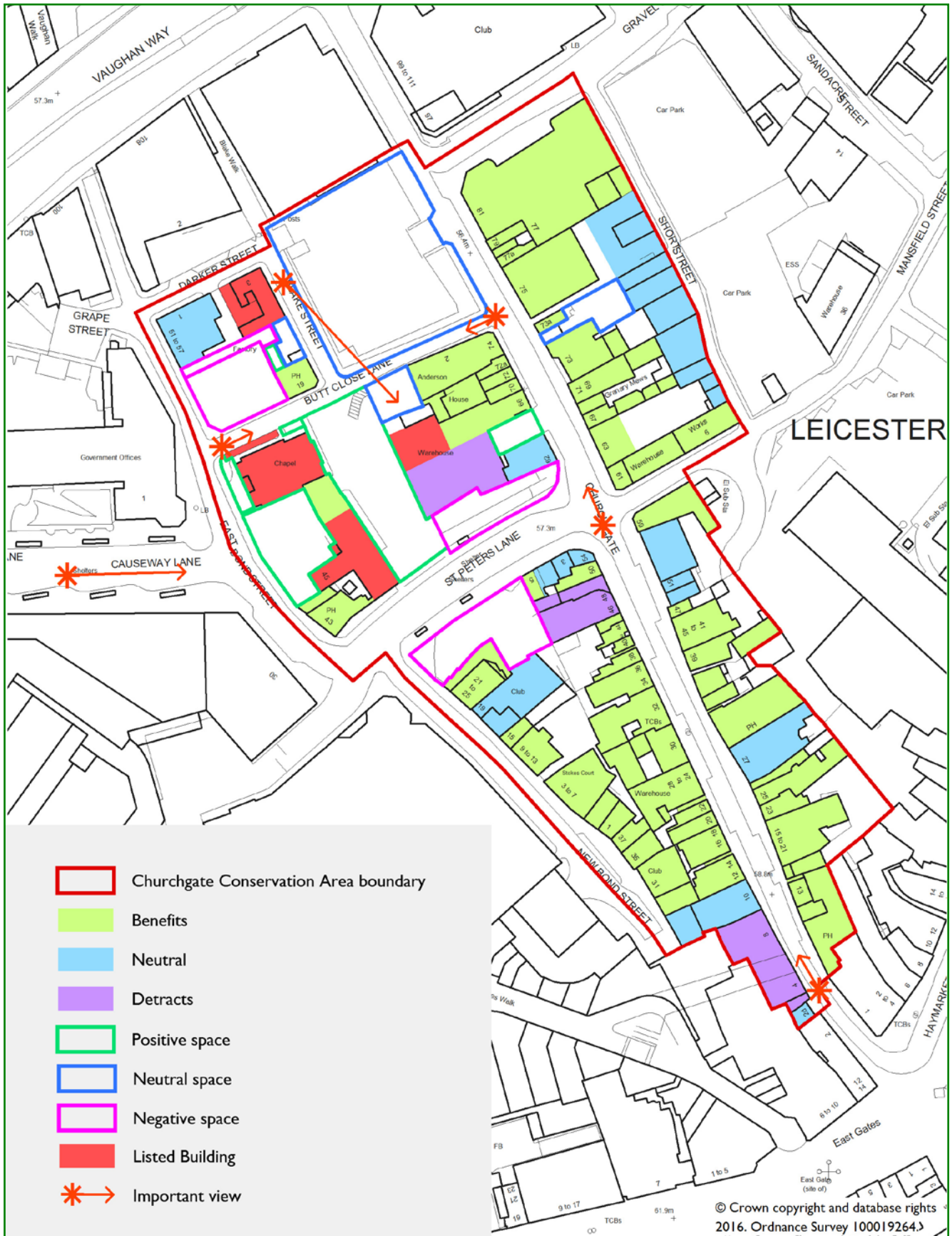
### 7.03 Church Gate: East Side

7.04 **7-9 Church Gate** is at the southern end of the street. The four-storey building is now known as the Church Gate Tavern, but was built as the Cricket Players Hotel in the 1870s. It is constructed in gault brick, a relatively unusual building material for Leicester, and has fine Classical mouldings to the stone window surrounds. The exposed brickwork and original timber-framed sliding sash windows on the upper floors contribute greatly to its character. The ground floor has been more substantially altered, with inappropriate rendering, but the window surrounds remain.



*The dramatic juxtaposition between the 18th century 9-11 Church Gate and the adjacent later buildings is evident and creates a strong sense of place.*

7.05 **11-13 Church Gate** is a pair of shops set within a larger property. The date "1711" is detailed in vitrified brick at first floor level, but this wall may conceal an older building behind. The 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix III) indicates that the building was then the Windmill Inn, but in the 1840s it was a coffee house run by Thomas Cooper, one of the leading figures in the Chartist movement. Although the ground floor has been extensively altered, the buildings are of considerable historic significance as a rare surviving example of a building type, which would once have been common within the city.



Map 10. Spatial Analysis



7.06 **15-21 Church Gate** is a notably fine four-storey building dating from the early part of the 20th century and built in Queen Anne style in red brick with stone dressings; the semi-circular windows are surrounded by brick and stone voussoirs on the top floor. It is the grandest of the former industrial buildings on the street with carved keystones and octagonal pilasters across the upper floors as well as a grand stone door surround at ground floor level. The shopfronts are modern but are set within substantial stone pilasters which link the building to the ground. Its height and scale make it a significant landmark when looking south along the street.

7.07 **23-25 Church Gate** is a more modest 19th Century building, with 3 rows of windows set in classical proportions and oversailing eaves. The upper floors have been unsympathetically painted, but it retains its original windows and slate roof. The shopfront is modern and out of keeping with the rest of the building.

7.08 **27 Church Gate** is a two-storey property which dates from the mid-20th century. The upper floor is dark red brick, split into six bays each, with an aluminium-framed sliding sash window. The building does not have the same character as the older buildings on the street, but respects the overall scale and proportion. The windows, while modern, reflect a traditional size and opening form with slender frames. The shopfront is modern and has a projecting angular fascia zone which over-dominates the building. The prevalence of glazing visually detaches the upper floor from the ground floor.



7.09 **29 Church Gate** is a former coaching inn known as the Loughborough House Inn. The façade likely dates from the early 20th century and has a good quality decorative composition, with oriel windows on the first floor with leaded details. While the façade is relatively modern an older building may survive behind. The property has a slate roof and interesting chimneys but would benefit from the removal of the unsympathetic modern paintwork from the façade. Number 31 was incorporated into the property in the 1980s.

