

Mansfield Street Character Area Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

Evidence Document

Draft v.9

**Urban Design Team
January 2020**

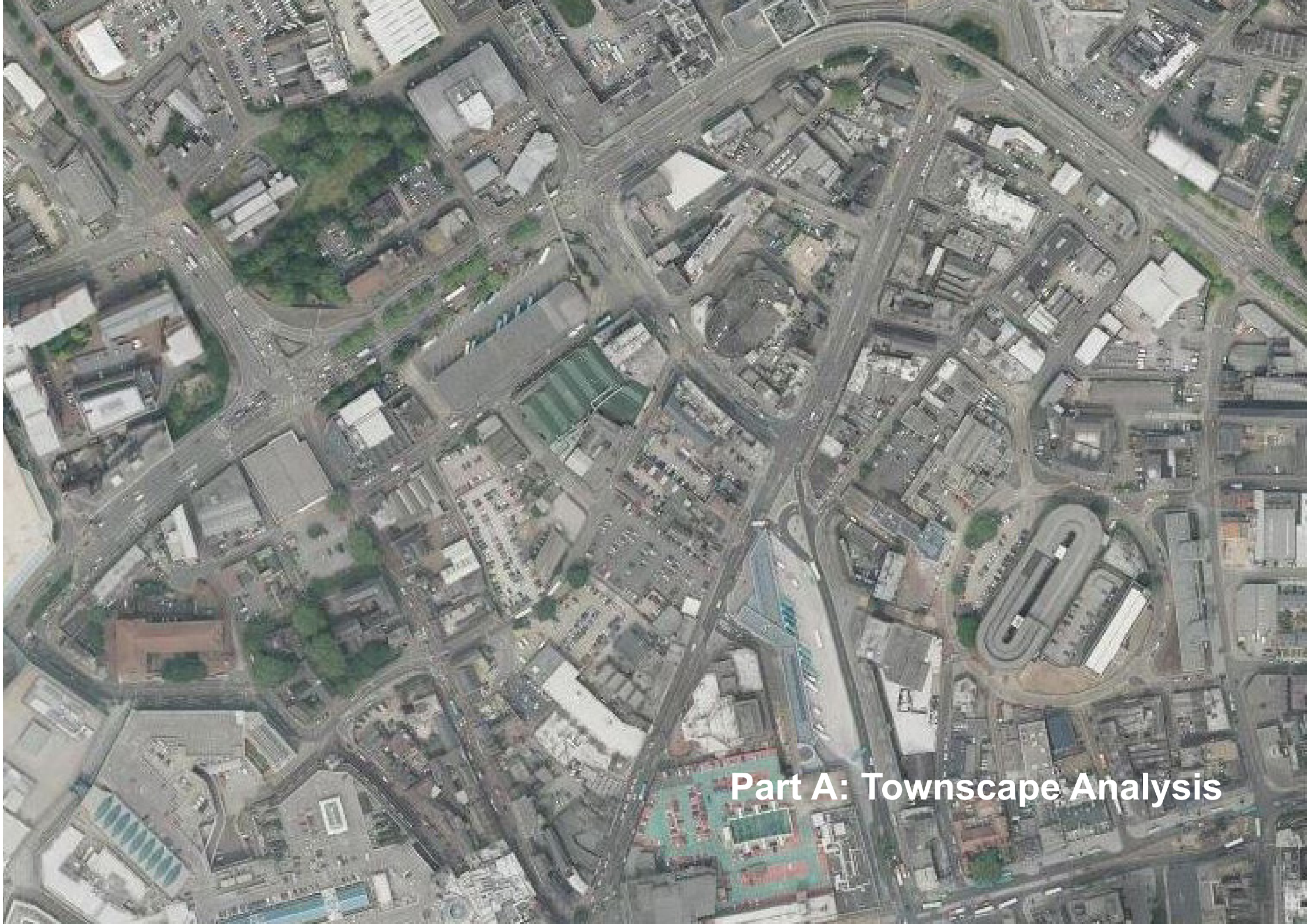
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Part A: Townscape Analysis

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

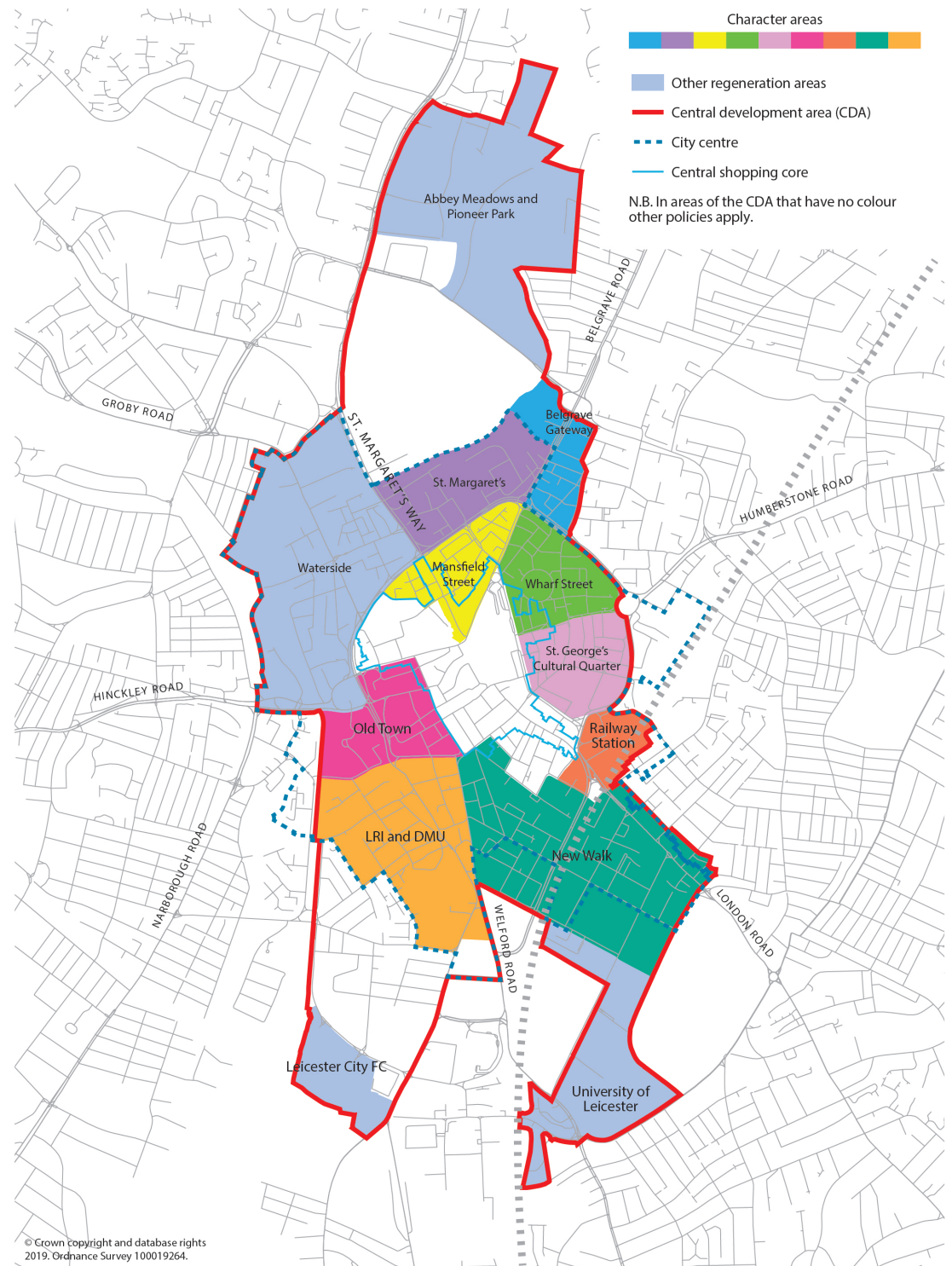
The regeneration of Leicester is a key theme of Leicester's development plan. In considering the central area of Leicester, areas have been identified which have distinctive characters and context, identity, opportunities and challenges and therefore different development objectives. These areas will 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



Four Other Regeneration Areas:-

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

Policy Basis:

