

Belgrave Gateway Character Area Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

Evidence Document

Draft v.8

**Urban Design Team
February 2020**

Contents

Part A: Townscape Analysis

1. Introduction: The Central Development Area (CDA) and Character Areas	1
2. History of the area	5
3. Heritage and Townscape Assets	8
4. Key Views and Legibility	11
5. Streets and Spaces	13
6. Existing Building Heights and Planning History	14
7. Transport Network / Movement	15
8. Active Frontages	16
9. Land Uses	18
10. Connecting Leicester Improvements	21
11. Street Hierarchy	23

Part B: Guiding Future Development

12. Growth and Development Potential	27
13. Proposed Building Heights	28
14. Future Guidance Plan	30



Part A: Townscape Analysis

1. Introduction: The Central Development Area (CDA) and Character Areas

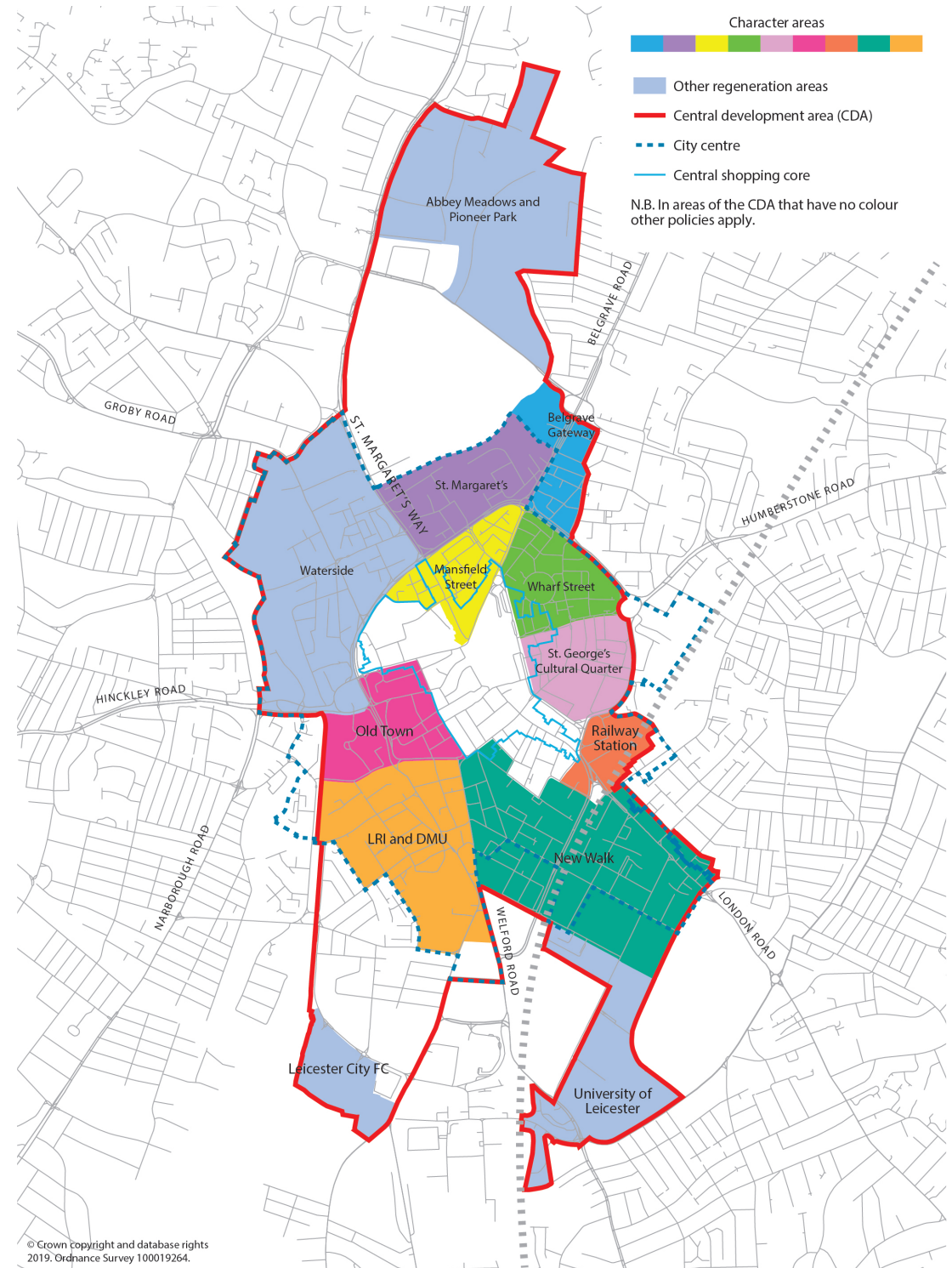
The regeneration of Leicester is a key theme of Leicester's development plan. In considering the central area of Leicester, areas have been identified which have distinctive characters and context, identity, opportunities and challenges and therefore different development objectives. These areas will also make a very important contribution to addressing the city's future housing needs.

Much of the development activity needed to enable restructuring of the economy will occur in the area within and around the City Centre, within the Central Development Area (CDA). Leicester's future economic prosperity will depend on making sure that it has the right appeal to a skilled and mobile workforce as well as being an attractive place to live and work. The quality of life, environment, housing, jobs and the cultural, leisure and retail offer of the city and central area in particular, will play a major role in this. The aim of the Central Development Area is to enable the City Council to direct, optimise and encourage investment, whilst managing development appropriately within a local context, so that they deliver high quality development, which in turn creates certainty and developer confidence.

The City Council has divided the Central Development Area (CDA) into 13 distinct areas, including 9 Character Areas and 4 other Regeneration Areas to recognise the individual context of each area and for future policy to be based on the area's defining characteristics.

There are 9 Character Areas :-

1. Railway Station;
2. Mansfield Street;
3. St. Margaret's;
4. Wharf Street;
5. Belgrave Gateway;
6. LRI and DMU;
7. St. Georges Cultural Quarter;
8. Old Town;
9. New Walk and



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Four Other Regeneration Areas:-

- Abbey Meadows and Pioneer Park;
- Waterside;
- Leicester City Football Club;
- University of Leicester.

Policy basis:

The revised NPPF (February 2019) in paragraphs 124 – 126 under Section 12. Achieving Well-designed Places states the importance of plans creating a clear design vision and expectations, at an early stage, tailored to the context and an areas defining characteristics. This will support the creation of high quality buildings and spaces and give applicants some certainty on what is likely to be acceptable. This is being achieved currently through the Waterside SPD which was adopted in 2015 which is successfully promoting and delivering regeneration, managing development to deliver high quality design which, in turn, creates certainty and developer confidence.

The 9 Character Areas have been comprehensively assessed by the City Council. A detailed 'Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance' evidence document has been prepared for each character area to respond to the requirements of the NPPF, build on the success of the Waterside SPD, and develop policies and clear guidance for development that is tailored to the circumstances and context of each character area.

It is expected that in time this guidance will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, including proposed building heights, which will also focus on directing and prioritising pro-active interventions which may include public realm, transport, heritage, streetscapes etc. and objectives and townscape guidance specific to each character area.

12. Achieving well-designed places

124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

125. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

126. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.

Extract from the NPPF (February 2019): Paragraphs 124 - 126

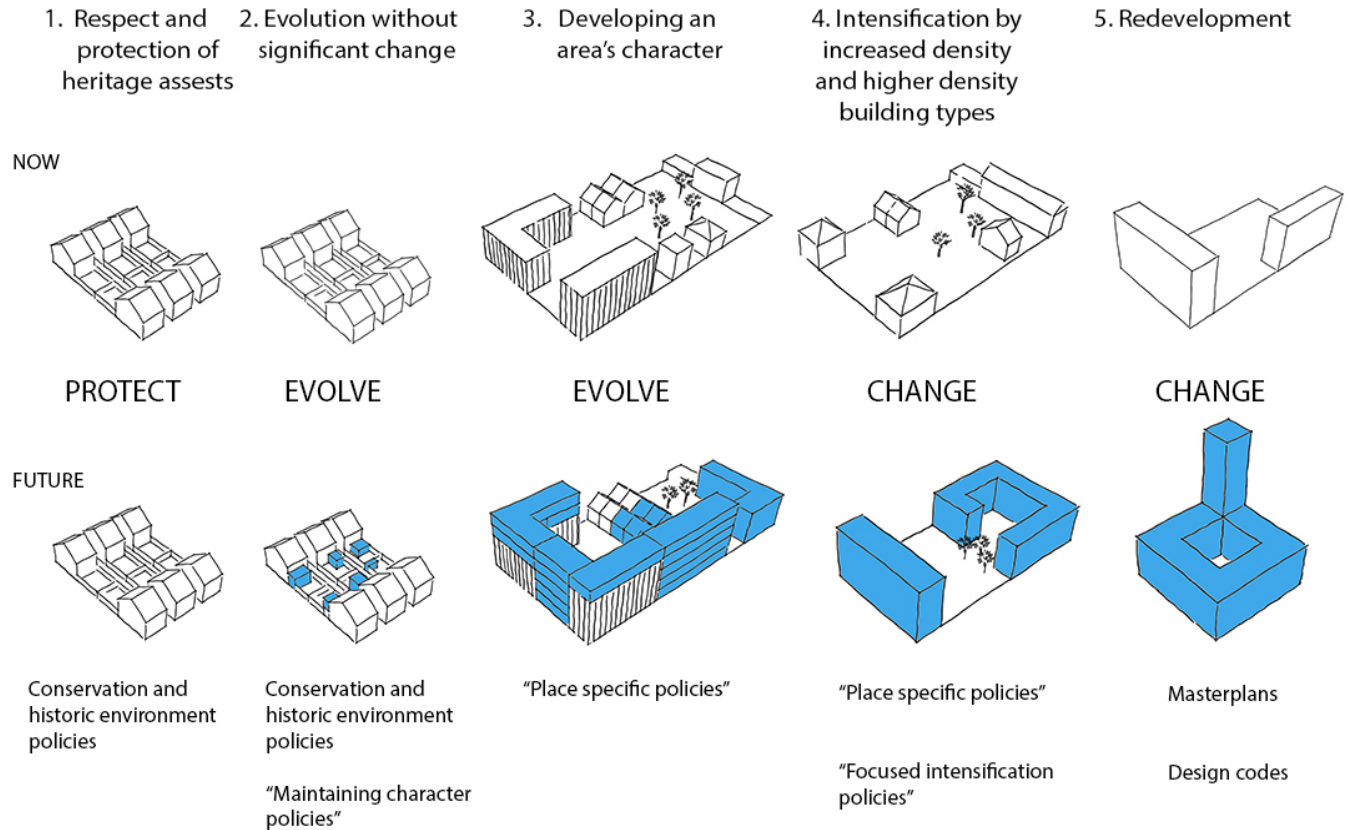
Townscape Character Management:

To inform and guide policy it is helpful to understand the level and scope of change the distinct Character Areas are likely to undergo during the plan period and beyond. Some Character Areas will be predominantly heritage assets, with few development opportunities and require protection to conserve their very distinct character. Others may undergo significant residential growth and intensification and require guidance to manage this growth cohesively and comprehensively, also considering the need for new infrastructure as residential neighbourhoods grow.