*Unique street scene within the city centre showing many stages of development.*

7.10 **33-37 Church Gate** is a good group of three-storey Georgian buildings, which retain their original timber sash windows and first floor bays on the upper floors. Number 33 retains its un-painted brickwork, but 35-37 have been painted. The shopfronts are modern, but fit stylistically with the building. Number 35-37 has a Dutch Canopy.

7.11 **39 Church Gate** is also a three-storey Georgian property with original sliding sash windows on the upper floors which have recently been repaired and the façade re-painted. The shopfront is not original and the fascia board is out of scale with the property.

7.12 **To the rear of 39 Church Gate** is a substantial three-storey factory building. It is of solid red brick construction with simple arched windows. It is plain in detailing and retains a Swithland slate roof, which is in poor condition. Historic maps indicate it was formerly surrounded by buildings. Wrights directory in 1899 suggests number 39



was in use as an animal preserver and skin dresser; this building may have been used in connection with this business. It can now be viewed from the service yard of the properties on Belgrave Gate (outside the Conservation Area). The building is currently empty and in need of repair and re-use.

7.13 **41-47 Church Gate** is a row of smaller-scale Georgian properties with a mix of original and replacement timber windows. The upper floors have recently been repainted. The shopfronts are replacements and are typically too big for the property. An air conditioning unit outside 43 harms the row, as does the proliferation of signage. Numbers 43-47 are rare surviving examples of small properties, the like of which were typically cleared in the mid-20th century as being unsuitable housing. As such the row is of considerable historic interest.



Rear of 39 Church Gate.

7.14 **51-53 Church Gate** is a pair of two-storey shops dating from the early 1960s, built in brown brick with stone window surrounds. The scale of the property is in keeping with the character of the area even if the horizontal emphasis of the windows is uncharacteristic of the area. The shopfronts are modern and not of interest.

7.15 **55-57 Church Gate** is a row of three two-storey shops from the 1970s which, although of little architectural merit, respect the height and scale of their neighbours. The slimline sliding sash windows on the first floor are a contemporary approach to copying a more traditional form. The shopfronts are of little interest.

7.16 **59 Church Gate** is a two-storey early 20th century building, extended at the rear so that it attractively turns the corner into Mansfield Street. It has retained its original timber windows on the upper floor but has been re-roofed in concrete tiles.

7.17 **61 Church Gate** is located at the corner of Mansfield Street. It is a small three-storey 18th century building which complements 59 Church Gate in height and scale forming a gateway on Mansfield Street. Although the upper floors have been painted, a faux-Victorian shopfront installed and the chimney stack removed, it has retained timber sash windows on the upper floors and retains its overall historic character.



59 & 61 Church Gate form a gateway to Mansfield Street.

7.18 **63 Church Gate** is the former Fish & Quart public house which dates to 1832 and is the earliest surviving building in the city attributed to Henry Goddard, father to fellow architect Joseph Goddard, who was one of the City's most eminent architects and

designer of the clock tower. It is a tall three-storey building with rows of three windows on the upper floors and oversailing eaves. It is currently in a poor state of decorative repair with blocked up windows on the first floor and uPVC-framed windows on the second floor. The upper floors have been rendered while the ground floor has been tiled with large grey tiles and the façade is punctuated with a plethora of spotlights. Despite the current condition, its raised height and location at the end of St Peters Lane make it an important local landmark as well as of considerable local historic interest.

Planning permission has recently been granted for the change of use of the upper floors to flats which will hopefully allow some of the building's character to be restored.

**7.19 67-71 Church Gate** is located next to number 63 and creates an interesting contrast in scale. A group of small 18th century buildings, the properties retain a slate roof and prominent chimney stacks with historic pots. The first floor windows are not original but are likely to replicate the historic window style.

The properties are separated by an undercroft leading to a yard now known as Granary Mews, which was developed in the 1980s. Much of the historic range of buildings remains, as does the character of a subsidiary range of buildings, which was part of the historic character of the old town. The undercroft may have been a later addition to the building as it sits uncomfortably within the row and has no decorative archway. This likely shows the development of the town throughout the Victorian era as the historic building stock was put under increased development pressure and ways of intensifying land uses for small dwellings and shops were found.

**7.20 73 Church Gate** is, in comparison, probably the most architecturally accomplished building on Church Gate. It was built in the 1890s as a house and offices for a local builder George Duxbury by local architect Harry Percival on a site identified as part of Goodwin & Barsby's iron foundry on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix III). It was subsequently used as an adult school, offices and a nightclub; the ground floor has now been converted into shops. It is built in red brick with decorative stone detailing, twin pedimented gables, a large recessed central window and a stone balustrade. It retains an unusual mansard roof with Welsh slates including a circular window with stained glass. The windows have been replaced, but have kept leaded details, which likely replicate the original windows. On the ground floor, the two bay windows have been modified into a shopfront with access through the chamfered panel and modified steps. The original front doors with stained glass tympanum have survived.

To the rear of 73 is a range of modern buildings which currently are used as a bar and nightclub and are not of special historic or architectural interest.



*The mix of building ages and styles combine to provide both an attractive streetscene and a picture of the historic development of the city.*



7.21 **73A Church Gate** is an unusual, single storey building, which is only a single plot wide. It likely dates from the 1920s and appears to have originally been associated with the plot at the rear of 73. It has modest decorative and historic interest.

7.22 **75 Church Gate** is an attractively proportioned, substantial three-storey Victorian ormer coach workshop; the ground floor of which has been converted into a restaurant. The property has prominent oversailing eaves with decorative corbels; the second floor has four wide windows, while the first has eight windows in pairs which sit neatly beneath the ones on the upper floor. The window frames are all uPVC casements but may reflect a more historic glazing bar pattern. The upper floor retains its brickwork, unpainted and, as such, decorative sills and voussoirs are still visible and contribute to the character of the area. The ground floor retains cast iron pilasters with some decorative detail, whilst the shopfront is modern. The roller-shutter boxes are particularly prominent and detract from the street scene. The southern flank-wall is prominent within the street scene; it has been painted white, but is now fading – the ghost sign of ‘Wentworth’ is still visible.

7.23 **77-79 Church Gate** is an interesting pair of small shops which are likely to date from the mid-late Victorian era with a decorative basket arch leading to a rear courtyard. The building retains a slate roof and chimneys and exposed brickwork on the upper floor but the windows have been replaced with unsympathetic uPVC framed units, which pay some reference to the original glazing bar pattern of the original sashes.

The ground floor shops have lost their original shopfronts, although historic console brackets appear to survive above number 79. The 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix III) shows courtyard housing at the rear under the name of ‘Court A’. This was one of the many housing courts in the area, all of which had been demolished as part of slum clearance works in the mid twentieth century.



Former coach workshop at 75 Church Gate.