Section 12 of the revised NPPF (February 2019), paragraphs 124 – 126, Achieving Well-designed Places, states the importance of plans for creating a clear design vision and expectations at an early stage, tailored to the context and an area's 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 currently being achieved through the Waterside SPD adopted in 2015 which is successfully promoting and delivering regeneration, 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

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

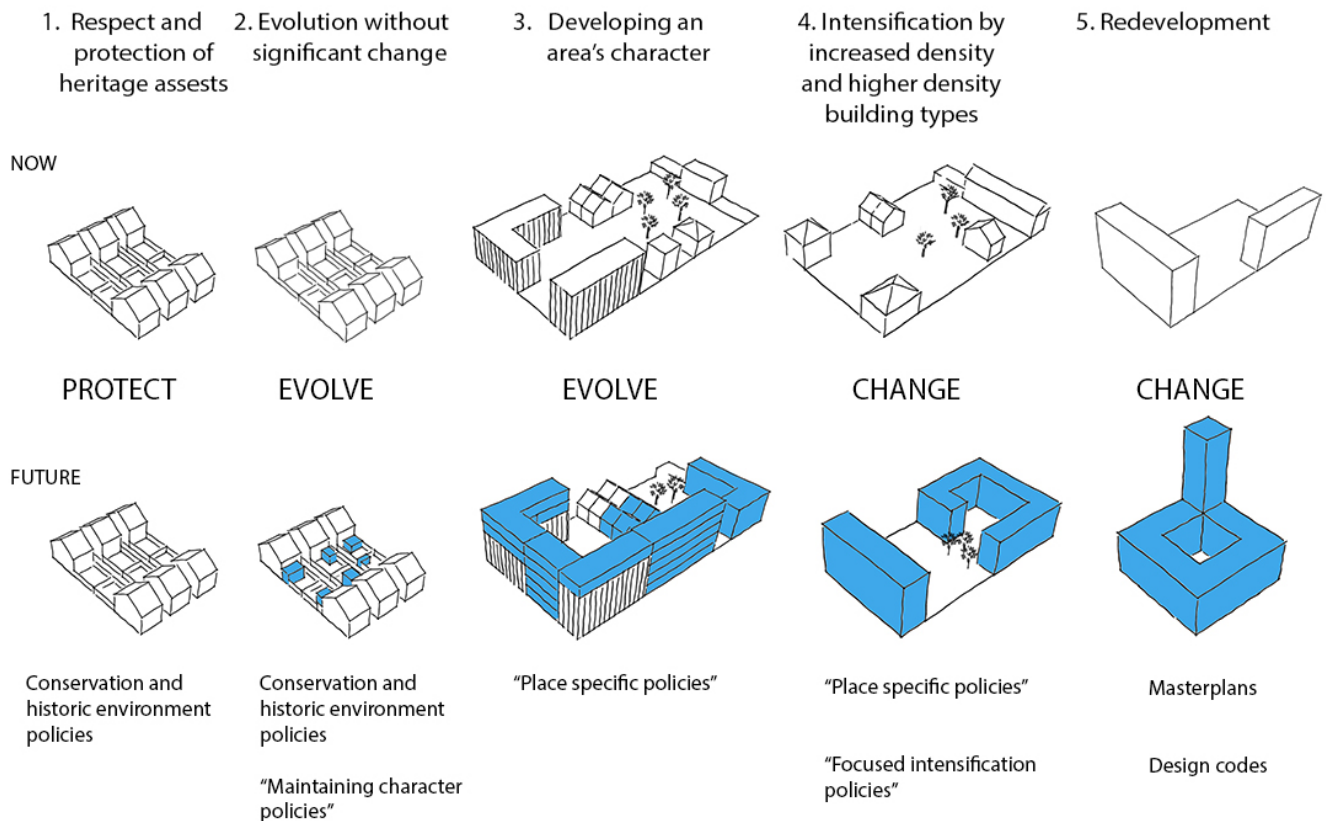
Townscape Character Management:

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 used by the 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.