The Townscape Management Options (right) used by London Borough of Croydon in their Local Plan 2018 outlines five options to categorise and understand this level of change and how it will be managed through planning policy.

1. Respect and protection of heritage assets
2. Evolution without significant change
3. Developing an area's character
4. Intensification by increased density and higher density building types
5. Redevelopment.

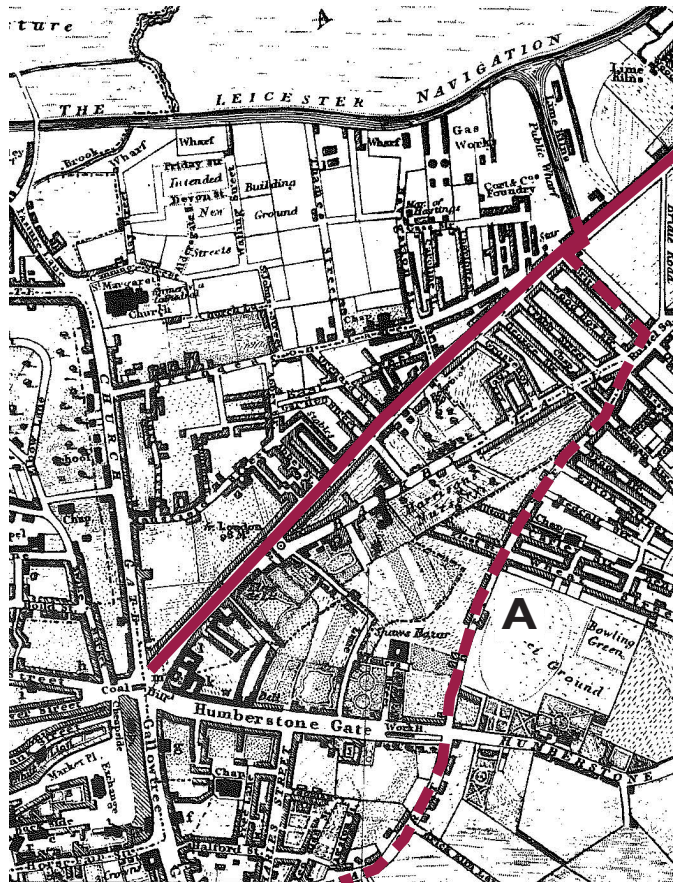
The Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance for each Character Area will establish the relevant Townscape Management Option(s) attributed to that area to develop policies and clear guidance for development that is tailored to the circumstances and context of each Character Area.



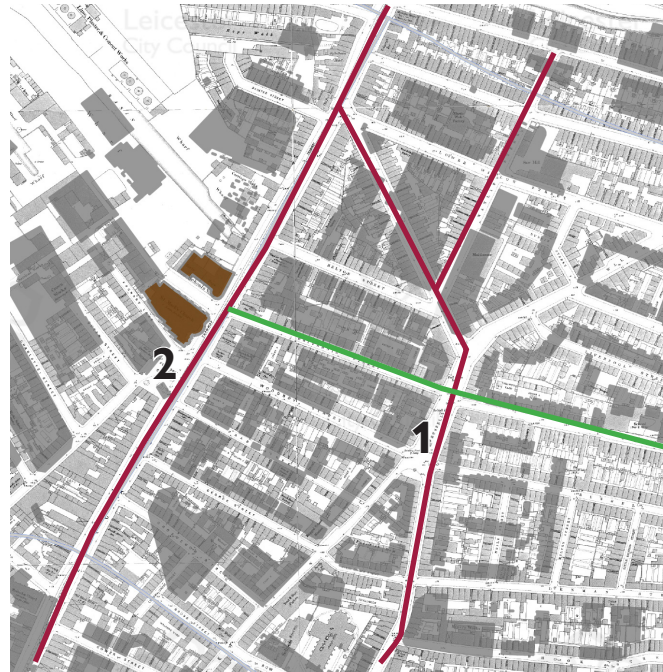
Reference: Local Plan 2018, London Borough of Croydon

2. History of the area

-  Key North-South Route
-  Key East-West Route
-  Listed building
-  Locally listed building
-  Building/spaces making a positive contribution to the townscape



1828 (Base map from Cockshaw's 1828 map of Leicester showing the first phase of development in the Wharf street Area)



1886-87



1914-16

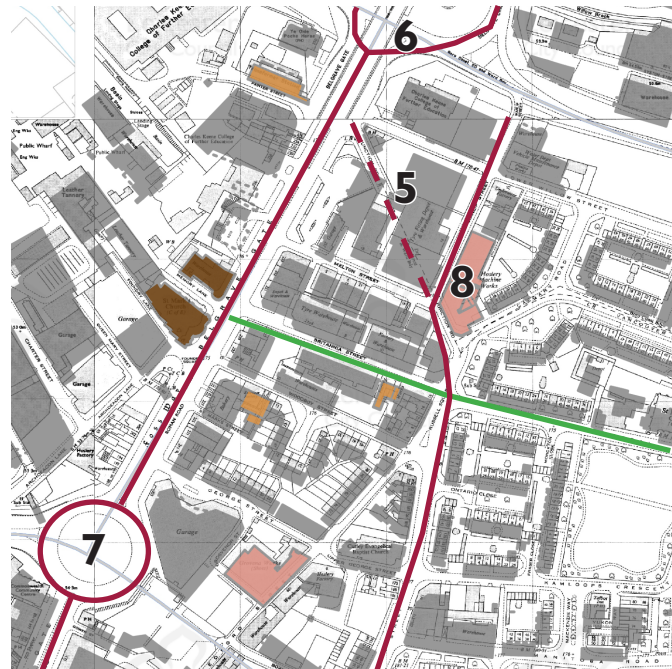


1940



1952

2. History of the area



1962

Historic plans are shown underneath the figure ground of present day development. The heritage assets are highlighted showing their relationship to the historic plans.

1828: Like today Belgrave Gate was a key north-south route though the Character Area. Plans as old as 1741 reflect this. The 1828 plan reflects this importance. Much of Belgrave Gateway was considered part of the historic Wharf Street Area. Running almost parallel to Belgrave Gate through the area was Wharf Street (A). As the name suggested, this route connected the centre of the city to the wharf.

1886-87: Belgrave Gateway had a clear urban grain during this period, with predominantly terraced streets being fronted by perimeter blocks. Russell Square (1) (at the meeting of Britannia Street, Russell Street, Bedford Street North, Wharf Street North, Willow Street, Junction Street, Chester Street and Woodboy Street) was an important central space in the character area. Foundry Square (2) forms a key public space within the setting of St Mark's Church. As the name suggests

the church was located in close proximity to large industrial buildings and iron foundries.

The city's Tramway ran along the length of Belgrave Gate. Wharf Street North, Junction Road and Wanlip Street combine to form another key North-South Route. Chester Street and Britannia Street from a key East to West connection that lead to and is terminated by St Mark's Church on Belgrave Gate. The former Victoria Model Lodging House (3) on Britannia Street and former boot and shoe factory at 7 Woodboy Street (4) were built circa 1888 and 1898 respectively.

1914-16/ 1940: There are no major changes to the area between 1887 to 1940. However, slum clearances had begun to take place in neighbouring areas.

1952: By the 1950s the slum clearances - see the plan on page 7- (which had been on going at Wharf Street since the 1930s and following bombings during World War II) had resulted in the demolition of many buildings that fronted onto Belgrave Gate. The grain of Belgrave Gate became more fragmented, the tramway was removed and Belgrave Gate became primarily a route for motor vehicles.

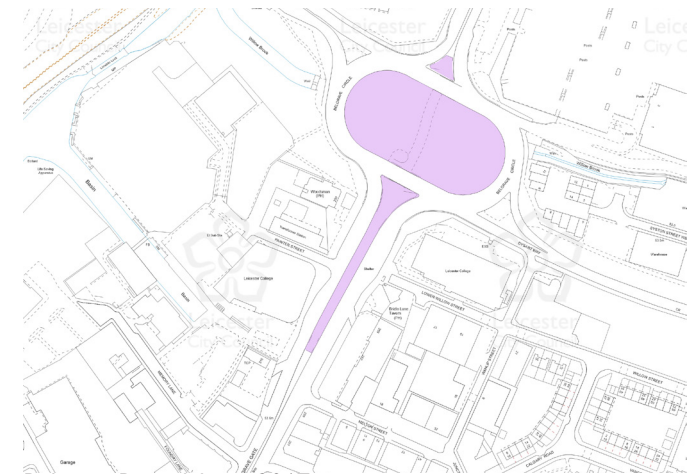
During the 1950s the clearance of slum housing to the east of the Character Area took place. The two storey houses were to be replaced by 4 storey maisonettes - leading to a total of 727 new dwellings. These new dwellings formed the St Matthews Estate.