81 Church Gate is one of two former car garages in the area, the distinctive ‘fin’ forms an interesting corner feature



7.24 **81 Church Gate** sits on the east side of Church Gate, at the corner of Gravel Street. These premises were built as a garage for Castle's Motors (who also owned many other buildings in locality) in the 1930s, probably at the time when Gravel Street was extended. It is in Art Deco style – popular for such uses at that time - and features a tower that acts as a prominent local landmark.

### 7.25 **Church Gate - West Side (evens)**

The west side of Church Gate would have developed as plots which backed onto the former city wall, which could explain its very straight building line compared to the more sinuous building line on the eastern side.

7.26 The first building in the Conservation Area is actually the facade to the western entrance to the Highcross Shopping centre, which was developed in the early 1990s on the site of 4-8 Church Gate. The façade is three storeys tall and is predominantly clad white metal panels with intermittent glazing. The roof is marked with oversailing fins, a design feature which is reflected on a smaller scale above the ground floor units. Overall the composition is very plain and lacks visual interest, other than the main projecting sign.

This building is very prominent when the street is viewed from the Clock Tower area as the curvature of the street at the southern end prevents long views until you are on the street. Unfortunately, it does not give an impression of the character of the street or wider area.

7.27 **10 Church Gate** dates from the 1970s and is a bakery and café. It has facades to both Church Gate and Bond Street at the rear and is the only building in the area to do so. It is undistinguished architecturally and because of its age, does not possess vernacular charm. Efforts have been made to replicate more traditional details such as brick voussoirs above upper floor windows and brick arches at ground floor level, but the elevation is flat and is overreliant on brick. The upper floor windows are slimline aluminium sliding sashes, which replicate the traditional form of window opening in a contemporary material.

7.28 **12-22 Church Gate** is a terrace of six three-storey early 19th Century properties with ground floor retail units and residential accommodation on the upper floors. They have recessed windows set in stone surrounds with smaller openings on the third floor and prominent chimney stacks. The properties retain attractive brickwork set in Flemish bond on the upper floors with painted stone window surrounds. The windows have been replaced with top hung timber mock-sashes, but that reflect the glazing pattern of the original windows. The shopfronts are entirely modern and do not reflect the historic character of the buildings.



7.29 **24-26 Church Gate** is a pair of shops, which were re-fronted in the 1980s, having formerly formed three small units. The façade is unambitious but has interesting arched windows surrounds with bespoke arched timber windows and a decorative blue brick string course. While not of historic interest, efforts have been made to provide a

*12-22 Church Gate - despite unsympathetic shopfronts much of the area retains a strong historic character.*

decorative façade. The shopfronts also date from the 1980s and have mock-Victorian features such as wooden pilasters. Both properties have roller shutters with recessed boxes. The relatively modern façade may hide more historic buildings at the rear of the site.

7.30 **30 Church Gate** is a grand, three storey Victorian factory, built in Classical Italianate style and identified as Lowe & Son's "Fancy Hosiery Works" on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix III). The building has interesting architectural features throughout, with decorative corbels and brackets at eaves level, as well as brick and carved stone voussoirs on the upper floors. The ground floor is split into five bays separated by robust square pilasters. The building retains most of its original sliding sash windows to the front which are a key part of its character. The ground floor has been converted to a shop with glazed panels and roller shutters between the pilasters. The appearance of the building is adversely affected by the paint that has been applied to the brickwork, which has masked much of the decorative detail on the upper floors. There is an excessively large fascia board which dominates the ground floor and may hide decorative detailing behind.

7.31 **32 Church Gate** is an interesting three-storey twin gabled property, dating from the late 19th century which also has a workshop at the rear. The buildings were in use as a leather-belt factory until the 1960s (H Pretty & Sons Victoria Works). The upper floors are relatively plain but with some brick and stone voussoirs and original sliding sash windows. Similar to number 30, the ground floor has been converted into a shop with glazing and roller shutters between ground floor pilasters and it also has a disproportionately large fascia sign. The whole building has been painted which has screened much of the decorative detailing.

7.32 **34-40 Church Gate** is a group of smaller early 19th buildings. These three storey properties are relatively plain in detailing but form a good stock of buildings within the area. As with many others, the upper floors have been painted to the detriment of their visual appearance and historic character. The windows have been replaced, but with timber units that reflect the historic glazing bar pattern.

7.33 **42-44 Church Gate** has a red-brick façade which largely dates from the early twentieth century and which screens a pair of older buildings behind. The window openings have a horizontal emphasis and are out of proportion with the building. The windows have recently been replaced as part of a residential conversion scheme. The ground floor of number 44 has been crudely turned into a vehicle entry through the removal of part of the shopfront and creation of an undercroft with a metal gate, which detracts from the character of the area.

7.34 **46-48 Church Gate** dates from the early 1960s and was built speculatively for either a showroom or offices. It is a four-storey building which is 4 bays wide and is both out of scale and character with other properties on the street. It is built from concrete beams with buff brick infill panels and retains original metal three-pane windows. The



30 & 32 Church Gate – examples of Victorian factories, some of the closest built to the City Centre.

ground and first floor are built with an unusual 2-storey curved wall which leads into an undercroft, which typically is now used for car parking. The shopfront is contemporaneous with the building and is quite interesting for the curve of the building.

7.35 **50 Church Gate** is a three storey 19th century building that is now the last building in this block following the demolition of its neighbours in the 1970s as part of the St Peters Lane redevelopment. The building is constructed of brick, with a well-proportioned façade featuring oversailing eaves, decorative corbels and carved stone lintels. The windows on the upper floors have been replaced within uPVC units, but ones which reflect the pattern of the likely former sashes. The walls have also been painted white, to its detriment. The shopfront is modern and has unsympathetic roller shutters to the front.

7.36 **54 Church Gate** incorporates one bay of the shopfront beneath number 50; the remainder extends round onto St Peters Lane. This two-storey element is unambitious and does not positively contribute towards the conservation. It adjoins number 50 at an uncomfortably sharp angle. It also incorporates an older two-storey workshop at the rear of number 50, the flank wall of which is visible within the streetscene.

7.37 **62-64 Church Gate** is the first building on the other side of the wide expanse formed by St Peters Lane. It dates from the mid-2000s. It is a three-storey red-brick building designed with three sliding sash timber-framed windows in a traditional style. The first floor has been designed as a shopfront with arched wooden windows, while the ground floor has a timber shopfront with unusual green brickwork.

7.38 **66 Church Gate** is one of the more unusual and distinctive groups of properties on the street. The main building is side facing and has a highly decorative façade and end gable with a first floor balcony. It was remodelled in 1881 for TD Brown, primarily as house, but with rooms set aside for offices. To the side of the building is a surviving pair of decorative cast iron gate piers.