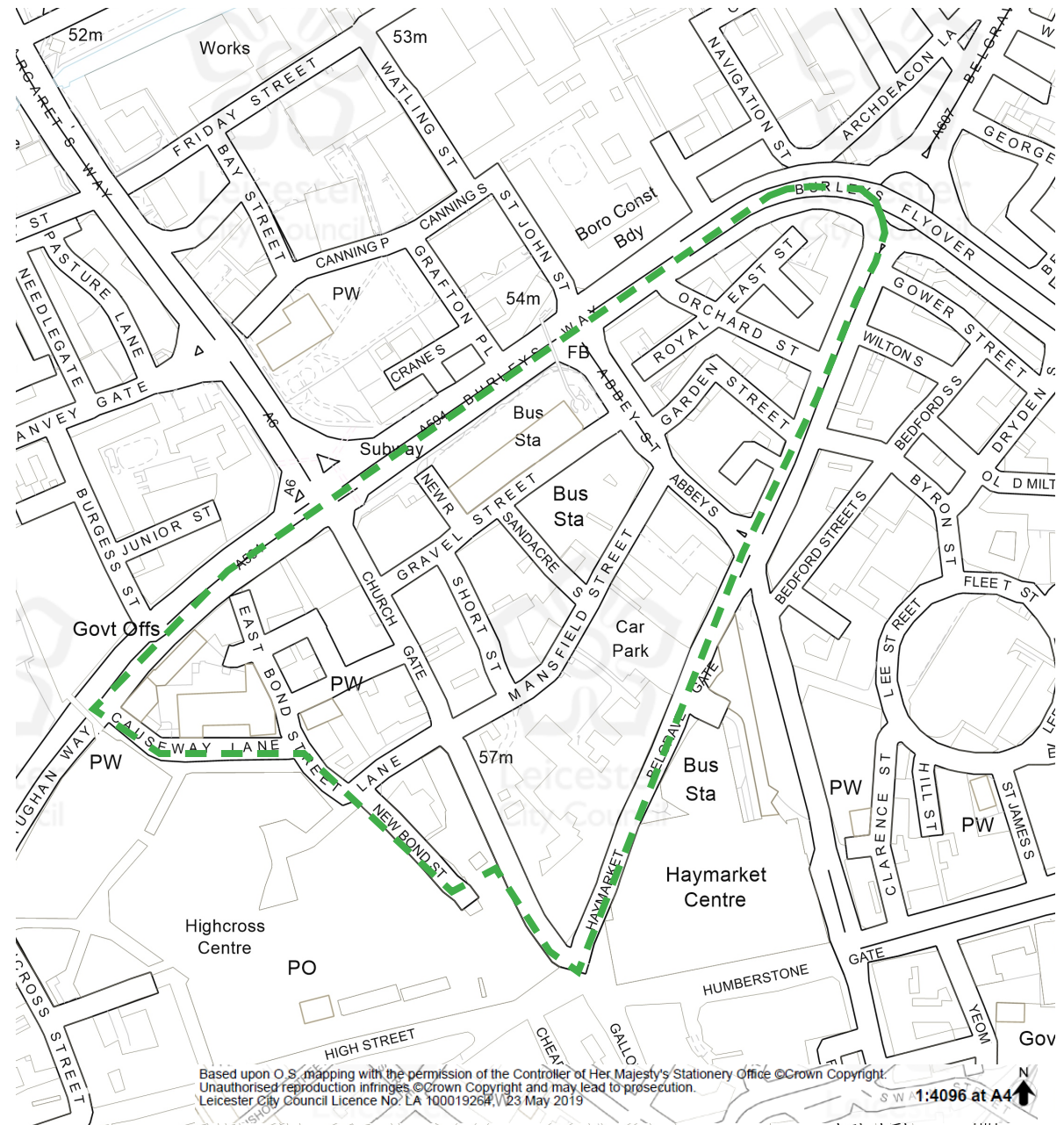
Reference; London Borough of Croydon

Mansfield Street Character Area

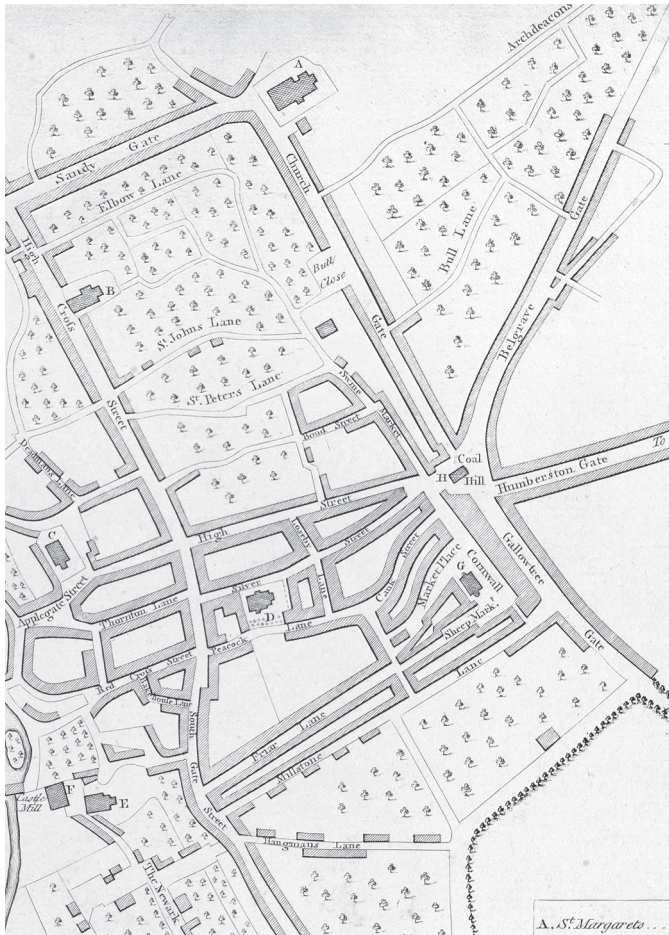
Leicester City Council recognises the opportunities and issues within the Mansfield Street Character Area.

The Mansfield Street Character Area is well placed within the city centre, adjacent to the two main bus stations, main shopping areas and the benefits of the nearby Abbey Park for leisure and recreation. Notwithstanding the mix of industry, retail and leisure uses, residential uses are coming forward and being established in the area. Mainly these are at a smaller scale, with flats above shops and conversions within the Church Gate Conservation Area. A high density residential scheme has been recently approved by the city council with further interest on other sites.

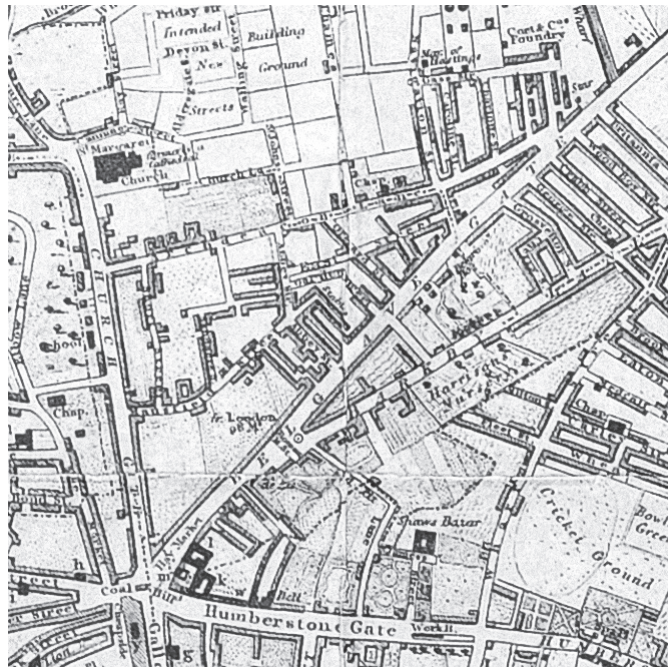
The Mansfield Street Character Area could become an area of residential growth and intensification. Although the area is in close proximity to the Grade I listed St. Margaret's Church, it includes areas of Church Gate Conservation Area and will be affected by significant city wide views, there is a potential for growth as the central part of the character area is relatively unconstrained compared to other parts of the city centre. A coordinated and comprehensive approach is required to enable the creation of an attractive, successful and sustainable place with a distinctive identity. It is highly likely that the area will change in character in the next 15-20 years and this process needs to be managed positively and proactively.



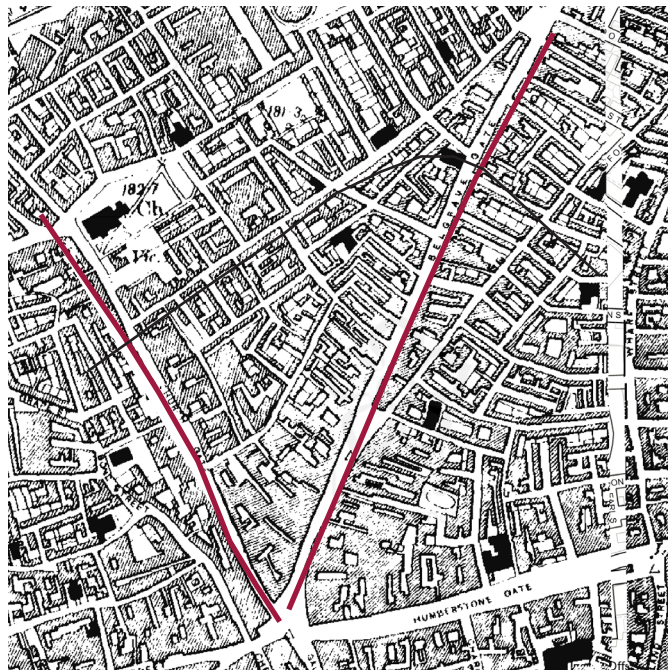
2. History of the area



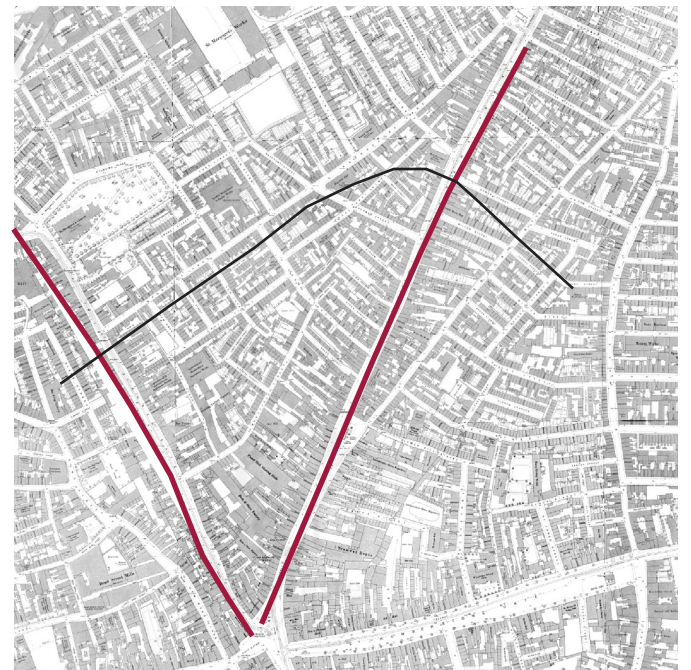
1779 (Prior)



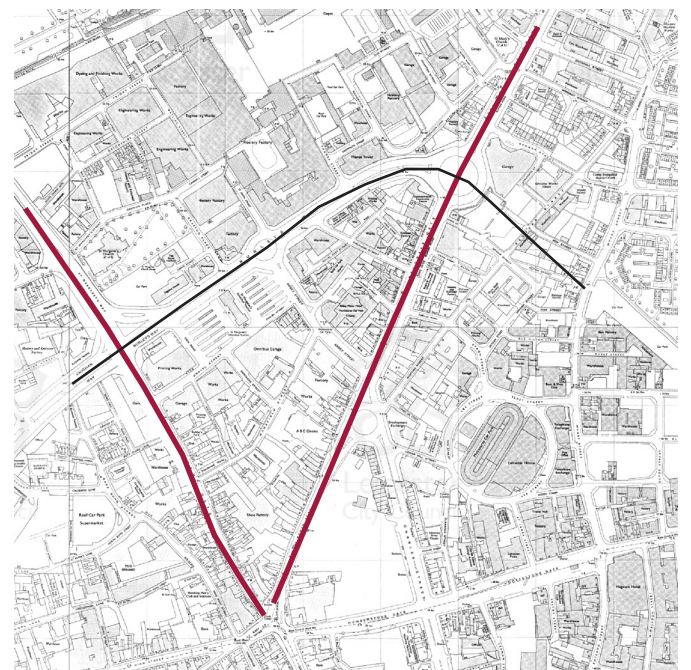
1828 (Ellis & Ellis)



1903



1886



1962-1969

2. History of the area

The Church Gate Conservation Area is a distinctive part of the Mansfield Street Character Area and falls wholly within the Archaeological Alert Area.