Just to the north of the Character Area on Belgrave Road, Belgrave Road Railway station was located. The main services from the station were to Peterborough and Grantham, with special summer services to Mablethorpe and Skegness. After being opened in 1882 the station saw regular services, which ended in 1953 and summer specials ending in 1962



Belgrave Road Railway Station opening 1882, Leicester County Council

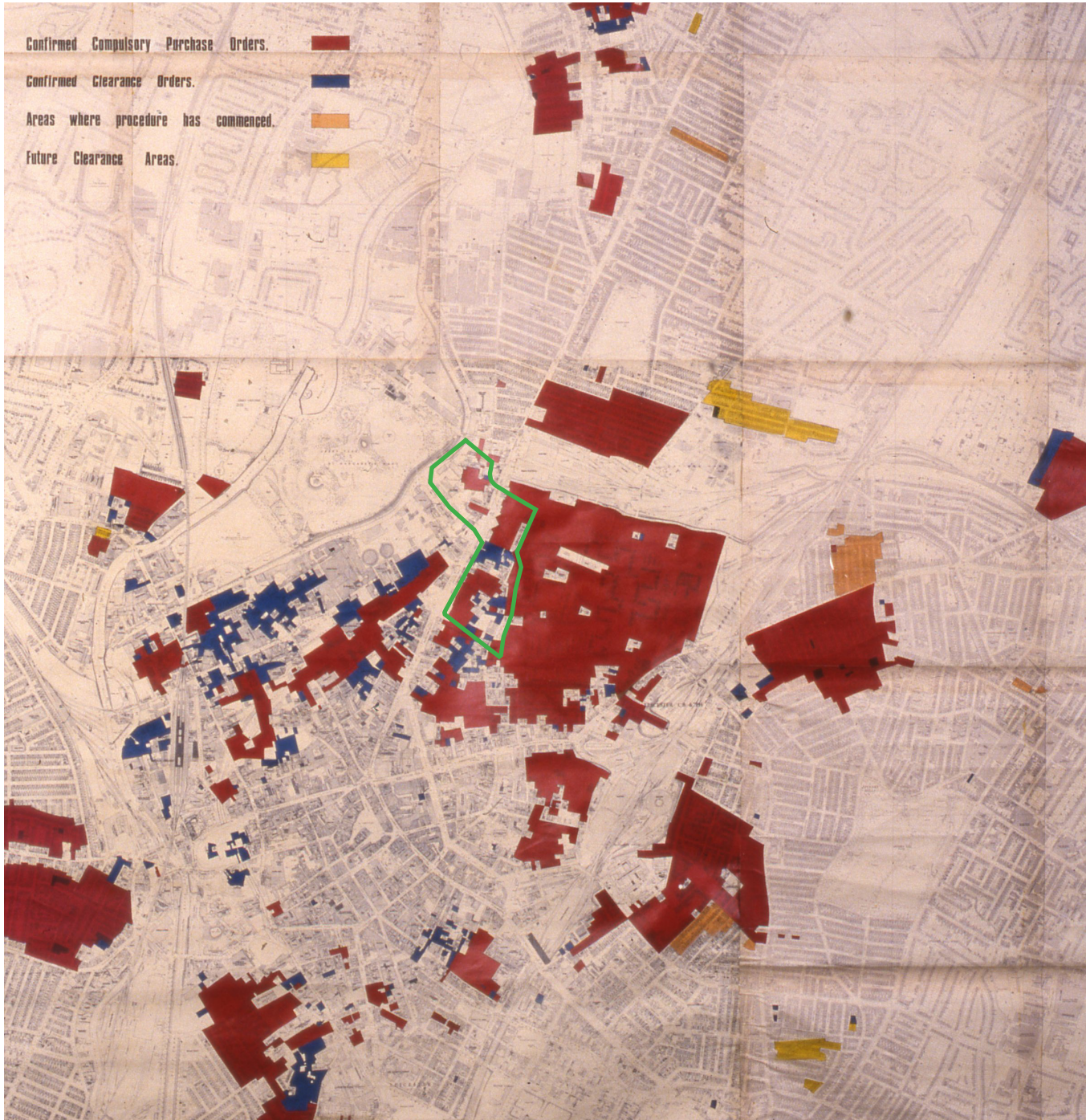
1962: the plan shows, there were major changes to the road and street network through the Character Area. Whilst new terraced housing had been built on Woodboy Street, the 1962 map shows a clear change in grain and character on the blocks to the east of the Character Area due to the change in style of the dwellings. Many streets (such as Liverpool Street, Russell Street and Chester Street) were lost during this period. Junction Road (5) was built on, thus severing a key connection between Belgrave Gate and Russell Square. The orientation of Junction Road also explains the geometry of the frontage of the factory building located at 1 Junction Street (8).



Belgrave Roundabout 2017

The area now consisted of many larger warehouse and factory buildings and the large Charles Keene College of Further Education (named after businessman and Leicester City Council Alderman Charles Keene). Belgrave Gate, to accommodate motor vehicles, was widened. A further sign of the street network now being designed for the motor vehicle in preference of pedestrians was the construction of Belgrave Circle and (as part of the ring road) Burleys Roundabout. In the following decade flyovers were constructed over the roundabouts and in doing so caused great detriment to the character of Belgrave Gateway.

In 2014, as part of connecting Leicester the Belgrave flyover was removed and improvements made to pedestrian connections across the roundabout.



Map of Leicester Slum Clearances with character area boundary.

3. Heritage and Townscape Assets

Additional buildings which make a positive contribution are identified. They are buildings which are not listed, locally listed or within Conservation Areas; however, this classification reflects their importance as part of the townscape of the character area. As such there is a general presumption against the demolition of these buildings.

There are a handful of heritage assets within and around the Belgrave Gateway Area. The main heritage assets are the Grade II* listed St Mark's Church (1) and its Grade II listed school (1i). The church was first built in 1870s and was at the time surrounded by large industrial buildings. St Mark's served one of the main working class parishes of Leicester.

There are three locally listed buildings in the Character Area. The former Boot and Shoe Factory on Woodboy Street (2) was built in 1898 for G. Wilson & Co Ltd boot manufacturers. The building was an important part of Leicester's boot and shoe industry in the 19th and 20th Century. The chimney to the rear of this property is part of the same listing. The old Transformer Station on Painter Street (3) was built in the 1930s in order to change voltage levels between high transmission voltages and lower distribution voltages, between the generating station and consumers. The building was likely connected to the LERO Building (which was located adjacent to the building prior to its demolition) which provided electricity for the city's tramway system. The former Victoria Model Lodging House on Britannia Street (4) was built circa 1887 for its proprietor Mr Harry Wilkinson to the designs of architect Thomas Hind. The lodging house would have provided cheap accommodation for immigrants, predominantly Irish, whilst working within the city. The building has to its front a pair of high-quality ceramic panels that depict an Englishman, an Irishman, a Scotsman and a Welshman.

In addition there are three buildings that have been identified as buildings that make a positive contribution to the townscape: 9 Wanlip Street (5) is a two storey former industrial building. It is connected to 1 Junction Street (6), also a former industrial building. 1 Junction Street terminates the vista from the key north connection along Wharf Street North to Russell Square and reflects the former street geometry in its form. 1-5 Grosvenor Works at 1 Grosvenor Street (7) is recognised as a three storey building making a positive townscape contribution.

It is important to note that the Character Area is bordered by Abbey Park (a Grade II* registered Park and Garden) to the north west.



3. Heritage and Townscape Assets

Archaeological Alert Area:

Leicester has a clearly defined historic core. The historic core formed part of the town's defences, first established in the Roman era and re-adopted in the Medieval Period. The historic core of the city centre is defined as an Archaeological Alert Area and indicates where development is most likely to have an impact upon archaeological remains. Approximately half of the Character Area (predominantly in the south) lies within the archaeological alert area.

Building Frontages:

1. St Mark's Church
2. The former Boot and Shoe Factory on Woodboy Street
3. The old Transformer Station on Painter Street
4. The former Victoria Model Lodging house on Britannia Street
5. 9 Wanlip Street
6. 1 Junction Street
7. 1-5 Grosvenor Works at 1 Grosvenor Street



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



The junction of Metcalf Street & Lead Street, Leicester. Lead Street's junction with Carley Street is in the distance, pre 1950s. These streets no longer exist (Leicester Mercury)



William Hughes' shop on the corner of Woodboy Street and Russell Square, 1926 (Leicester Mercury)



A typical court of back to back houses off Belgrave Gate (Wharf Street Revisited, Cynthia Brown)



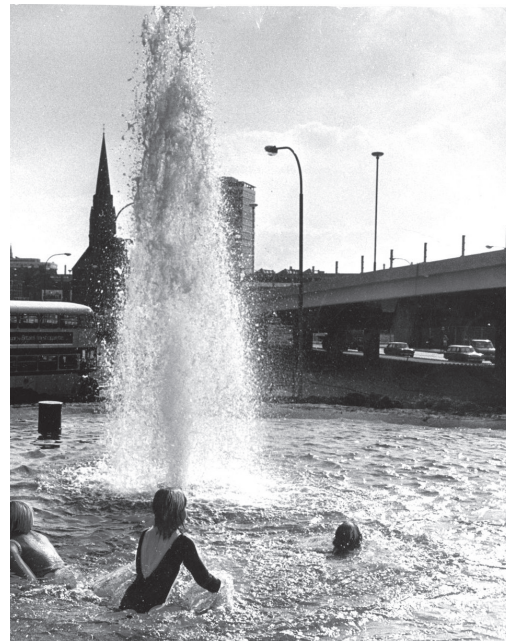
Russell Square 1950s (BBC)



Belgrave Gate, 1954 (Leicester Mercury)



Construction of Belgrave Road flyover 1973 (Leicester Mercury)



Water fountain on Belgrave Circle, adjacent to the flyover 1974 (Leicester Mercury).



Communal Courtyard, St Matthews Estate Maisonettes 1965 (Leicester Mercury)

4. Key Views and Legibility

Key Views into, out of and within the Belgrave Gateway Character Area have been identified:

1. The view north towards St Mark's Church from the public space to the south west of St Mark's Church.
2. The view south along Shackleton Street that is terminated by the locally listed former Boot and Shoe Factory on Woodboy Street
3. The view west along Lower Willow Street towards the locally listed Transformer Station