Adjoining this building is an exceptionally unusual five-storey timber-framed warehouse that was originally used for drying timber as part of the timber production process. It is Grade II listed and can be glimpsed in part from various places within the Conservation Area.

Adjacent to these two buildings is a much later metal shed which acts as part of the current furniture warehouse business, it is not architecturally distinguished and does not contribute positively to the character of the area. Notwithstanding the later addition, these buildings are among the most important in the area for their rareness and architectural/historic interest.



*66 Church Gate - a decoratively distinctive building within the area.*

7.39 **74-76 Church Gate** is the last building on the western side. It was built as Jennings' boot and shoe manufacturers; a carved detail dates the corner building to 1877 but the side extension, built in the same style, dates to 1895. The windows on the upper floors have been replaced with insensitive uPVC framed units to the detriment of the



overall appearance of the building. Notwithstanding this, its high quality red bricks with decorative gault brick voussoirs still make this an imposing and characterful end to the street, and which attractively turns the corner into Butt Close Lane. The ground floor contains four shop units and an entry door. Three of the units are set within a historic shopfront which retains cast-iron pilasters with decorative detailing and a prominent oversailing fascia panel.

#### **7.40 Mansfield Street and St Peters Lane**

The only buildings on Mansfield Street are 2-6 Mansfield Street; two industrial buildings which appear to date from the late 19th or early 20th century. Number 2 has two storeys while number 6 has three storeys. They are built from red brick and have wide windows with shallow segmental arches above. The windows have all been replaced with uPVC framed units to the detriment of the appearance of the building, but a historic glazing bar pattern has been reflected and the windows are set back within the reveals, which lessens this impact. The slates have been replaced with inferior concrete tiles, but the brickwork has not been painted which adds to the buildings' character.

**7.41 Short Street.** The western side of Short Street has been included within the Conservation Area as part of the block formed by Mansfield Street, Church Gate and Gravel Street. The buildings which front the street either have no historic interest or have been severely altered to the point that they do not retain any special character.

**7.42 New and East Bond Streets.** New Bond Street and East Bond Street are two streets which once formed part of a winder network. Historically there were also North, South and West Bond Streets, all of which were located on land to the west, which is now part of the Highcross Shopping Centre. The present day street appears as if it is a single street but the change in street names can be found where there is a kink in the building line. Historically this also marked a ward boundary.

New and East Bond Streets represent the only surviving fabric from this corner of the city with a single row of shop buildings on the east side while the west side is now dominated by the flank wall of the Highcross shopping centre; the end of the street terminates with one of the entrances to the centre.

The remaining row of buildings still retains a good stock of interesting properties, which are now rare survivors of the former character of the area.

**7.43 Rear of 10 Church Gate** is the first building in the row. Although it has a strong presence on New Bond Street it is part of the main bakery and café use fronting onto Church Gate. The façade is three storeys with four rows of windows. It is distinctively clad in rows of narrow cream-coloured tiles and has a long wooden soffit at eaves level. The effect is both unattractive and uncharacteristic of the area, but its overall proportions are in keeping. The shopfront is unambitious with a prominent fascia panel, a brick wall with service doors as well as an entrance to the café. However, the physical link through the café to Church Gate is positive.

**7.44 31-33 New Bond Street** appear to date from the late 19th Century and are handsome three-storey buildings. Some of the window openings have been altered to the detriment of the overall appearance of the building. All the windows have been replaced with uPVC-framed units, but the historic glazing bar pattern has been retained. The brickwork has not been painted which adds to its character. The shopfront is made from timber and retains some attractive elements such as carved pilasters and leaded light details. However, it is let down by two un-coated roller shutters. The building has a long-standing use as a club being a Unionist Club in the Early part of the Twentieth Century and a British Legion Club in the latter part of the century.

**7.45 35-37 New Bond Street** is a pair of three-storey properties with three rows of windows. The buildings have an outward appearance of being Victorian with a slate roof, stone lintel detail and decorative corbelling. The modern windows replicate four-pane sash windows typical of a Victorian building. The presence of braces on the faces may indicate that the façade hides earlier buildings behind. The first floor windows of number 35 have been replaced with panels depicting a religious scene in conjunction with the ground floor shop. Both shop units form a single retail unit, which although not original is in keeping with the character of the area.

7.46 **1-5 East Bond Street** is a handsome terrace of three-storey 19th century buildings with good upper floor detailing, oversailing eaves, original chimney stacks and original windows. The upper floors are mostly un-painted, which allows the brickwork to be seen, however, elements such as satellite dishes, defunct window boxes and trailing wires detract from its overall appearance. The shopfronts are modern but are generally in keeping with the character of the area.

7.47 **7 East Bond Street** now forms a block of flats know as Stokes Court along with numbers 1, 3 and 5. The substantial building at number 7 was built as a vehicle garage in the 1930s in an Art Deco style. In the early 1990s it was converted to flats and the top floor extension was added. Elements of the original art deco design can be seen in the horizontal emphasis of the upper floors, the curved ground floor pilasters and remains of the 'fin' detail on the upper floors.

The shopfronts are modern but are timber-framed and respect the overall character of the area. The access door to the upper floor flats appears to date from the 1930s and is an important feature of the history of the building.



*The kink in the building line is the only indication of the change from New Bond Street to East Bond Street.*

7.48 **9-15 East Bond Street** is a distinctive terrace of four properties featuring original windows on the first floor and Welsh slates. It has strong Arts and Crafts influences, with a steeply pitched roof with attractive hipped dormers, oversailing eaves and prominent chimney-stacks set within the main roofslope. The first floor has been painted, which detracts from its overall appearance. The shopfront of number 15 is now blank as it is used as part of the adjacent casino. The other three shops remain in use for retail and retain some elements of original shopfronts between the strong pilasters although they are screened by roller shutters.



*9-15 East Bond Street retains much original character including prominent chimney stacks and leaded glass – elements of the historic shopfronts survive beneath security features.*

7.49 **17-19 East Bond Street** was built in the mid-1960s as club rooms and a concert hall for the Variety Artistes Club and institute. In the early 1970s consent was given to change the use to a casino and it remains in that use to the present day. The building is relatively undistinguished; it has two storeys, the upper floor having three large square windows set in three bays. The ground floor is largely brick with some glazed shopfronts.



7.50 **21-25 East Bond Street** is the first building on the street. A prominent three-storey building dating from the early 20th century, in Classical style, with a semi-circular pediment above the entrance and timber windows recessed behind deep pilasters. The shopfronts were added later, but have been designed to fit within the bays of the building and are made of timber. The upper floors have recently been sensitively converted to residential units.