The Church Gate Conservation Area 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.

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.

Church Gate is one of the few thoroughfares into the city which was not substantially redeveloped in the Victorian era or twentieth century and as such gives a rare snapshot into the historic development of the city.

Most of the streets have medieval origins, but the majority of buildings date from the 19th century onwards.

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. The name Church Gate likely dates back to 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.

Medieval Era:

There has been a church on the site of St. Margaret's Church since AD 679, which may have had a small community attached to it, and was connected to the markets by a lane.

Some suburbs began to develop centred on the market that had sprung up just outside the town's eastern

gate. As the town defences fell into disrepair and were removed during the late 15th century a period of steady growth took place. 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.

16th to 18th Centuries:

In the 16th Century Elizabeth I had donated an area of open land to the freemen of Leicester for archery practice. On this 'butts' shooting marks were erected and the activity is recorded in the name Butt Close Lane.

By the 18th century Sanvey Gate and Church Gate had become the main coach route into the town from the north. By the time the East Gate was removed in 1773 the centre of the town had gravitated from Highcross 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 became a major junction.

Although the main street pattern has been established with Church Gate, Belgrave Gate and Archdeacon Lane clearly visible on Prior's map of 1779 there was still only a limited amount of development in the area at the beginning of the 19th century. By the time of Fowler's map of 1828 Mansfield Street and Abbey Street have been established.

Church Gate was now a more established thoroughfare but it did not extend directly out of the city, instead connecting to the North Gate a river crossing via Sanvey Gate. Belgrave Gate becomes a main thoroughfare north-east from the junction with Gallowtree Gate.

Victorian era:

The growth of the boot and shoe and hosiery industries from the 1830s onwards led to the expansion of Leicester and widespread development and change within the city. Small-scale industry dominated the town until it was gradually out-competed by larger factories. The 1886 Ordnance Survey Map shows that larger scale industrial uses had become established alongside smaller scale industry. These included hosiery and footwear, and industries complementing them. There are timber yards, saw mills, foundries and also agricultural and



Medieval plan of Leicester showing the current extent of Church Gate Conservation Area

2. History of the area

horticultural works, some of which survive in the Church Gate Conservation Area. The industrial uses were located predominantly to the south with terraced and courtyard housing. A church and Sunday school, hall, school, coffee house, public house, skating rink and hotel served the community at this time. Many of these original buildings have survived and are nationally listed or locally listed.

In 1902, a scheme to widen and upgrade High Street was completed whereby it was substantially rebuilt as a grand shopping street incorporating new electric trams. Alongside the rapid expansions of the Victorian era and trade along arterial routes, Church Gate, in particular, gradually lost its importance as a city thoroughfare, but remained an important shopping street.

20th century and early 21st century

The main impact on this area and the city in the 20th century was the increasing influence of motorised transport with the most drastic changes taking place in the post-war era. Construction started on the central ring road system in the 1950s with the widening of Burley's Lane into Burley's 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 congested Clock Tower. In doing this, much of the historic street pattern was swept away and the end of Church Gate was severed from St. Margaret's Church and the long standing historic route between the East and North Gates, along Church Gate and Sanvey Gate, was lost.

Additionally, the Abbey Motor Hotel and car park (with capacity for 915 cars) was built and a number of garages were located along Church Gate. St. Margaret's bus station was constructed in its present day location, although it has undergone many changes since.

In the 1970s St. Peter's Lane was extended to connect the ring road to Mansfield Street. The road was built significantly wider than adjacent streets and caused a significant visual separation between the north and south elements of Church Gate and East Bond Street.

Also in the post war era the clearance of 'slum' housing was taking place. By the early 1960s most of the narrow streets and small houses, characteristic of the area, had been cleared. The area around Church Gate shifted from being a mix of residential, commercial and industrial to one which was solely commercial in character. The larger Mansfield Street area retained a mix of commercial properties and industries to the south, but much of the residential stock to the north was replaced by industrial uses, although some of the community uses still remain.

Coming up to date, the Connecting Leicester programme will bring significant change to the area with the aim of improving the public realm in Church Gate and Belgrave Gate by reconfiguring the street layout and creating a new bus link. Residential schemes are also coming forward in the area, mainly through small-scale conversions of buildings in the Conservation Area to flats and a higher density scheme on a cleared former industrial site has recently been given planning approval.

3. Heritage and Townscape Assets

This section does not seek to reproduce the Conservation Area Appraisals which are relevant to this character area, although they have informed the content. For more detail the Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans should be referred to.

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.

Conservation Area:

The Church Gate Conservation Area is a distinctive part of the area and was first designated in 2006, although changes have been made to the area it covers since that time. The Conservation Area 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.

Within the Church Gate Conservation Area Appraisal 2017 the area's special interest is defined as follows;

- Historic and archaeological importance relating to Leicester's early suburbs and the Roman and medieval town. It contains the best surviving fabric of the historic route from North to East Gates running along the city wall;
- Surviving and rare elements of the City's 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 Church Gate looking north;
- The area includes several listed buildings, including one of the town's earliest brick buildings (the Great Meeting Chapel). An unusual timber warehouse (66 Church Gate) and Master Hosier's House are rare survivals 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 Conservation Area Appraisal identifies two distinct zones which are characteristic of their areas; The 'commercial zone' of Church Gate and Bond Street and the 'quiet zone' around the Great Meeting House and Butt Close Lane. Key views outlined within the Conservation Area Appraisal are also illustrated.

To the rear of 39 Church Gate is a substantial three storey factory building. Historic maps indicate it was formerly surrounded by buildings. Wrights directory of 1899 suggests this was in use as an animal preserver and skin dresser and this building may have been used in connection with this business. The building is currently empty and in need of repair and re-use.

81 Church Gate (currently Langtons) was built as a garage for Castle's Motors in the 1930s. It is in the Art Deco style and the elegant fin like tower acts as a local landmark.

Listed Buildings:

The buildings of most influence to the Mansfield Street Character Area are not within it. Grade I St. Margaret's Church and Grade II* St. Marks Church both terminate city wide significant views. The area also forms a backdrop to the view of the Grade II listed Clock Tower from Gallowtree Gate.

St. Margaret's Church is one of the most highly valued heritage assets in the city. A church on this site dates back to AD 679, and parts of the present building dates back to c. 1200. St. Marks Church was first built in 1870. It was surrounded by large industrial buildings and became one of the main working class churches in Leicester.

The Great Meeting House, built in 1707, is one of the earliest brick buildings of any importance in the city and is listed at Grade II. In the 18th and 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). It is possible that East Bond Street (or 'Goldsmith's Grave as it is shown on Roberts' map of 1741) was chosen because non-Conformists, with their radical political and religious views, had to maintain a discreet presence in the town. At the time of construction the 'backland' site where it is located would have been

ideal. It became a Unitarian Chapel in the 19th century and the elegant front porch dates from that period.

Adjacent to the meeting house is the former schoolrooms which date from 1859 which is also listed at Grade II. On the east gable is a plaque dating the foundation of the school to 1708 which has most likely been reused from an earlier building.

On the south side of Butt Close Lane is the northern boundary wall to the Great Meeting House with parts dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. The wall is Grade II listed in its own right.

At the other end of Blake Street, 3 Darker Street is Grade II listed and is a rare example of a hosiery master's house and workshop and represents a building type that would have been commonplace within the city. It was built around 1850 and pre-dates the large-scale industrialisation that was to occur within a few years. The Conservation Area appraisal identifies the need for a sympathetic new use for this building.

Adjoining 66 Church Gate is an unusual five storey timber-framed warehouse that was originally used for drying timber as part of the timber production process. It is of considerable interest due to its rarity, aesthetic appeal and as a local landmark. It is Grade II listed and can be glimpsed from various places within the Conservation Area.