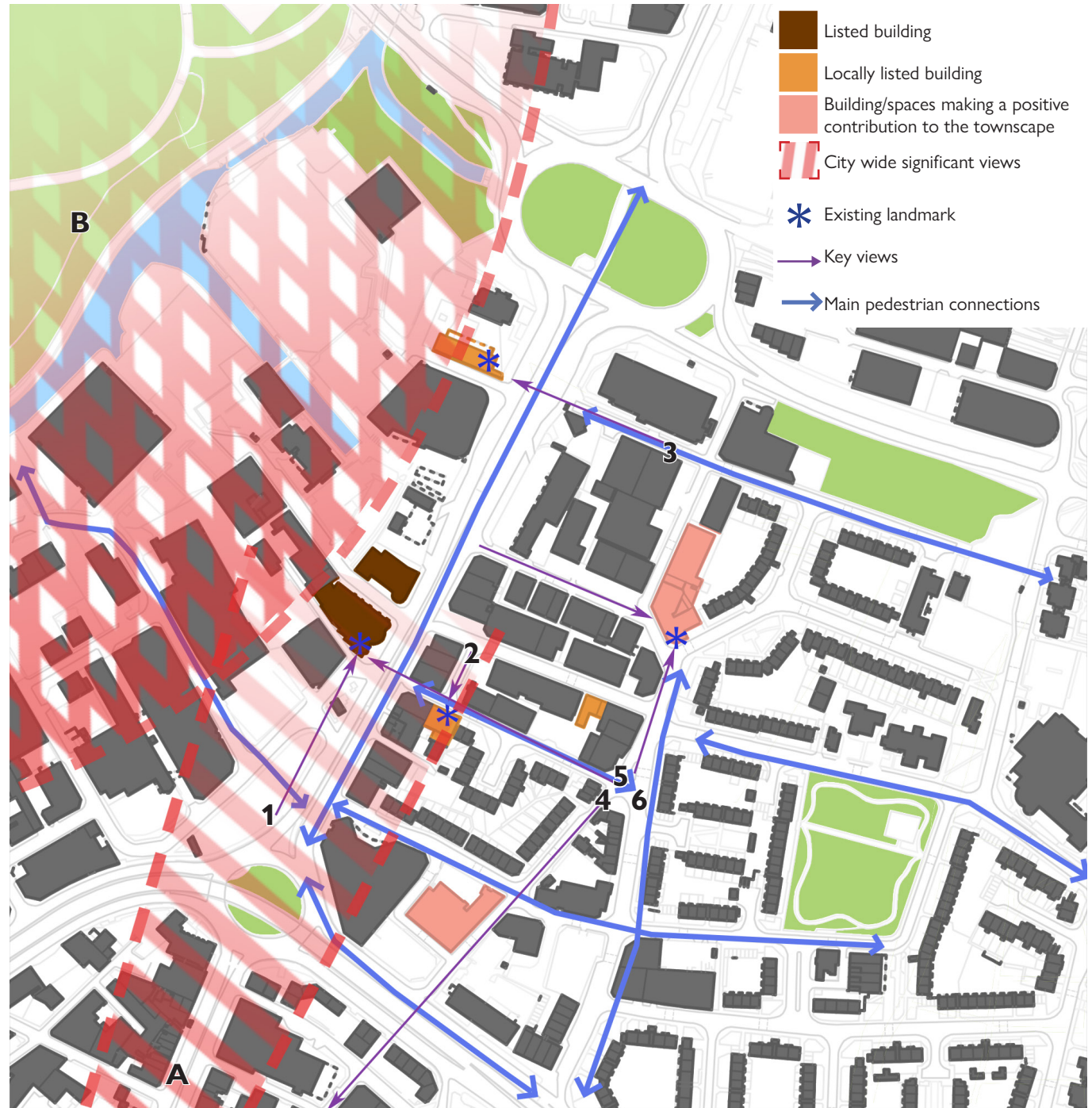
Views 4 and 5, taken from Russell Square both complement each other and form unique key views from both within and outside of the Character Area. View 4 looking west along Woodboy Street towards the spire of St Mark's Church. View 5 looking south west along Bedford Street north, out of the Character Area towards the spire of St Martin's Cathedral in Old Town. The point at which these views originate is the area which was Russell Square.

6. View 6 looking north along Russell Square (part of a key pedestrian route) is terminated by the frontage of 1 Junction Street.

In addition to the 6 key views, there are views and vistas that are of city wide significance

A) The view originating from The Clock Tower looking north east along Belgrave Gate towards St Mark's Church.

B) The wide view out from Abbey Park into the Character Area.





1



2



3



4



5



6

5. Streets and Spaces

Successful places have well enclosed, active and connected streets, well defined perimeter blocks and well designed public spaces. Strong frontages, local markers, nodes, gateways and public spaces are elements of the townscape that together contribute to the familiarity of a place, making it easily understandable to find your way. They also contribute to the character of a place, its story, its distinctiveness, which forges a sense of belonging and pride.

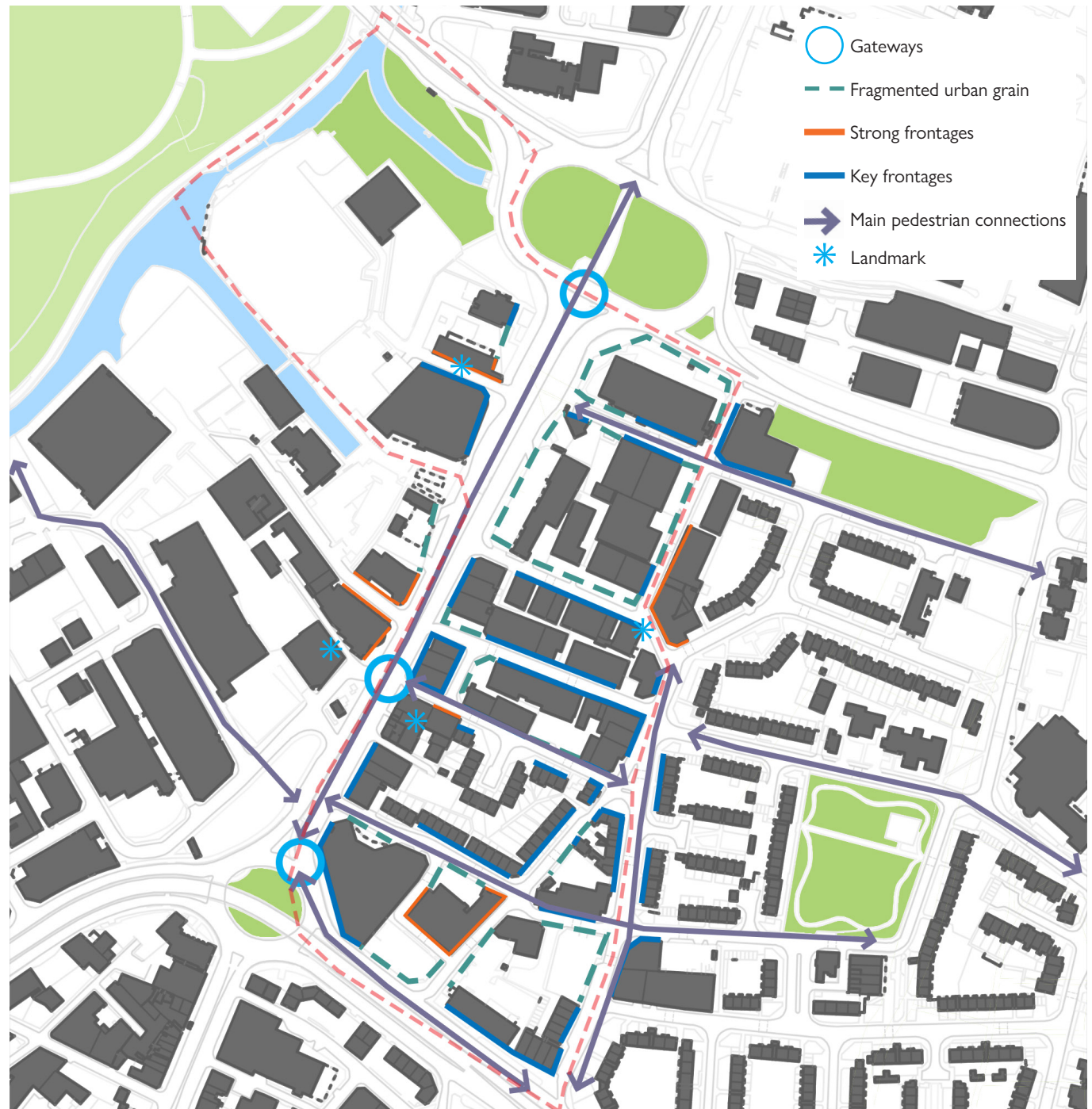
Fragmented urban grain identifies locations where perimeter blocks have been lost over time to the detriment of the townscape. Strong frontages are those frontages where both the building line and the building are important to the townscape. Key frontages are those frontages which provide a well defined edge to streets and spaces and so the building line is important but not the building.

While the south of Belgrave Gate's frontage does show some signs of a consistent building line, the Character Area suffers from a fragmented urban grain in the north, where many large industrial buildings set back from the road with surface car parking. The street design and roundabouts have been designed with motor vehicles in mind.

There are two key spaces adjacent to the Character Area; Abbey Park (a Grade II* registered park and garden) and Belgrave Roundabout (following Connecting Leicester improvements). The improvements to Belgrave Roundabout have resulted in a well used pedestrian connection. Wharf Street North and Russell Square form a main pedestrian north - south connection.

The spire of St Mark's Church is very important in terms of legibility in the area.

As a node within the Belgrave Gateway area, there is potential for Russell Square to be enhanced, recognising its importance and distinctiveness to this area. Adjacent to the Character Area's boundary is Foundry Square that has potential to be a key public space. Moreover, this square, and development fronting onto it, also has the potential to improve the setting of St Mark's Church.



6. Existing Building Heights and Planning History

Context:

The heights shown are based on 1 storey at 3m. Given the variety of storey heights that is possible within a Character Area it was necessary to calibrate across the city centre. Therefore, a heritage asset of 4 storeys may be shown at 5 or 6 storeys to reflect the higher floor to ceiling heights and there may be differences between residential and commercial uses.

The majority of buildings within the Belgrave Gateway, be it residential or commercial, are below 4 storeys in height. The maisonettes along Wharf Street North are 4 storeys in height. At a height of 5 and 6 storeys Leicester College (A) is the tallest building in the Area. However, in terms of structure, the spire of St Mark's Church (B) is the tallest structure (with a height of 51m) and is prominent on the skyline of Belgrave Gateway and an important townscape marker for legibility.