#### 7.51 **The Quiet Zone**

In contrast to the activity found in the commercial zone, the quiet zone is characterised by lower density uses and more greenery. Until the mid-20th century, the area was predominantly a residential district that expanded to the east west and north – the majority of this housing was cleared as ‘slums’ by the 1960s. However, some very interesting buildings and streets remain and retain a distinct character.

7.52 **The Great Meeting Chapel** (1707) is one of the earliest brick buildings of any importance in the city. Built in a plain but solid manner, with stucco detailing and a steeply-pitched slate roof, it became a Unitarian chapel in the 19th century and the front projection dates from that period. Alongside, the former schoolrooms date from 1859 and are built in red and yellow brick in Gothic Revival style, with pointed arch windows; it has been linked to the chapel with an attractive extension, clearly modern but echoing the style of the buildings. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, non-conformist chapels were commonplace within the city. Relatively few survive to the present day and only three retain their historic use (the other two being the Baptist Chapel on Charles Street and the Methodist Chapel on Bishop Street).

7.53 On its northern boundary, which forms the south side of Butt Close Lane, the boundary wall to the Great Meeting Chapel reveals a very early section of rubble walling at the base – reputed to be stone from the town wall. Above the plinth is 18th



*7 East Bond Street is a former vehicle garage which has been extended and converted to shops and flats.*



*Great Meeting School.*



*Butt Close Lane retains a unique character within the city.*



century brickwork - the small, hand-made bricks being typical of the period. The burial ground to the Chapel, accessed from Butt Close Lane, was attractively landscaped in the 1990s and provides a refreshing area of green and landscaped open space – the only such space within the Conservation Area. The gates and steps to St Peters Lane and Butt Close Lane are of wrought iron, with piers of stone and brick and form an attractive boundary treatment. Alongside, the side elevation of the timber warehouse provides a strong visual termination. The Chapel, the former School and the wall to Butt Close Lane are all Grade II listed.

7.54 The adjacent **Cherry Tree public house** is a handsome three-storey former hotel that can be identified on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix III). It originally adjoined a building to the south and joined the rest of the East Bond Street, but the construction of the St Peter's Lane extension in the 1970s and has left it standing in isolation. The southern flank wall is covered in creeper which is a simple and effective way of screening a blank elevation attractively while also providing biodiversity value.



Cherry Tree Public House.

In contrast, the northern flank was clearly finished with the intention of being seen as it contains a decorative Flemish bond with lighter coloured bricks used as the headers for a 'chequered' effect. The façade is well proportioned and mixes some of the simplicity of Georgian proportions and quoin details with more decorative Victorian elements such as the use of polychromatic brickwork in the relieving arches and string courses adding greatly to the façade. The ground floor has been modified to incorporate a vehicular access but timber sliding sashes survive throughout and greatly add to the character of the building.

7.55 At the corner of Butt Close Lane and Blake Street, **The Salmon Public House** is a good surviving example of a Victorian street corner public house. It has timber sliding sash windows with decorative glazing bars, prominent chimney stacks and exposed brickwork on the upper floor. The arrangement of windows and door indicate it was likely re-modelled at some point, perhaps to move the door to the corner to increase trade. It is the last surviving property of the row, where it once formed the end of the terrace.

7.56 At the other end of Blake Street, **3 Darker Street** is a rare example of a hosiery master's house and workshop. It was built around 1850 and pre-dates the large-scale industrialisation that was to occur within a few years; the house and workshop are Grade II listed.

Whilst its architectural detailing is unremarkable, it is a unique example of this building type within the city and is the last representative of a something, which would have once been commonplace within the City. The 'master' hosier would have lived in the property at the front and employed a small number of workers. Eventually, larger factories were built and improvements in transport and housing allowed factory owners to move further out of town into grander and more salubrious surroundings.

7.57 The final building in the area is **51-57 East Bond Street**, which is now a dental surgery and has a rendered façade. Whilst superficially unremarkable, on closer inspection it is apparent that this building was once four terraced houses that have since been knocked-through and had their roofs removed. The only surviving clue to this is in the decorative stone lintels which sit above the first floor window openings. This building also incorporates 1 Darker Street, which is a 2/3 storey building dating from the early-mid 20th century. It has original windows and some glazed bricks at the base, but is largely unremarkable.



3 Darker Street awaits a sensitive re-use.

7.58 The other feature of the quiet zone is two car parks. The smaller one is private and serves the use at 51-57 East Bond Street. It is the site of a former row of houses, but now the openness and lack of landscaping detract from the surrounding area.

The larger car park serves the large retail store, which sits just outside the boundary of the Conservation Area to the north and has some public access. It effectively represents a cleared block and is likely to have been the original open piece of land where the archery butts were located. It is shown as open land in 1807, but by 1828 buildings have appeared. In Victorian times it housed a school and housing, while, in the early 20th century, the school was demolished to provide a large vehicle garage. The whole site was cleared by the 1970s and has been used as a car park since the 1980s.



The Great Meeting House is one of the oldest buildings in the City.

### 7.59 Greenery and Open Spaces

The only area of open green space within the Conservation Area is the former burial ground to the Great Meeting Chapel. The burial ground was landscaped by the City Council in the early 1990s and provides an attractive space within the area.

7.60 As the Conservation Area is not well provided with trees, the cluster found in the Quiet Zone is of great importance to the area. Of particular value are the large,



View of former timber-drying warehouse at rear of 66 Church Gate from Butt Close Lane.



mature plane trees and limes on the East Bond Street side of Great Meeting Chapel. There are some additional mature plane trees and two Indian bean trees within the burial ground which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. At the corner of Butt Close Lane and East Bond Street are a large ash tree and lime tree that are close to the church building.

There are also important trees around the Matalan car park. These include four plane trees on the Church Gate frontage and several mature cherry trees and younger rowans on Butt Close Lane. This greenery adds greatly to the character of the area as well as improving the biodiversity of a predominantly built-up area.

There are a number of smaller open spaces in the area which form part of the surroundings of buildings in the area and are important to the setting of these buildings even where they are not being maintained to their full potential.



*The graveyard of the Great Meeting House – an attractively landscaped green space.*



*The car park serving Matalan is located on the area thought to formerly be used for Archery Butts. The site has a mixed development history, but is not harmed by being open and contains a large number of trees which make a positive contribution to the area.*



## 7.61 Key Views

As well as the individual character of the buildings and spaces between, there are a number of views which are important to the character of the area; these can be set out as follows:



### 7.62 View looking north along Church Gate to St Margaret's Church

The Grade I listed 15<sup>th</sup> Century St Margaret's Church, whilst not within the area, gives the street its name and is located the historic junction of Church Gate and Sanvey Gate, which also marks the north-east corner of the old city walls.