Outside the Conservation Area is the Grade II listed former St. Patrick's School on Royal East Street. It was built as a school and chapel in 1854. At the end of a culs-de-sac this building is often not seen or known about and its setting is currently poor.

Locally Listed Buildings:

Within the Mansfield Street Character Area there are four locally listed buildings to the northern end of Belgrave Gate. Located on a prominent corner site, 170 Belgrave Gate, is a good example of a late 19th century Primitive Methodist chapel and adjoining Sunday school, built circa 1882 to the designs of the nationally recognised Victorian architect Edward Burgess (also architect of the former school on Royal East Street). The building was remodelled in the 1930s with a distinctive art deco frontage, possibly when it was converted to a hall.

On Garden Street are two houses which remain from a block of court houses believed to have been constructed circa 1828-1832. They are a rare example of the typical one up – one down single aspect properties typical of many of Leicester's early 19th century slum houses and they escaped demolition, possibly as they were in use as part of the retail units to Belgrave Gate.

No. 106 - 108 Belgrave Gate is the former Albert Coffee House, a late 19th century coffee house designed, again, by Edward Burgess for the Leicester Coffee and Cocoa House Company. The company was founded in 1877 as part of the temperance movement to provide a better place for the men of Leicester to buy refreshments away from the beer shop or public house. The building is one of several purpose-built coffee houses that still remain, all representing the important historic significance of the coffee-house movement.

On a prominent corner plot along Belgrave Gate, No 1 Orchard Street was originally called the Red Cow Hotel and is a former Victorian public house. The current building dates from circa 1875 and despite the closure of the public house, the building remains a physical reminder of the importance of public houses to their local community.

Archaeological Alert Area

Leicester has a clearly defined historic core. The historic core encompasses the town's defences, first established in the Roman era and with the Roman and Medieval suburbs outside the walls. The historic core of the city centre is defined as an Archaeological Alert Area and indicates, to developers, where development is most likely to have an impact upon archaeological remains.

3. Heritage and Townscape Assets





City wide significant view - Church Gate terminating in St. Margaret's Church



City wide significant view - Belgrave Gate terminating in St. Mark's Church



City wide significant view - St. Margaret's Way looking south to St. Margaret's Church



City wide significant view - from Gallowtree Gate towards the Clock Tower



Key views identified in the Church Gate Conservation Area Appraisal



Burley's Way 1952 (Transport Memories of Leicestershire, Leicester Mercury)



Burley's Way 1946 (Leicester City Council)



St. Margaret's Bus Station in the early 1970's (Transport Memories of Leicestershire, Leicester Mercury)



View down Church Gate towards St. Margaret's Church prior to the construction of Burley's Way (Leicester City Council)



Belgrave Gate, with the Palace Theatre, opened in 1901, on the site of the former Floral Hall (Leicester Mercury)



Leicester viewed from the air in 1937. The Clock Tower can be seen in both photographs with Belgrave Gate, Church Gate and the extent of the Mansfield Street Character Area, at that time, clearly identifiable. (Historic England)



Leicester viewed from the air in 1947 showing St. Margaret's Bus Station and the associated garages. (Historic England)



Leicester viewed from the air in 1947. The photo is of the north eastern section of the Mansfield Street Character Area around Orchard Street and Royal East Street. Most of the slum housing has been cleared and land set aside for the proposed widening of Burley's Lane (into Burley's Way) and Abbey Street.

The grade II listed former St. Patricks School on Royal East Street and the locally listed former Victorian public house on 1 Orchard Street can be seen and remain today. (Historic England)

4. Key Views and Legibility

Within the Mansfield Street area it is very difficult to find your way around with poorly defined streets, large undeveloped plots and very few landmarks of townscape merit.

To the west and east edges the churches of St. Margaret's and St. Mark's terminate iconic views of city wide significance down Church Gate, as an evolving sequence of views and from the north and Belgrave Gate; However, in the area between these two main streets views are often terminated poorly or are not terminated at all.

View A - is terminated by the surface car park and office buildings in the distance. However, the Hosiery Masters House and Workshop could be brought more prominently into the view. The marker of the 'fin' of the 81 Church Gate (the former 1930s garage for Castle's Motors) become more visible closer to Church Gate.

View B - has no notable termination and the 8 storey tall building is dominant in the view

View C - is from outside the area looking along Abbey Street. The pedestrian bridge across the ring road and the tall buildings of Crown House and Epic House are visually dominant

View D-D1 - has poor termination

View D1-D - is terminated with a building of poor quality

View E1-E - is well terminated by the apartments for Highcross

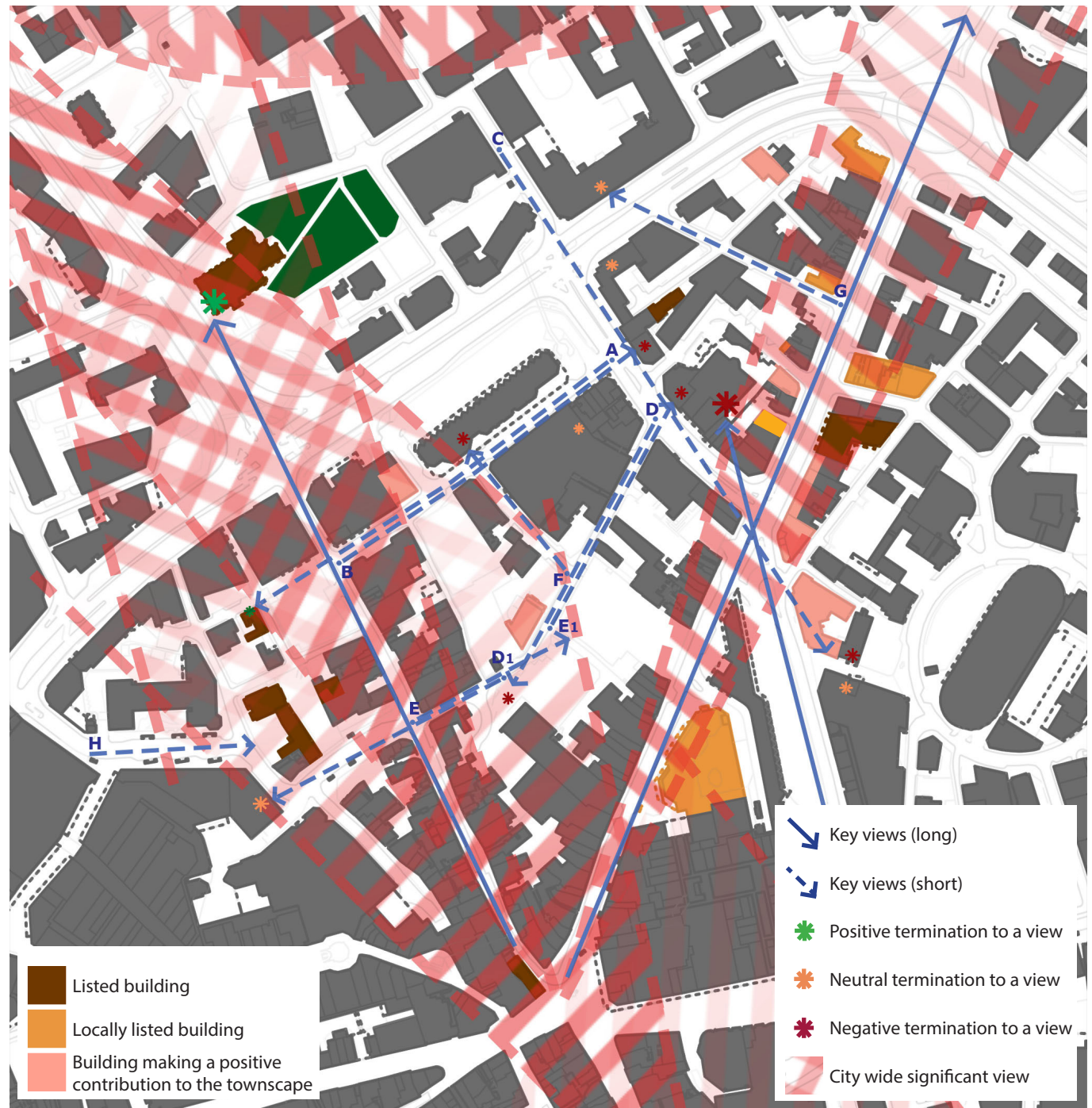
View E-E1 - has poor termination

View F - terminates in a blank frontage from St. Margaret's bus station. St. Margaret's Church can be glimpsed, but it is not a protected view

View G - terminates with the string and distinctive frontage of the Corah building.