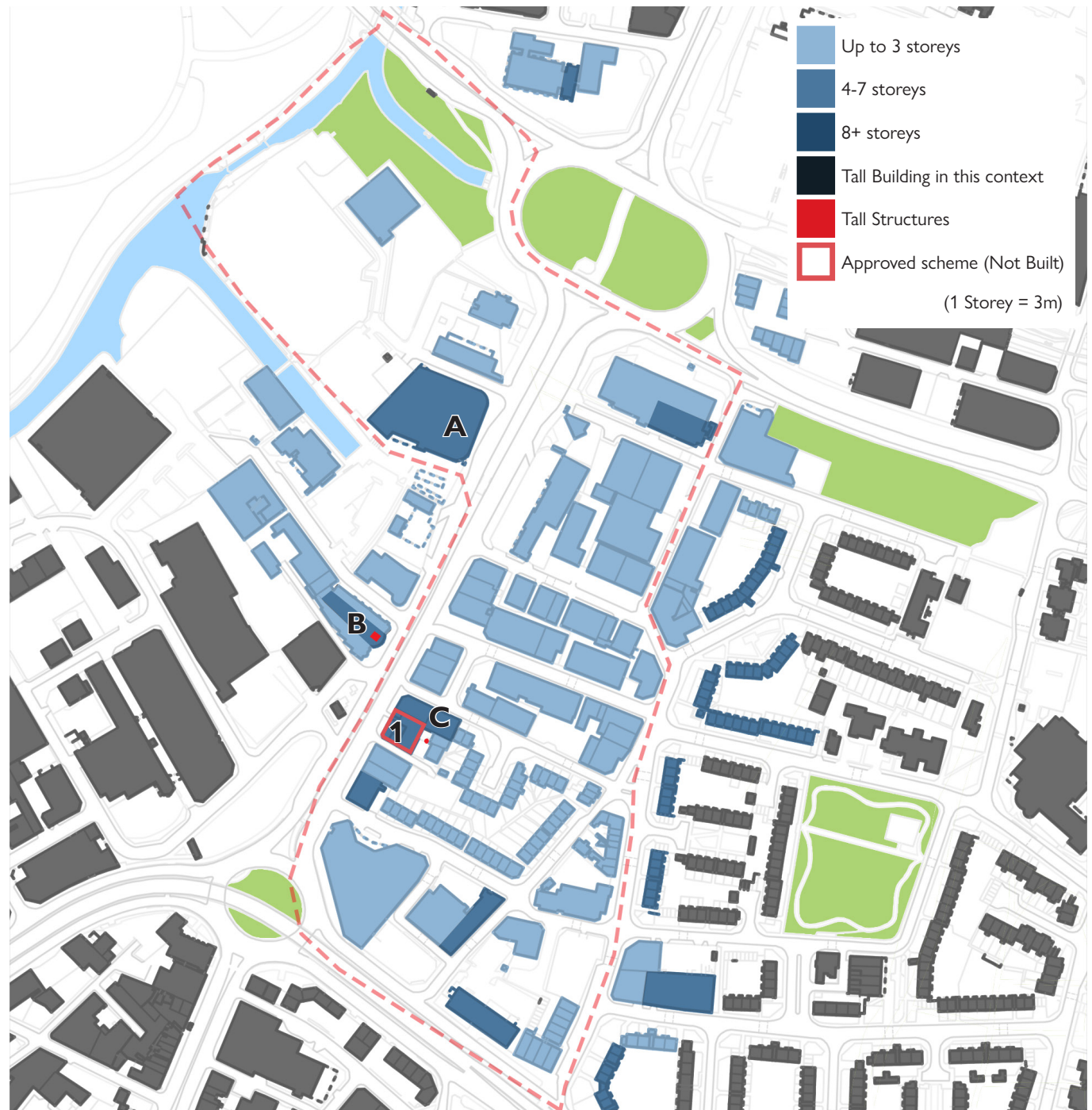
At the rear of the locally listed former Boot and Shoe Factory on Woodboy Street (C) the factory's chimney is a tall structure (also locally listed) in relation to the immediate context.

Planning History:

The planning history within this section reflects the most up to date information at the time of publishing.

The Character Area has a low level of planning activity . There is only one site that has an approved scheme:

(1) 20170175- Demolition of existing building; Construction of a six storey building with three shop units on the ground floor (CLASS A1) and 25 flats (25 X 1BED) (CLASS C3) on the upper floors (Subject106 Agreement) at 227-231 Belgrave Gate, Dee Kay House



7. Transport Network / Movement

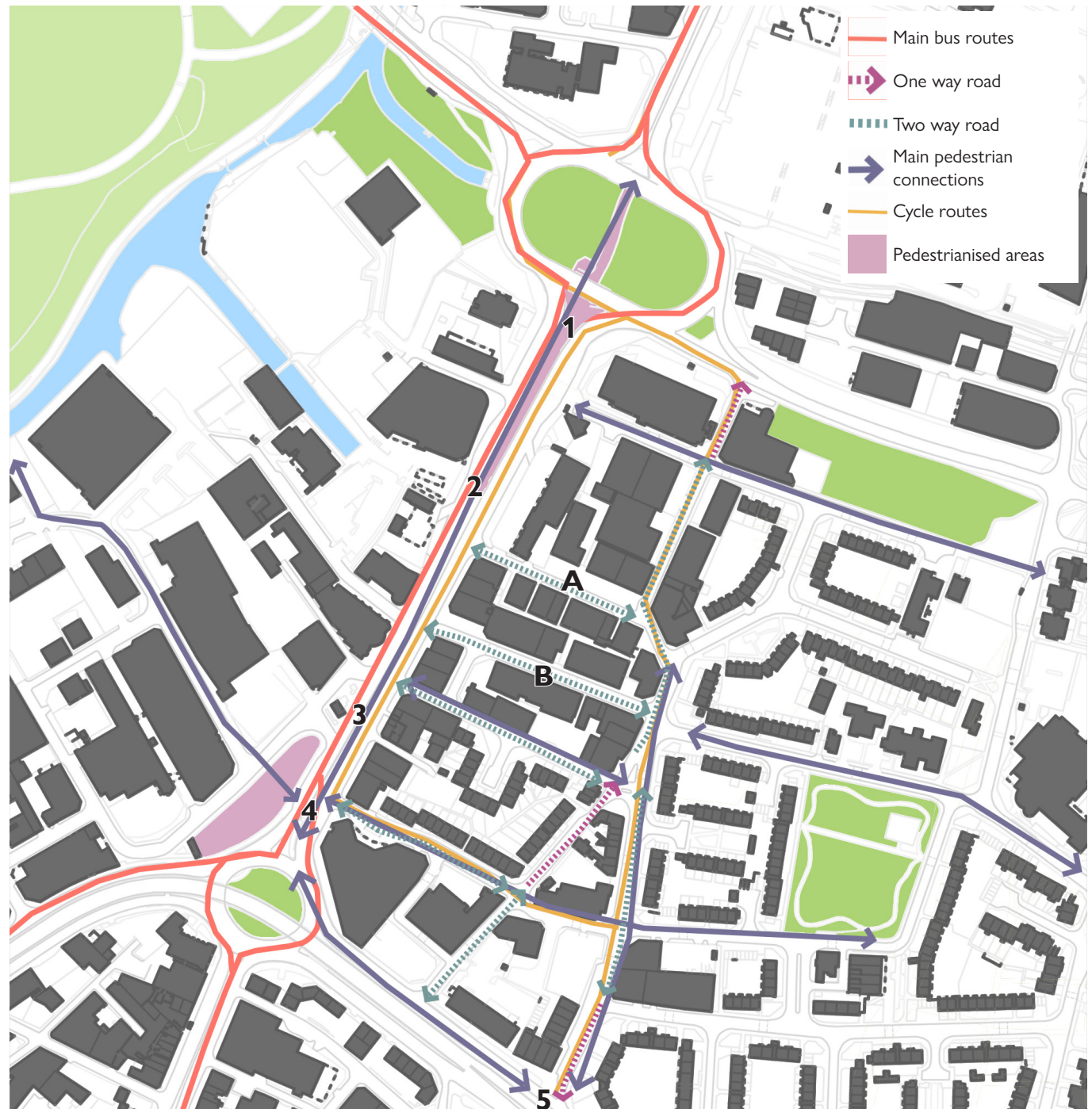
Cycling routes are taken from the Leicester Cycling Map and includes cycling infrastructure relevant to the city centre; on road cycle lanes, off road routes, bus lanes where cycling is permitted, pedestrian streets and recommended on road routes. Future cycling infrastructure guaranteed to be delivered is also identified. Bus routes are taken from bus operators' information in Leicester.

The main pedestrian connections are identified through a combination of local knowledge, observation, previous research undertaken by Leicester City Council and Space Syntax™ online information.

Belgrave Gate is a major (if not main) route for pedestrians, buses, cyclists and cars in the area. Consequently, the Character Area is well served by buses. Leicester College has two bus stops (in the north of the street) and the southern portion of the street has two bus stops adjacent to George Street.

From observations during site visits and research from Space Syntax™, Melton Street (A) and Britannia Street (B) appear to be underused by pedestrians. The Streets and Spaces section in the document showed that these streets have a fragmented urban grain. Combined with a limited number of active frontages, this suggests that these streets are not desired pedestrian routes. It should also be noted that Britannia Street is not located as close to pedestrian crossing points across Belgrave Gate, unlike Woodboy Street and George Street. This may also be a further possibility as to why Britannia Street appears to have a lower pedestrian footfall.

Following improvements to Belgrave Gate and roundabout, pedestrians have improved connectivity across the roundabout and through the Character Area. However, despite Wharf Street North/Russell Square being a key pedestrian and cycle route, it is in need of improvement and (upon observation during site visits) seems to be used by cars as a short cut through the area. There is only one north-south crossing point in Belgrave Gateway Character Area across the ring road, at Wharf Street South (5). As a result, the Burleys Flyover limits the pedestrian connectivity between the Belgrave Gateway and Wharf Street Character Area. In comparisons, Belgrave Gateway has 4 pedestrian and cycle crossing points that aid east west connectivity through the area (points 1-4). This provides the opportunity (especially point 4) for residents from the St Matthews Estate to access Abbey Park and also the St Margarets Character Area.