The church tower rises above all surrounding buildings; This historic view still dominates the view north along Church Gate from the city centre and belies its physical separation from the conservation area. The view is particularly dramatic around midday when the sun illuminates the southern wall of the church tower.



**7.63 View into the Quiet Zone from Causeway Lane**

The view looking into the Conservation Area from Causeway lane affords a view of both the great meeting house and the adjacent school with the timber-drying warehouse in between forming an interesting and visually pleasing grouping, particularly set among the greenery.



**7.64 View of the timber warehouse at rear of 66 Church Gate from Blake Street**

The timber warehouse is a very rare and interesting building within the conservation area and whole city; it is listed at Grade II.

Because of the built up nature of the surrounding area, it is difficult to view from the public highway; the best view is from the north from Butt Close Lane and Blake Street.





**7.65 View along Butt Close Lane**

The narrowness of the lane gives great character to the area; the hard edge of the wall of the meeting chapel and former factory on the southern side in particular give a strong sense of identity as a 'minor' route and the sense of enclosure likely to have been characteristic of the historic town.



## 7.66 Setting of the Conservation Area

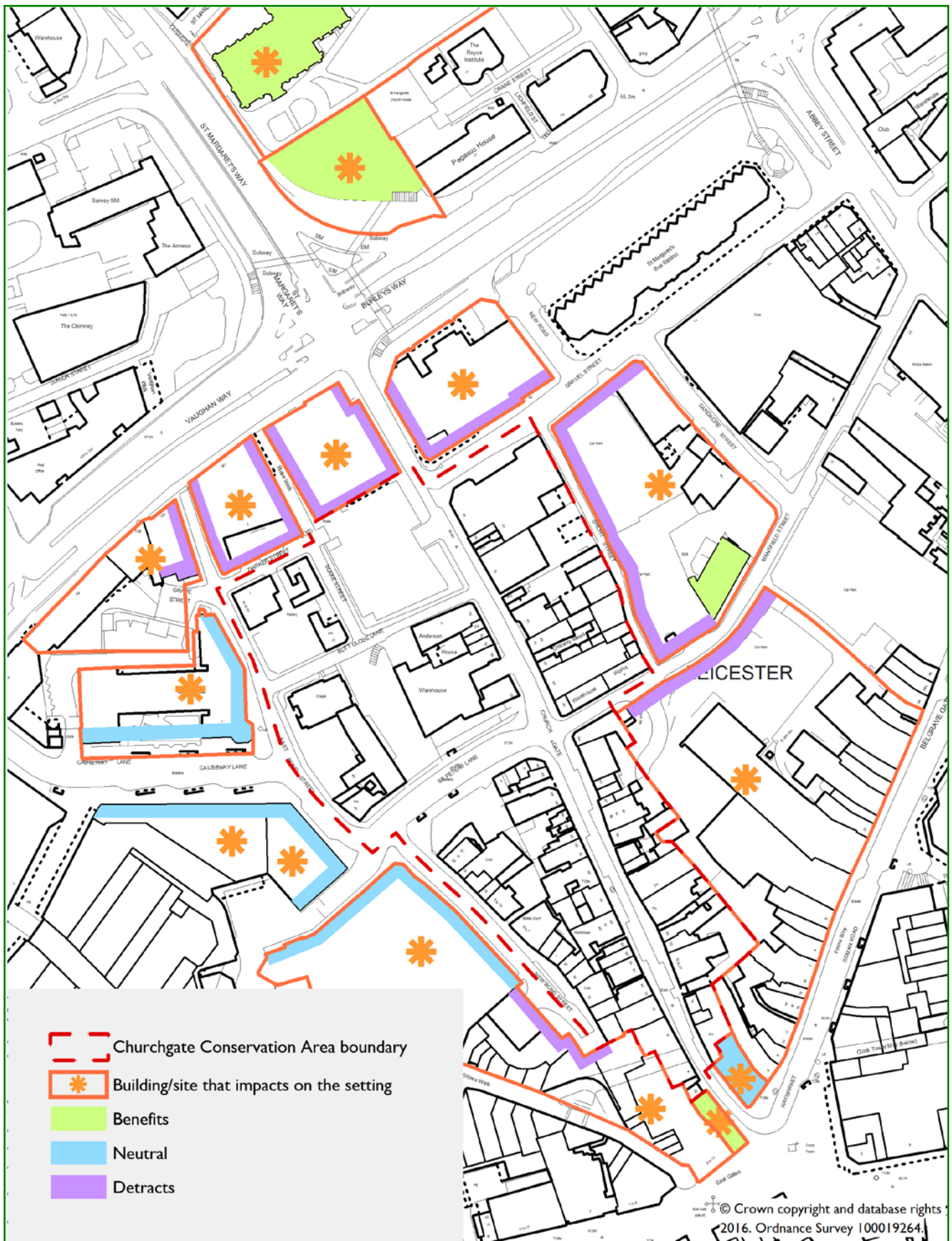
Outside the boundary of the conservation area are a number of buildings and sites which have a significant impact on its setting either through immediate proximity or impact on long views. Church Gate is unusual for a city centre conservation area as it only shares a very small boundary with another conservation area, High Street, at its southern end and there is only a very limited visual link between the two areas.

7.67 As previously set out – the conservation area preserves a small section of a wider type of development that would have been common in the surrounding streets but was lost through substantial redevelopment of the wider area, particularly around the ring road, in the twentieth century. The conservation area is surrounded on most sides by large areas of land which have been developed either in a scale and character not in keeping with the character of the area or are vacant and await redevelopment. Development of these sites has the potential to significantly alter the appreciation of the historic character of the conservation area.

7.68 Map 11 shows sites surrounding the conservation area and their current impact on its setting. The impact any development on the setting on the conservation area will be a material consideration of any future development of these sites. Setting of the area can be formed by the framing of buildings as well as skyline interest. The context in which a building is viewed changes with what surrounds it – a buildings significance may be harmed if it is not possible to view it against clear sky; the absence of buildings can form an important part of the setting of the area.



*Flats on East Bond Street, which form part of the Highcross forms a strong edge to the conservation area although is not being within the boundary. The buildings was constructed over the former route of St Peters Lane.*



Map 11. Setting of the Conservation Area



## 8.0 Pressures and Challenges

### 8.01 Negative Factors

In this appraisal, buildings have been identified that make positive contributions to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, there are many examples of other changes, both large and small, that have begun to erode the special quality of the area.

### 8.02 Mid-late Twentieth Century Buildings

The majority of the building stock makes a positive contribution towards the character of the area or could be enhanced with repair and redecoration. Many of the post-war buildings do not have the same charm or intrinsic historic interest of the earlier buildings, reflecting the more homogenous use of building materials and simplicity of design. There is less local distinction, as the buildings were built as generic retail space rather than for a specific purpose.