View H - terminated by the Grade II Great Meeting House

There are buildings in the character area which terminate significant views from outside the area. The most significant of these is the view down Charles Street currently poorly terminated by Abbey Street car park. Any future development of this site would need to carefully consider



its visual impact given the buildings prominence. Future development and improvements to the area can provide an opportunity to provide new local markers and improve the existing markers to improve the legibility and appearance of the character area.

View from D can see the Cathedral in the distance, but future development is likely to obscure this view and it would not be considered a key view of the Cathedral.



View A



View B



View C



View D-D1



View D1-D



View E-E1



View down Charles Street terminating in Abbey Street car park



View E1-E



View F



View G

5. Streets and Spaces

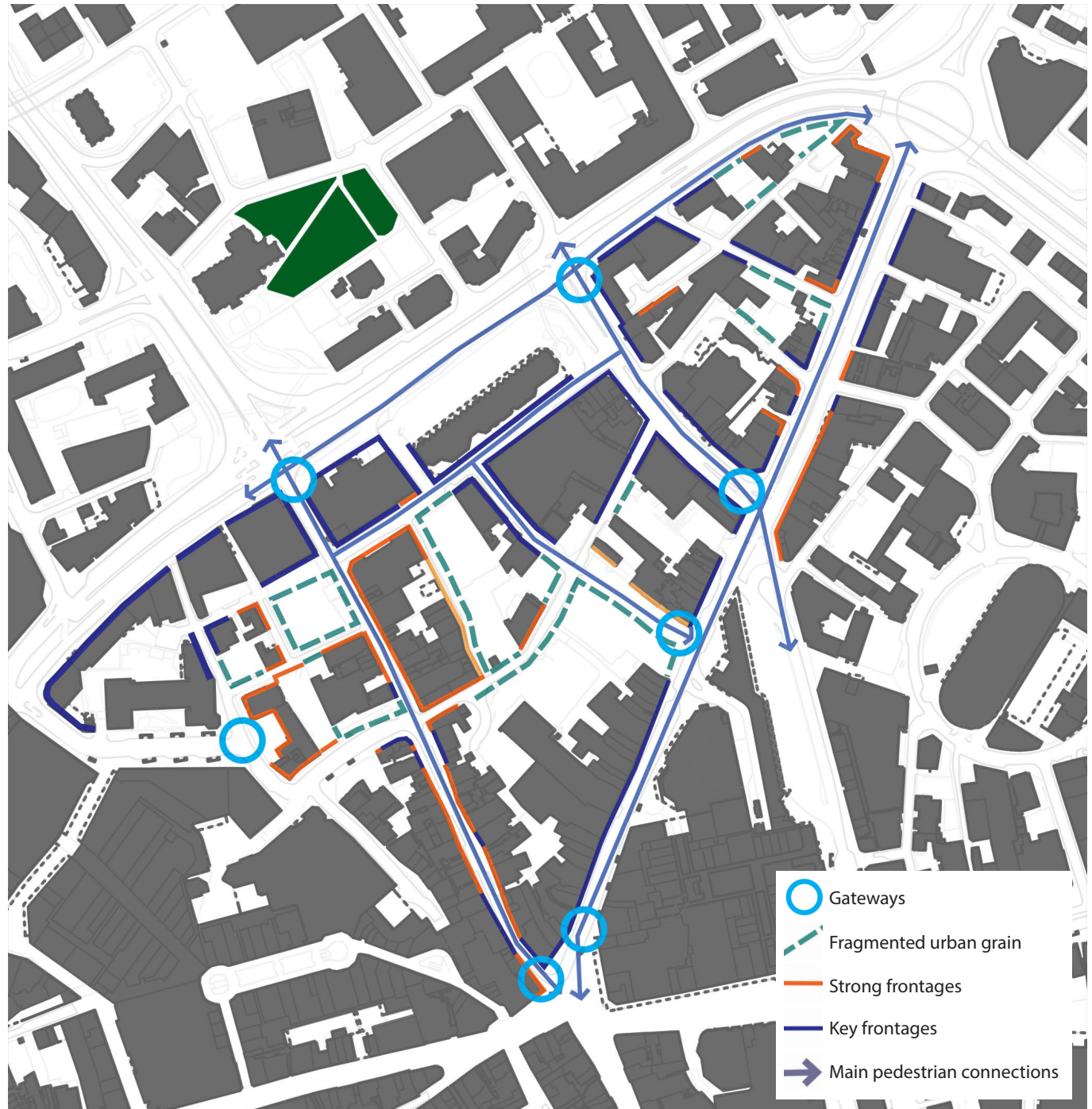
Successful places have well enclosed, active and connected streets, well defined perimeter blocks and well designed public spaces. Strong frontages, local markers, nodes, gateways and public spaces are elements of the townscape that together contribute to the familiarity of a place, making it easily 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 which provide a well defined edge to streets and spaces and so the building line is important but not the building.

As expected, Church Gate and Belgrave Gate are well defined streets with continuous frontages providing enclosure and activity given the dominance of retail uses. The number of plots along these streets provide a very fine urban grain of uses and activity. In particular, along Church Gate there are many strong frontages making a significant contribution to the townscape.

Within the area itself, streets are not so well defined with large undeveloped plots, car parks and large buildings of single uses offering limited activity and townscape merit. Currently the car park between Belgrave Gate and Mansfield Street is providing a main pedestrian connection. North of Abbey Street the area is isolated and poorly connected, although pedestrians use the route along Royal East Street from the Belgrave Gate roundabout to access the bus station. It should be noted that this route is across private land but is well used nonetheless.

To the west of Church Gate, within the Conservation Area along Darker Street and East Bond Street there are buildings of significant heritage value which are isolated



by the current Matalan car park. This area falls within the Mansfield Street Character Area rather than the large retail area of Highcross Shopping Centre.

The future development of the Mansfield Street Character Area provides a number of opportunities to improve the area and establish its character and identity. In particular, taking opportunities to repair the urban grain to create more legible streets, improve connections to areas to the west and north and establish a new street off Belgrave Gate to St. Margaret's Bus Station.