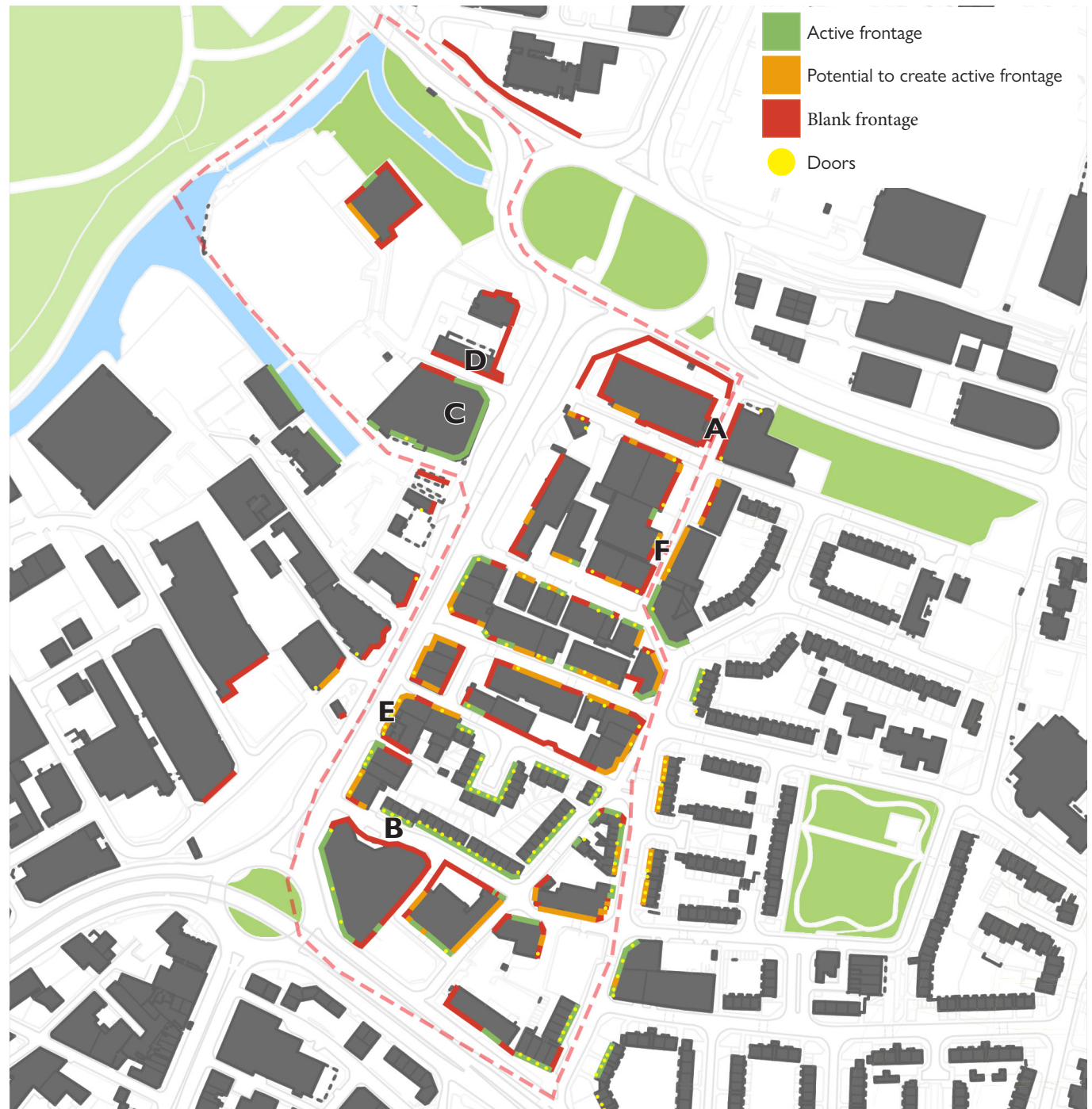
8. Active Frontages

Active frontages are important to creating successful places. They are street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floor of buildings. This quality is enhanced where the front façade of buildings, including the main entrance faces and opens towards the street. They are vital to creating activity and vitality to an area and a sense of safety with well overlooked streets. Blank frontages provide no active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floor of buildings. Frontages in existing buildings could contain blocked up or screened windows and doors for various reasons.

Opportunities for reversing these changes and opening up façades have been identified as providing potential active frontages. The frequency of doors also assist in establishing the likely level of activity and interaction within a street.

There is a high concentration of blank frontages in the area. Certainly in the streets in between Russell Square and Belgrave Gate many of the streets do not feel overlooked. The high number of blank frontages are caused by numerous factors such as surface level car parking, large warehouse and industrial buildings with delivery and services being accessed from roads such as Wanlip Street (A). The terrace houses along the north side of George Street (B), along the south of Woodboy Street and along Bedford Street North have good active frontages and doors onto the street. Thus balancing out the blank frontages from the southern side of George Street.

The Ground floor of the College (C) has windows on the ground floor. However, the scale of the windows appear domestic, and as the photograph shows, the window sill is just above person height. Consequently, this results in a ground floor that is not active. With a long, almost fully blank wall surrounding the car park and blank frontage along Willow Street, the building contributes limited activity to the street. The former Transformer Station (D) with a blank gable wall, blank side wall along Painter Street (with filled in windows- see photograph) and a blank boundary wall along Belgrave Gate, means the building provides no activity to the street. Along Belgrave Gate there are ground floor retail units (E) that have partial opaque glazing that limit the effectiveness of the active frontage. Minimal changes would result in an active frontage. Additionally, 9 Wanlip Street (F) has large openings that could provide excellent surveillance, but are covered with metal grills.



The following page shows images from the examples named above.



A



B



C



D



E



F

9. Land Uses

Ground floor:

There are a variety of uses within the Belgrave Gateway Area. There was a great number of manufacturing and industrial uses in the first half of the 20th century. The industrial heritage of the area is still evident today with many of the land uses within the area being industrial.

Within the north of the Character Area where the Abbey Park Campus of Leicester College is situated there are some buildings with an educational use, such as the Technology and Engineering Centre. The retail uses are located mainly along Belgrave Gate.

There is limited domestic use in the area. Most of the domestic use is in the south east. These are shown on the plan as the terraced houses on the block between Woodboy Street and George Street.

Despite low planning activity, Belgrave Gateway is expected to evolve over time and this evolution must be carefully managed so that these mix of uses continues to thrive. The retention of employment uses within the northern and eastern portions of the area is important. Redevelopment for residential use would only be encouraged along the Belgrave Gate frontage.



9. Land Uses

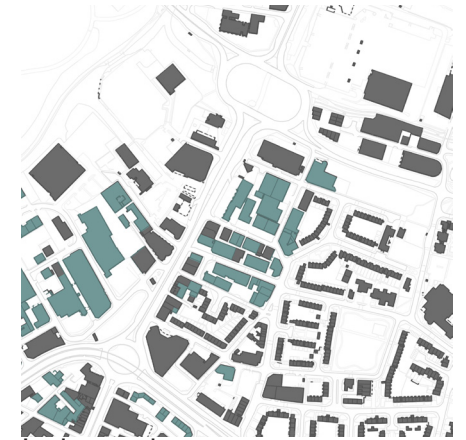
(Including above ground distribution)



Domestic



Community



Industrial



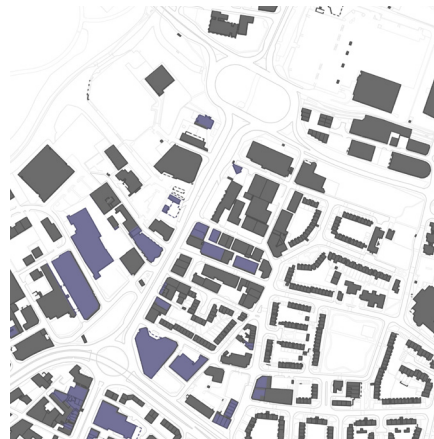
Leisure



Office



Places of Worship



Retail



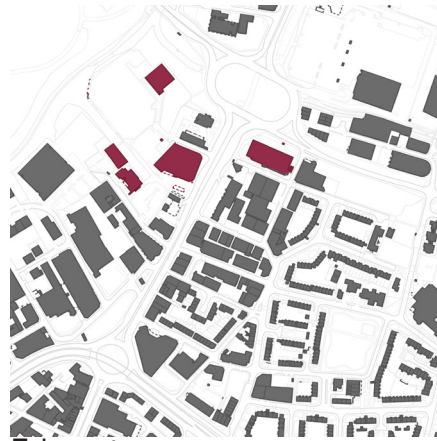
Utilities



Medical

9. Land Uses

(Including above ground distribution)



Education



Miscellaneous

10 Connecting Leicester Improvements

Connecting Leicester is a vision to create and provide a connected, safe and family friendly city centre. The City Mayor is committed to creating a thriving heart of the city that takes away barriers and greatly improves the connections between key places within the city, including the 'hidden gems' as part of Leicester's story, and shopping, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities. Connecting Leicester is a series of key projects bringing together special buildings and places, reducing the dominance of roads and helping to create an attractive, pedestrian friendly environment.

The Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) is a Government fund with the aim of driving up productivity and spread prosperity through investment in public and sustainable transport in some of the largest English city regions between 2019 and 2023. The Fund is focused on intra-city connectivity, making it quicker and easier for people to get around and access jobs in some of England's biggest cities. The Council's TCF bid has progressed to the next stage to develop packages of proposals to support growth and prosperity and meet the Council's objectives regarding improvements, for example, to public transport, cycling, air quality. Potential schemes are highlighted.

In terms of proposed Connecting Leicester works, improvements have been proposed to the Burleys Way roundabout. A new shared footpath and cycleway running underneath the flyover have been proposed. This should provide a more direct and safer route along Belgrave Gate. The existing Lotus Flowers public art is likely to be relocated to nearby Archdeacon Lane next to Charter Street, where a new bridge has been installed to provide an additional entrance into Abbey Park.

North of Burleys Way, a separate cycleway and footpath will be created along the central reservation, to link in with improvements made to Belgrave Circle following the removal of the flyover. This will require the removal of the existing inbound bus lane between Melton Street and St Mark's Street.

Belgrave Flyover was demolished in 2014, and the ageing, 1970s concrete structure replaced with a roundabout, landscaping, cycle lanes and pathways which created an improved pedestrian connection between the Character Area and the north east of the city.



10 Connecting Leicester Improvements

Images 1 show the Burleys Way underpass as it is currently and image 2 shows the proposed underpass following the Connecting Leicester intervention.

Images 3 shows the Belgrave Flyover looking north from Belgrave Gate and image 4 shows the Belgrave roundabout following the Connecting Leicester improvements and the installation of a new pedestrianised connection between Belgrave Gate and Belgrave Road.



1. Existing image of Burleys Way roundabout and underpass.



2. CGI Image of Burkets Way roundabout and underpass following the proposed Connecting Leicester improvements (Leicester City Council)



3. View north from Belgrave Gate to the Belgrave Flyover (before it was demolished) (Leicester City Council)



4. Image of Belgrave Gate Roundabout following the flyover's demotion and Connecting Leicester Improvements (Leicester City Council)