### 8.03 Building materials

The predominant building material within the Conservation Area is red brick, with a limited amount of stone detailing, timber windows and slate roofs. The use of more modern materials can harm this character. UPVC is a commonly used material for windows. This, particularly when coloured brilliant white, appears chunky and dominant within the window opening. Thick, 'stormproof' structure, 'mock' non-structural glazing bars and no set-back from the front wall all combine to harm the character of more historic buildings. Top-opening casement windows also harm the streetscene. This is particularly evident at number 50 Church Gate.



*Inappropriate windows at 79 Church Gate.*



*Obscuring of decorative corner feature at 70 Church Gate.*

### 8.04 Replacement roofs

Although not widespread, some properties have been re-roofed in non-original materials, such as concrete tiles or artificial slates; particular examples are 59 Church Gate and former workshops on Mansfield Street. The appearance of these roofs generally fails to match the profile and definition of a natural slate roof and is detrimental both to the appearance and character of the individual building and to the streetscene more generally.

### 8.05 Shopfronts

The majority of buildings along Church Gate have shopfronts which date from the mid-late 20th century or later. Although buildings need to adapt to changing circumstances and patterns of use, this has often been achieved at the cost of the architectural and historic character of the buildings. Many of the modern shopfronts along Church Gate are unsympathetically designed with overly deep fascias, using inappropriate materials that are not in keeping with the character of the rest of the building. Particularly poor examples are the shopfronts to the 18th century buildings at 11-13 Church Gate. In many locations solid security shutters have also been added and this has not only adversely affected the appearance of the buildings but has also created an unwelcoming appearance when they are closed.



### 8.06 Advertisements, Signs and street clutter

A particular feature of Church Gate is the number and variety of signs to commercial premises. Historically, some of these have been at high level. However, some are not sympathetic to the proportions of the building on which they are displayed. A number of signs are redundant, worn and give an appearance of neglect. A further feature which creates a negative appearance is the number of traffic direction and information signs, which creates a cluttered appearance, particularly at the junction of Church Gate and St Peter's Lane/Mansfield Street.

Because of the narrow width of the street, a number of street lights on Church Gate are fixed at high level on buildings. This has the advantage of reducing clutter. Some replica "Victorian" lighting columns have also been erected. However, the general quality and condition of the road surface, litter bins and planters is poor and out-dated. 'A' boards outside shops add to the cluttered and untidy appearance.

### 8.07 Painting of brickwork

The brickwork on several buildings, particularly along Church Gate, has been painted, usually white. Not only does this spoil the red brick character of the street but it also results in the need for regular and on-going maintenance. If poorly maintained, paintwork looks untidy when it starts to flake off. The application of paint can also cause damage to the brickwork as it traps moisture.

### 8.08 Night-time economy

Church Gate has several bars and nightclubs in and around the wider area and has become a focus of the 'night-time economy'. This has created particular problems such as an increase in antisocial behaviour, which in turn has required many shop-owners to need heavy security measures such as roller shutters to the detriment of the wider appearance of the area. This has had a detrimental effect on the 'image' and perceived safety of the area.



The shopfronts at 9-11 Church Gate don't relate well to the main building to the detriment of the building as a whole.



The area is cluttered by a proliferation of street furniture, vehicle movements remain a problem as does dated and incoherent street paving and markings.



Insensitive treatment of key buildings has led to an erosion of character within the area.

### 8.09 Lack of residential presence

Linked to the issues with the night-time economy is the general lack of occupation of the properties at night, which can give an abandoned feeling and mean a lack of passive surveillance. There is however an increasing trend is for upper floors of properties to be converted into residential flats, a move which is welcome and to be encouraged.

### 8.10 Vacant buildings

Following the economic downturn and a gradual change in shopping habits under-occupancy of buildings has become an increasing problem. This has two main manifestations: firstly in empty shops and secondly in long-term vacant buildings. The hosier master's house and workshop at the corner of Darker Street and Blake Street is a listed building at risk that urgently requires a sympathetic new use. Similarly the former workshop at the rear of 39 Church Gate is long-term vacant and a new use should be sought urgently. The best way of preserving a building is to ensure it remains in use and as such the council will continue to support applications to keep buildings in appropriate uses.

### 8.11 Car parks

There are three surface level car parks in the Conservation Area: one serving Matalan on Church Gate, another at the corner of Butt Close Lane/East Bond Street and a further one at the junction of East Bond Street and St Peters Lane. The latter two detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area as they lead to an openness, which is uncharacteristic of the city centre and detracts from its character. It is also an inefficient use of land and sympathetic redevelopment would be preferable. Where a redevelopment scheme is not forthcoming, suitable screening and landscaping schemes will be supported to minimise their visual impact on the area.



*The car part at the corner of Butt Close Lane and East Bond Street suffers from a lack of activity and poor landscaping.*

### 8.12 The public realm

The Council undertook repaving with brick paviors and installed planter beds, trees and an information board when Church Gate was part-pedestrianised during the 1980s. Unfortunately, the appearance of the streetscape has been affected by vandalism, poor maintenance and illegal parking on the footway. It is now dirty, with cracked and uneven surfaces. The colours that have been used have also tended to detract from, rather than enhance, the appearance of the area.

### 8.13 Poor Landscaping

Where sites don't contain buildings there is often a lack of planned landscaping which is to the detriment of the wider appearance of the area. Some areas suffer from a lack of maintenance which further harms their appearance.

### 8.14 Pedestrian and vehicle traffic

The extension to the Highcross shopping centre was completed and opened in 2008. As part of this, the High Street was pedestrianised and buses were re-routed down Church Gate. This has had mixed impact on the area as it has increased the prominence of the



street with higher traffic volumes, but has been detrimental to the pedestrian environment as it brings pedestrians into conflict with larger vehicles. It has also required the junction of Church Gate and St Peters Lane to be modified to accommodate the wide turning circles of buses.

### 8.15 Other Sites which detract from the Conservation Area

As well as the identified areas there are other sites within the conservation area which detract from its overall appearance.

### 8.16 St Peters Lane

The stretch of road now known as St Peters Lane was created in the 1970s as a link road connecting Mansfield Street to the Central Ring Road. In 2006, as part of the Highcross Shopping Centre extension, the older section of St Peters Lane that connected to Vaughan Way was stopped up, leaving the remaining section of St Peters Lane serving as a connection between Mansfield Street and Causeway Lane.

The road is three lanes wide, with wide pavements on either side. There is also undeveloped land on either side, which is currently screened by fencing following the removal of the advertisement hoardings in June 2015. The width and openness of this section of road are in stark contrast to the more intimate streetscapes provided on Church Gate and Bond Street. This openness is further exacerbated by the lack of an active frontage on either side, which causes a loss of character and gives no indication from Church Gate of the shops on Bond Street.