6. Existing Building Heights and Planning History

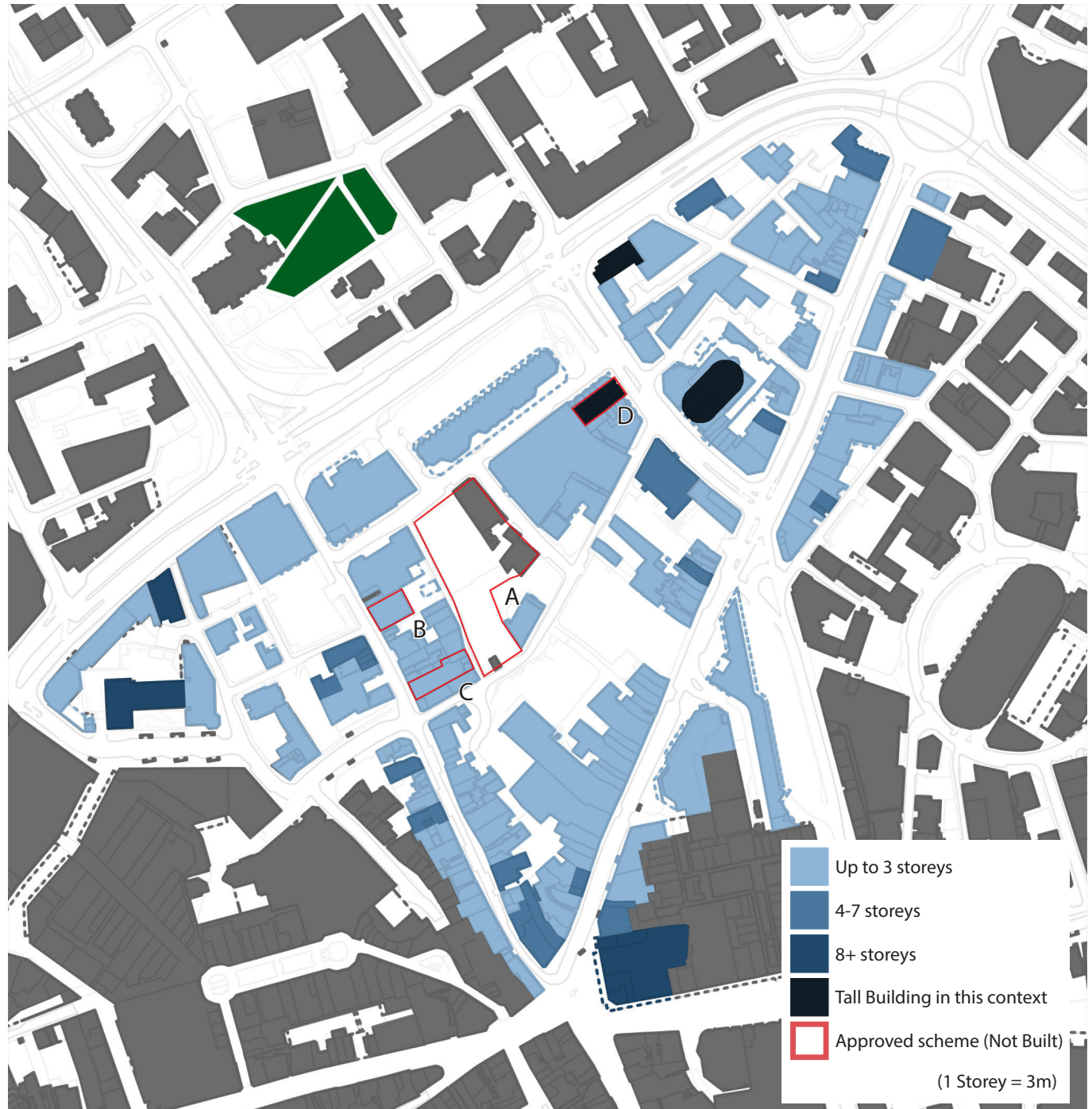
Context:

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.

Generally the area can be characterised by heights of up to 3 storeys provided by buildings within the Church Gate Conservation Area and the low scale of retail and leisure uses. There are a handful of buildings at 4-7 storeys.

There are 3 buildings of 8 storeys which are considered tall buildings in the context of the area. Abbey Street car park offers limited townscape contribution given its current condition. The 8 storey buildings on the corner of Abbey Street and Burleys Way and along Gravel Street are both of a proportion and built form which works well in the context of the general height of the area, although their appearance could be improved. Any increase in height to the surrounding context of these buildings would have an impact on how they sit in the townscape, which is currently considered to be positive. Any future development to this area would need to consider this impact to ensure this positive contribution is not affected.

Notwithstanding the general low heights in the area, it is likely to undergo significant change and given the limited heritage constraints within the centre there are opportunities to increase the general height of the area with some potential for tall development.



6. Existing Building Heights and Planning History

Planning History:

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

In considering the planning history of approved / determined applications in the area:

20171254 Sandacre Street, Car Park: Approval given in 2019 for 267 residential flats. Storey heights range from 5 to 11 storeys. (A)

20170100 75 Church Gate: Approval given for change of use of ground floor to class A1/ A2 uses and change of use to upper floors to provide 14 flats. (B)

20151727 63 Church Gate: Approval given for conversion , (Part) demolition and extension to create two retail units and 14 flats. (C)

20140947 / 20140936 / 44 Abbey Street: Change of use of third to seventh floors from offices B1(a) to C3 to create 44 flats. (D)



20171254 Sandacre Street: Verified view from the junction of Sandacre Street and Mansfield Street



20171254 Sandacre Street: Verified view down Short Street

7. Transport Network / Movement

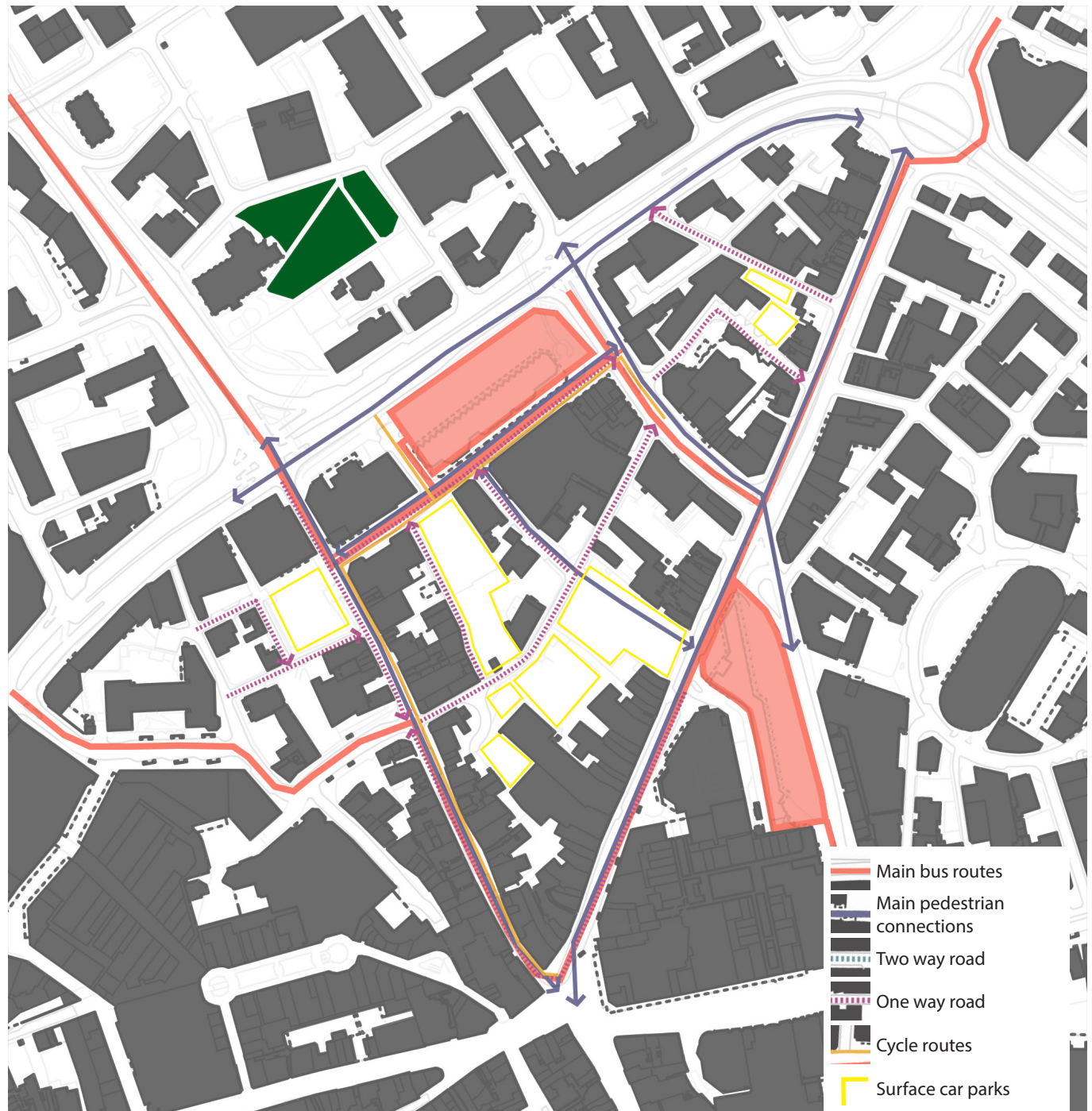
Cycling routes are taken from the Leicester Cycling Map and includes cycling infrastructure relevant to the city centre; on road cycle lanes, off road routes, bus lanes where cycling is permitted, pedestrian streets and recommended on road routes. Future cycling infrastructure guaranteed to be delivered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

The plan reflects current transport movements. Through Connecting Leicester there will be significant changes to the area with regards to bus movements. A new bus link will be created between Belgrave Gate and Mansfield Street with the objective of taking buses away from Belgrave Gate and Church Gate. Public realm improvements to both will create more pedestrian and cycle friendly streets.