11. Street Hierarchy

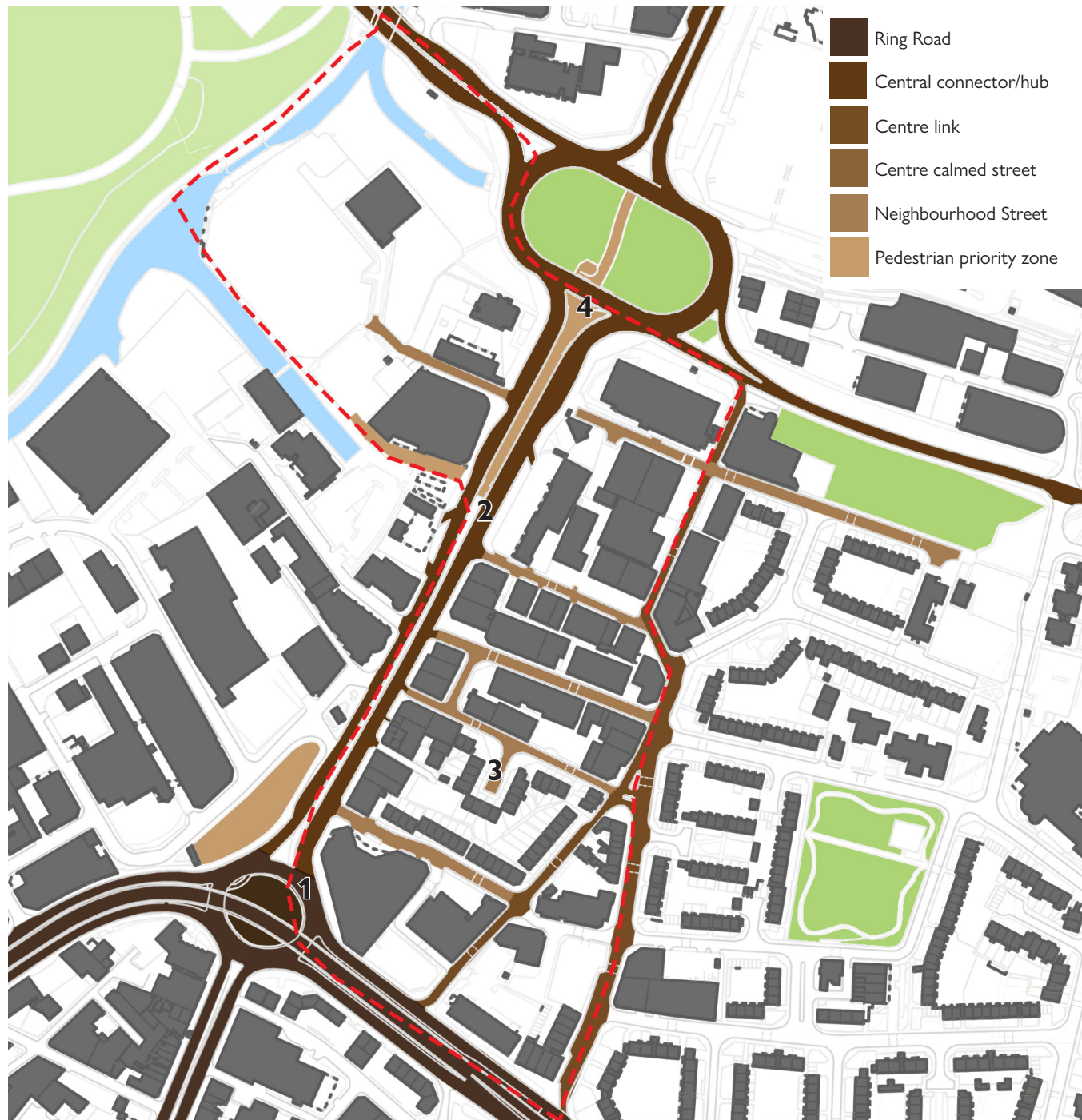
The street typologies or street character types are taken from the Leicester Street Design Guide (2019) and are representative of the street types found within the city centre. Although, not all street types will fit perfectly into each category it is useful to understand in each Character Area where priority has been given to vehicle movement, through the higher order roads (ring road, centre connector / hub) and those which are lower order roads (neighbourhood streets, centre calmed streets, pedestrian priority zones) which do and could prioritise their place function and meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. As stated on Manual for Streets (DfT 2007) 'streets make up the greatest part of the public realm. Better designed streets therefore contribute significantly to the quality of the built environment and play a key role in the creation of sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities.'

Important for place making is the contribution different street character types within a street hierarchy make to enable people to find their way around and easily understand a place. For example, the informality and lower building heights of a lower order neighbourhood street provides a very different townscape and feel to a formal tree lined boulevard (centre connector).

The highest order streets within the Belgrave Gateway Character Area are predominantly located around the Area's periphery. Belgrave Gate (2) and roundabout and Burleys Way (1), along with the flyover, in the south of the area is part of the city centre's ring road. The ring road does form a barrier between the Belgrave Gateway, Wharf Street and St Margarets Character Areas. On the eastern boundary of the Character Area, Wharf Street North, Bedford Street North and Russell Square are centre link roads.

The streets within the centre of the Character Area are the lowest order streets and are classified as neighbourhood streets (3). Predominantly, these streets are used by residents accessing their homes and also used by delivery vans and trucks accessing service entrances for the industrial and retail units.

The public improvements to the north of Belgrave Gate and around Belgrave roundabout have resulted in pedestrian priority zones (PPZ) that allow for pedestrians to have a key connection into and out of the area. There is also a PPZ following public realm enhancements to the public space St Mark's Church.



On the right hand side, this page shows examples of the existing streets hierarchies referred to earlier in this section.



1. Ring Road, Burleys Way/ St Matthews Way



2. Central Connector/Hub, Belgrave Gate



3. Neighbourhood Street, Woodboy Street



4. (Pedestrian Priority Zone), PPZ, Belgrave Roundabout



Part B: Guiding Future Development

Part B: Guiding Future Development

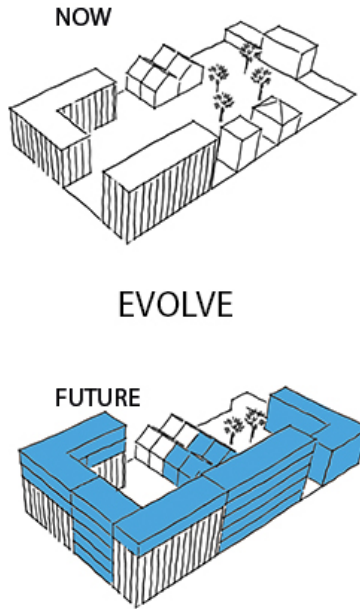
Part A Townscape Analysis outlines the comprehensive townscape assessment undertaken for each of the 9 character areas. Part B Guiding Future Development, is based on the findings of this assessment and identifies criteria to guide and manage development across the whole character area to provide a comprehensive and cohesive plan. The guidance is tailored to the circumstances and context of each character area reinforcing and responding to their unique qualities and opportunities, the level of townscape management required and their individual contributions to the Central Development Area (CDA).

Development guidance includes;

- criteria to guide new development shared across all character areas
 - criteria to guide new development specific to each character area
 - areas of focus for criteria
 - opportunities for improvements
 - recommended interventions to be considered in future policy, plans and infrastructure delivery.
- (future supplementary planning guidance will identify these improvements and interventions to be delivered with associated timescales)
- These will be shown on a 'Future Guidance Plan' within each SPD

The Belgrave Gateway Character Area falls under category 3 in the Townscape Character Area Management Plan. Widespread redevelopment is not expected. The emphasis will be on place specific policies to help guide a carefully managed development and evolution of the area's character

3. Developing an area's local character



12. Growth and Development Potential

It is essential to understand the growth and development potential of each Character Area and the likely rate and scale of change for the Local Plan period. This will assist in establishing priorities and the level of townscape management required. To do this we have considered the level of planning activity in the area and the amount of large plots under one or few ownerships and sites with redevelopment potential, also referred to as 'soft sites'. Sites in Leicester City Council ownership are also identified but their inclusion does not suggest future development or redevelopment. Views on other areas/sites with development potential would be welcomed to inform the progression of the Local Plan and Supporting Guidance.

There are few large plots or potential development sites and there is a very low level of planning activity in the Belgrave Gateway Character Area. To date, only one scheme has been approved but has not been built. This scheme is for the demolition of an existing three storey building and for the construction of a six storey building. It will provide 25 residential units.

Significant redevelopment and change is not expected in the short term. The retention of employment uses (especially within the north and east of the Character Area) will be a priority. In order to retain the employment uses, residential uses will be delivered through frontage redevelopment along Belgrave Gate.



13. Proposed Building Heights

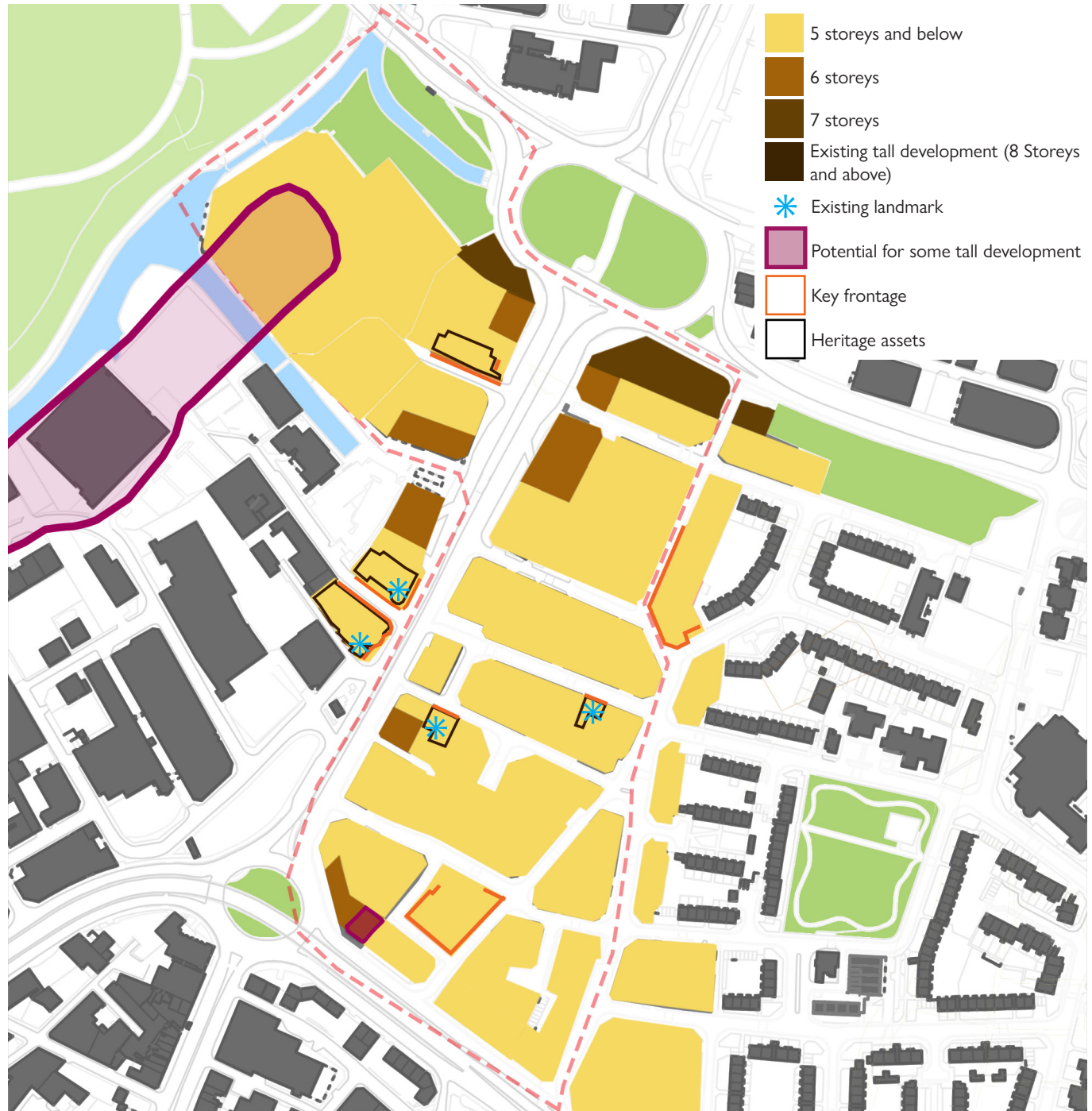
The maximum proposed building heights are based on townscape analysis undertaken in Part A and where required following more detailed site testing, for example, with the city 3D model. The heights shown are based on 1 storey at 3m, as stated in Part A and therefore the parameter to be used should be the overall parameter of height measured in metres and not the storey height. For example, a commercial use requiring an increased floor to ceiling height above 3m within an area identified as 5 storeys (15m) will use the 15m as the guiding height. This may result in a commercial development of 4 storeys. Notwithstanding the proposed heights, each proposal will need to be considered in relation to its context.