*St Peters Lane was built to accommodate a level of traffic that has never materialised; it is now out of character with the surrounding streets which benefit from active frontages as a sense of enclosure.*



*Flat and uninspiring façade to Highcross on Church Gate.*

### 8.17 Highcross Shopping Centre

While located just outside the conservation area, two of the entrances to the centre are located within the Conservation Area and the shopping centre has a significant impact on the character of the area as a whole. There are 4 main areas of impact:

- Church Gate – eastern entrance to lower mall;
- New Bond Street – entrance to upper mall;



- New/East Bond Street – side wall of shopping centre including vehicle entrance; and
- East Bond Street – external wall of Highcross including access to service yard

The centre has a mixed impact on the character of the area. The centre is a major economic draw for the city and, as such, having two entrances to the centre within the local area brings footfall and is welcomed. However, the long blank facades along New and East Bond Streets, as well as the vehicular and service entrances, lead to a lack of activity and a prevalence of heavy goods vehicles manoeuvring which can unsettle pedestrians and detract from the area.

## 9.0 Contacts

For further information on this, or other, conservation areas you can contact the Council's Building Conservation Officers by phone, letter or e-mail at the following addresses:

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LE1 1FZ.

T: 0116 454 2973

E: [planning@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:planning@leicester.gov.uk)

Information on all conservation areas is available on the Council's website ([www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk)) including Character Appraisals where adopted.

## Appendix I. Glossary

<b>Glossary of architectural terms</b>	
<b>architrave</b>	a moulded frame around a window
<b>ashlar</b>	smooth faced masonry blocks laid horizontally
<b>balustrade</b>	a series of short posts or pillars supporting a rail
<b>bracket/ console</b>	bracket a small piece of stone or other material supporting a weight e.g. eaves bracket [console or scroll bracket – in the form of a scroll]
<b>canted</b>	having splayed sides
<b>capital</b>	the head or crowning feature of a column
<b>chamfer</b>	the sharp edge of a stone block, usually cut back at 45°
<b>corbel(led)</b>	a method of laying bricks or stone so that each course projects slightly forward of the one below
<b>cornice</b>	horizontal projecting section at the top of a building or wall
<b>dentil</b>	a small square shaped block, usually one of a series, creating a tooth-liked pattern
<b>diaper</b>	pattern a pattern on brickwork that creates a series of diamond or square shapes using different coloured bricks
<b>drip moulds</b>	a projecting string, hood, or moulding over doorways, arches, windows, and niches, first installed to direct rainwater away from the opening.
<b>fanlight</b>	a window over a door
<b>flat arch</b>	an arch where the voussoirs are shaped to have horizontal edges on top and bottom
<b>finial</b>	a formal ornament at the apex of a gable or spire
<b>flute</b>	the shallow concave groove that runs vertically down the shaft of a column
<b>frieze</b>	a decorated band along the upper part of a wall
<b>hipped</b>	roof a roof that has sloping rather than vertical ends
<b>hood mould</b>	a projecting moulding over a door or window designed to throw rain off the face of the building
<b>keystone/ keyblock</b>	the central wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch that locks the arch in place
<b>lintel</b>	a horizontal support, usually stone, that sits above the opening to a window or door
<b>mansard</b>	a roof with a double slope the lower slope being steeper than the higher one
<b>modillion</b>	a small bracket, usually one of a series

<b>Glossary of architectural terms</b>	
<b>moulding</b>	a continuous groove or projection used decoratively to throw shadow on, or water away from, a wall
<b>oculus</b>	a circular window with no tracery
<b>oriel</b>	a curved bay window projecting out from an upper floor
<b>parapet</b>	a low wall along the edge of a roof
<b>pediment</b>	a low pitched gable shape over a door or window
<b>pendant</b>	decorative carved cloth, fruits etc hanging beneath a swag
<b>pilaster</b>	a shallow column attached to, and slightly projecting from, a wall
<b>plinth</b>	plain projecting surface at the base of a wall
<b>polychrome</b>	decoration created by the use of coloured bricks, stone or tiles
<b>quoin</b>	dressed stones laid up the external corners of buildings, usually in alternating large and small blocks
<b>relieving arch</b>	an arch built above an opening to redistribute the weight of the wall above
<b>rusticated</b>	of a column – square blocks which interrupt the shaft at regular intervals of a wall – chamfered edge masonry blocks laid with very deep joints
<b>segmental arch</b>	a very shallow arch [of a bay window – a very shallow curved bay]
<b>sill</b>	the horizontal base of a window surround
<b>string course</b>	a continuous decorative horizontal band projecting from a wall and usually moulded
<b>stucco</b>	a cement-type render used for facing external walls
<b>swag</b>	decoration carved to resemble a draped flower garland or fabric
<b>tympanum</b>	the semi-circular or triangular decorative wall surface over an entrance, bounded by a lintel and arch
<b>vitriified</b>	[of bricks] burned when firing producing a dark, slightly-glazed finish
<b>vousoir</b>	wedge shaped blocks or bricks which form part of an arch



## Appendix II. Boundary Review

The following boundary amendments were considered as part of the appraisal review.

Proposed Change	Issue	Consideration	Recommendation
Inclusion of 2-4 Haymarket on the site of former 1-7 Church Gate	Property part of 2 which frame the street when viewed from Clock Tower	Property dates from 1990s, not particular historic or architectural interest. Difficult to read in context of the street due to slight kink in road. Forms more part of the Streetscene of Haymarket	Do not include in area
Removal of '2d' Church Gate	Property is part of 12-14 Eastgates – a listed building within High Street CA.	Property dates from 1990s, as it forms part of 12-14 – should be in same CA as main building. Removing from CA would leave it without status	Leave in area, move to High Street when that CA is next reviewed
Removal of Industrial Zone	Block has lost the special character it had when CA designated in 2006	Loss of 2 historic buildings which formed the NW boundary to short street as well as upper floor of property on Sandacre Street has left the block with only 2 buildings of interest, which are disconnected from each other and the rest of the conservation area. Site characterised now by gap sites and surface car parks	Remove from CA
Amend boundary along rear of properties on east side of Church Gate	Current boundary reflects neither current nor historic building properties	Slight amendment to boundary to bring in in line with current and/ or historic rear property boundaries.	Redefine boundary
Inclusion of St Margaret's Church and land in-between	St Margaret's is one of the defining buildings of the CA but sits outside the boundary	Loss of buildings around the church and introduction of ring road mean the only link between church and area is a long-distance view	Do not include in CA but highlight importance in appraisal



# Appendix III. 1886 Ordnance Survey Map