As outlined in the draft Local Plan Tall Development Policy, Where there is an existing tall building within the Character Area it should not be assumed that a replacement tall building on that site, should it come forward, is acceptable. The proposed development heights reflect the Council's up to date view. Taller developments will only be permitted where exceptional design quality can be demonstrated including a positive ground floor relationship to the street and the surrounding context, including the setting of heritage assets. They should comply with the Local Plan Tall Development Policy and Tall Development SPD.

With a combination of residential, commercial and industrial buildings in the Area, Belgrave Gateway has a predominantly low scale with existing heights mostly falling between 2-4 storey. Grade II* St Mark's Church and it's setting should not be affected by tall development. Considering key views along the Belgrave Gate frontage opposite the church, development should therefore not exceed an eaves height of 5 storeys, and certainly not exceed the height of the ridge of the church. The church is a key existing landmark and should remain the dominant feature from a townscape perspective.

There could be potential for some 6 and 7 storey buildings at the north of Belgrave Gateway. Though the development must not impact upon the 2-4 storey residential homes and maisonettes. There is certainly a change of character in the Area along the east, towards the residential St Matthews estate.

To the west, an area has been identified offering some potential for tall development (defined as 8 storeys (24m) and above). Almost all of this area of potential is located within the St Margaret's Character Area. Any proposals for this area should consider the parameters and



constraints outlined in detail within the St Margaret's Character Area Evidence Document.

In the south of the Character Area there is potential for 6 storey development facing onto the Burleys roundabout. As part of this development, there is potential for a taller element facing the ring road and St Matthews Way. The location, scale and massing of this taller element must be carefully considered so as not to impact the view of city wide significance from the Clock Tower towards St Mark's Church.

14. Future Planning

The vision for the Belgrave Gateway Character Area is for an area that includes regeneration which is carefully managed. Development which supports existing land uses will also be encouraged. This includes the existing Leicester College Campus, the defined employment area in the northern part, fronting Belgrave Gate and the existing residential area to the south.

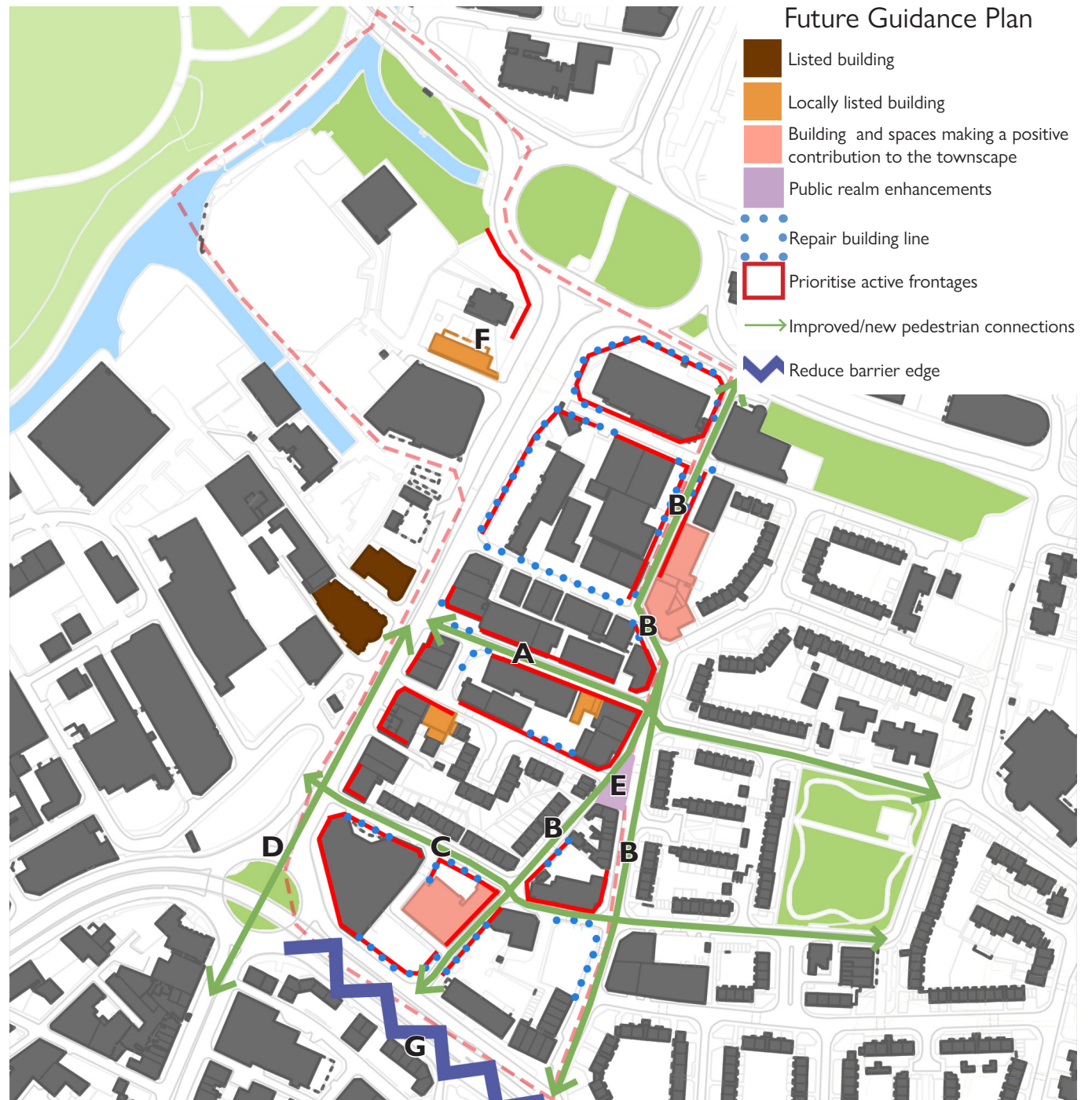
Development will also be expected to:

- Facilitate regeneration of the existing frontage along both sides of Belgrave Gate to improve and encourage movement through the area, and in turn improve connectivity with the adjacent Belgrave Road / Golden Mile
- Enhance this important gateway and its links to the City Centre
- Continue to improve connectivity and footfall, to Abbey Park from the City Centre.

As part A showed, amongst the most detrimental aspects of the Character Area were the high numbers of inactive frontages and fragmented urban grain. The plan on the right shows the locations of where active frontages should be prioritised and where the building line should be repaired. In addition, the need to improve the existing pedestrian and cycle connections such as Bedford Street North, Wharf Street North etc., should be prioritised.

Moreover, the important location of Russell Square as a historical node deserves to be celebrated. There is an opportunity here for public realm enhancements as part of an improved north south pedestrian and cycle connection along Wharf Street North/Bedford Street North.

The retention of employment uses (especially within the east of the Character Area) will be a priority. In order to retain the employment uses, residential uses will be delivered through frontage redevelopment along Belgrave Gate.



Criteria to Guide New Development:

Building heights

Proposed heights (in metres) will be outlined in the Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance for each area. The proposed heights are based on the contextual and townscape analysis undertaken.

Improving streetscape, pedestrian and cycle connectivity

New development will be expected to improve connectivity both within the character area and to surrounding areas, by contributing to the opening of new connections and improving the streetscape. This includes improving the quality of existing connections for pedestrians and cyclists.

Areas of focus:

(A) East – west connection between the St Matthews estate and Belgrave Gate, along Montreal Road and Britannia Street.

(B) North – south connection along Wanlip Street, Russell Square Wharf Street North/Bedford Street North.

(C) East-West connection along Kamploops Crescent and George Street to Belgrave Gate. This connections is intended to improve the connectivity for residents from the St Matthews Estate travelling to Abbey Park.

(D) North-south connection across the Burleys roundabout, along Belgrave Gate (proposed as part of Connecting Leicester).

Creation of Active Frontages and the Design of Ground Floors

Proposed development will be expected to present active frontages to the street, to maximise natural surveillance over the public realm. It is expected that particular attention will need to be given to ground floors, where there is a need to balance privacy with surveillance and provide appropriate design solutions. Specific streets and spaces where new active frontages are needed and the reinstatement of active frontages are of vital importance to the character area are identified. Areas of focus: see Future Guidance Plan - red line

This document has identified the location of poor frontages along key pedestrian routes. Such locations include the Belgrave Gate, Britannia Street, Woodboy Street, Melton Street.

Improving the Character and Appearance of the Character Area

Opportunities for improving the appearance and setting of specific existing buildings and spaces will be encouraged and actively promoted

by the Council. The Council will work positively with landowners of identified buildings and spaces.

Areas of focus:

(E) Create a new public space at Russell Square.

Repairing the streets

Development is expected to repair the street frontages and fragmented urban grain to reinstate perimeter blocks and recreate well defined and enclosed streets. Identified on the future guidance plan.

The areas of focus are in the north of the Character Area, such as along Wanlip Street, Melton Street, and Lower Willow Street. Also in the south such as Upper George Street and Wharf Street North, plus where there are surface car parks. The building line at the location of “Yours Supermarket” to be set back to widen the pavement, if development was to come forward on that site.

Buildings and Structures Making a Positive Contribution to the Townscape

Buildings which make a positive contribution, but are not locally listed, are identified in the Future Guidance Plan. There should be a general presumption against their demolition, due to their importance as part of the townscape and appearance of the character area.

Heritage Led Development

All development must enhance the setting of the heritage assets and other buildings which make a positive contribution to the townscape, ensuring that they continue to make a significant contribution to the distinctiveness of the area as it undergoes change. Development must be designed to recognise their importance in contributing to the legibility of that character area, ensuring they remain the dominant ‘markers’ and frontages in the area.

(F) If development comes forward on the site of the former Transformer Station, then the setting of this heritage asset should be significantly improved.

Development adjacent to the ring road:

Ensure any future development along the ring road is designed to address the need for activity and surveillance to a currently poor environment with the need to providing a good quality living environment. Moreover, reduce the barrier effect of the Ring Road and St Matthews Way by providing better crossings from the Bedford Street North/Wharf Street North region of the area (G).

Green Infrastructure

Provision of new green infrastructure will be expected, which makes a significant contribution to the character of a place and how it feels. This is needed particularly in building dominated urban environments, where the relief of trees, landscaping and planting provision is important.

Areas of focus: tbc

Recommended Interventions

Public realm enhancements at Russell Square (E)