Main pedestrian connections are along the busy shopping streets of Church Gate and Belgrave Gate and Abbey Street. Connections between the two bus stations are currently via the most direct route through the surface car park. This route will be formalised when the new bus link and street is delivered.

The area has a number of surface car parks requiring vehicle access. Some are customer car parks along Mansfield Street, to the rear of Argos and Iceland. Others are pay and display on currently undeveloped sites.



8. Active Frontages

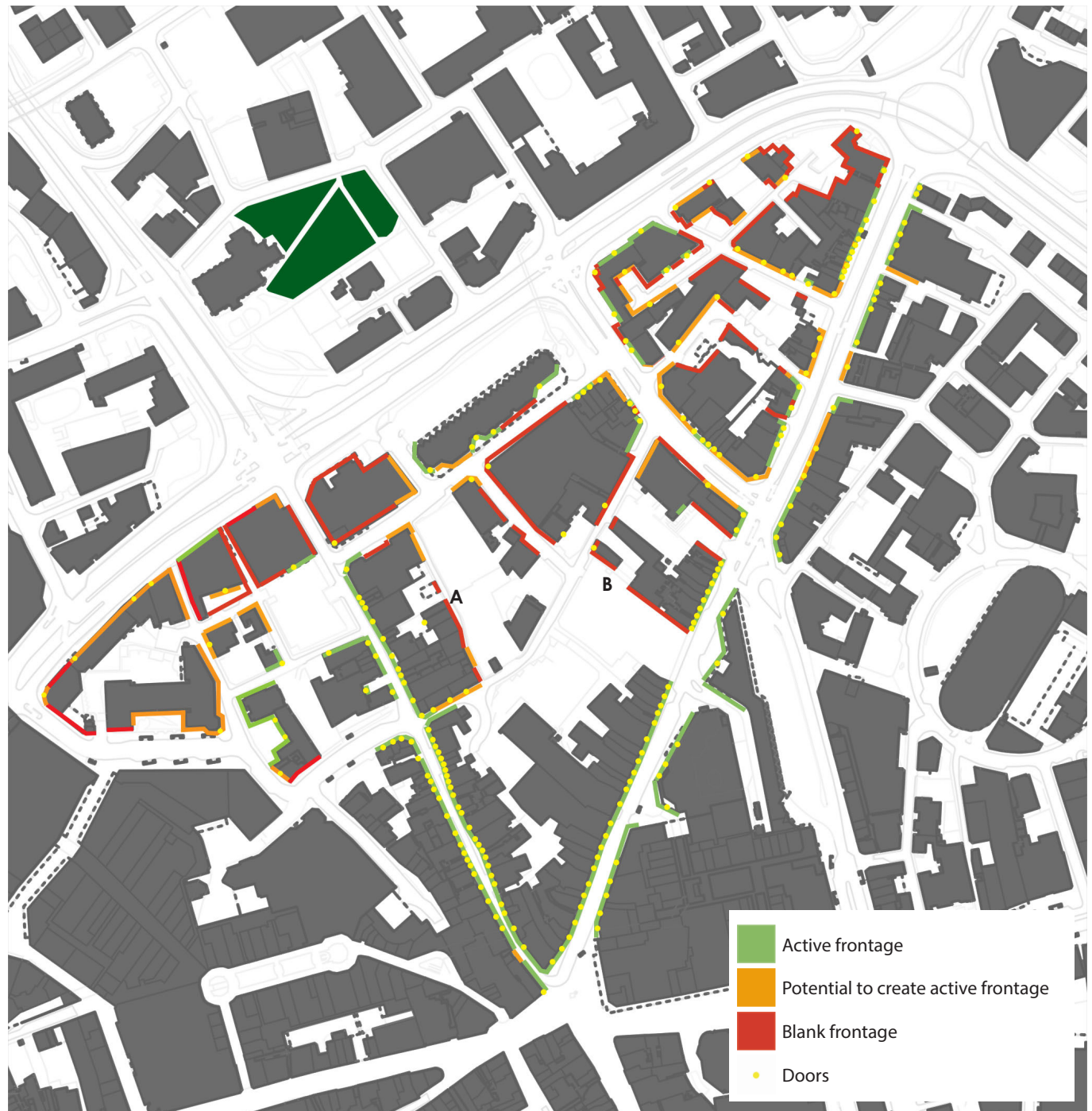
Active frontages are important to creating successful places. They are street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floor of buildings. This quality is enhanced where the front façade of buildings, including the main entrance faces and 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.

As expected the busy shopping streets of Church Gate and Belgrave Gate are very vibrant and active. However, within the character area the large single use buildings, including showrooms, factories and nightclubs provide limited active frontages and mostly blank frontages.

Along the key route of Abbey Street there is potential to create a more active street frontage. Windows and openings are provided on many of the buildings but they are blocked up or screened.

The frontages to the west of Short Street (A) and to the east of the proposed Mansfield Street / Belgrave Gate bus link (B) are problematic as they may in the future overlook new routes and spaces, but it may be difficult to create active frontages. Opportunities to improve their appearance and create a relationship with future streets and spaces should be considered.



9. Land Uses

Ground floor:

As expected the main shopping streets of Church Gate and Belgrave Gate are primarily retail, pubs and cafes. Within the Mansfield Street Character Area itself this category is most common place with the large nightclubs in this area also falling within it. Industrial uses, prevalent in Victorian era, are also still apparent in the area alongside limited office uses.

Small-scale residential, categorised domestic, above shops and building conversions are clearly identifiable and contribute to the mix of uses in the area.



9. Land Uses

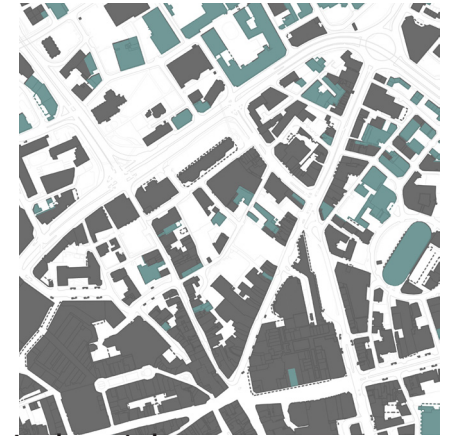
(includes above ground floor distribution)



Domestic



Community



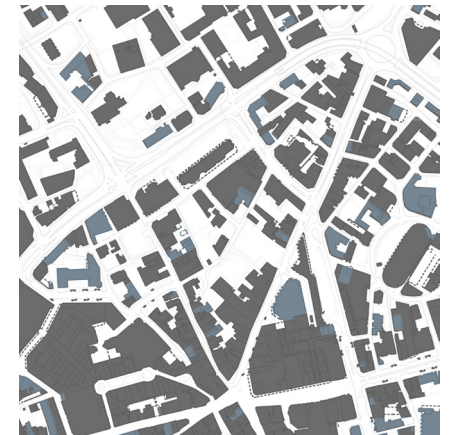
Industrial



Medical



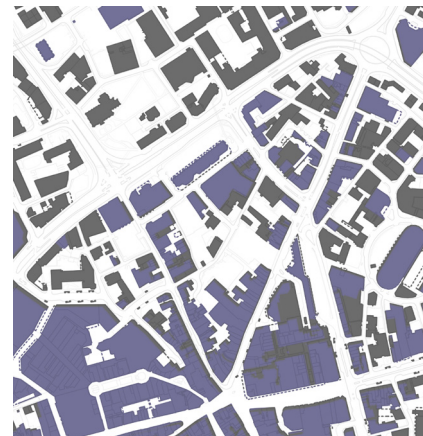
Leisure and Hotels



Office



Places of Worship



Retail, Pubs and Cafes



Car Parking

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.

Already completed are improvements to the northern end of Belgrave Gate, Humberstone Gate, Charles Street and Haymarket Bus Station and the northern end of Charles Street and Gravel Street.

Significant changes will be undertaken to improve the movement of buses through the area. A new bus link will be created between Belgrave Gate and Mansfield Street with the objective of taking buses away from Belgrave Gate and Church Gate. Public realm improvements to both will also create more pedestrian and cycle friendly streets and improve the setting of Church Gate and the Clock Tower. Plans are also being considered to provide a new bus link onto Burley's Way to allow buses to directly exit onto Burley's Way from St. Margaret's Bus Station.

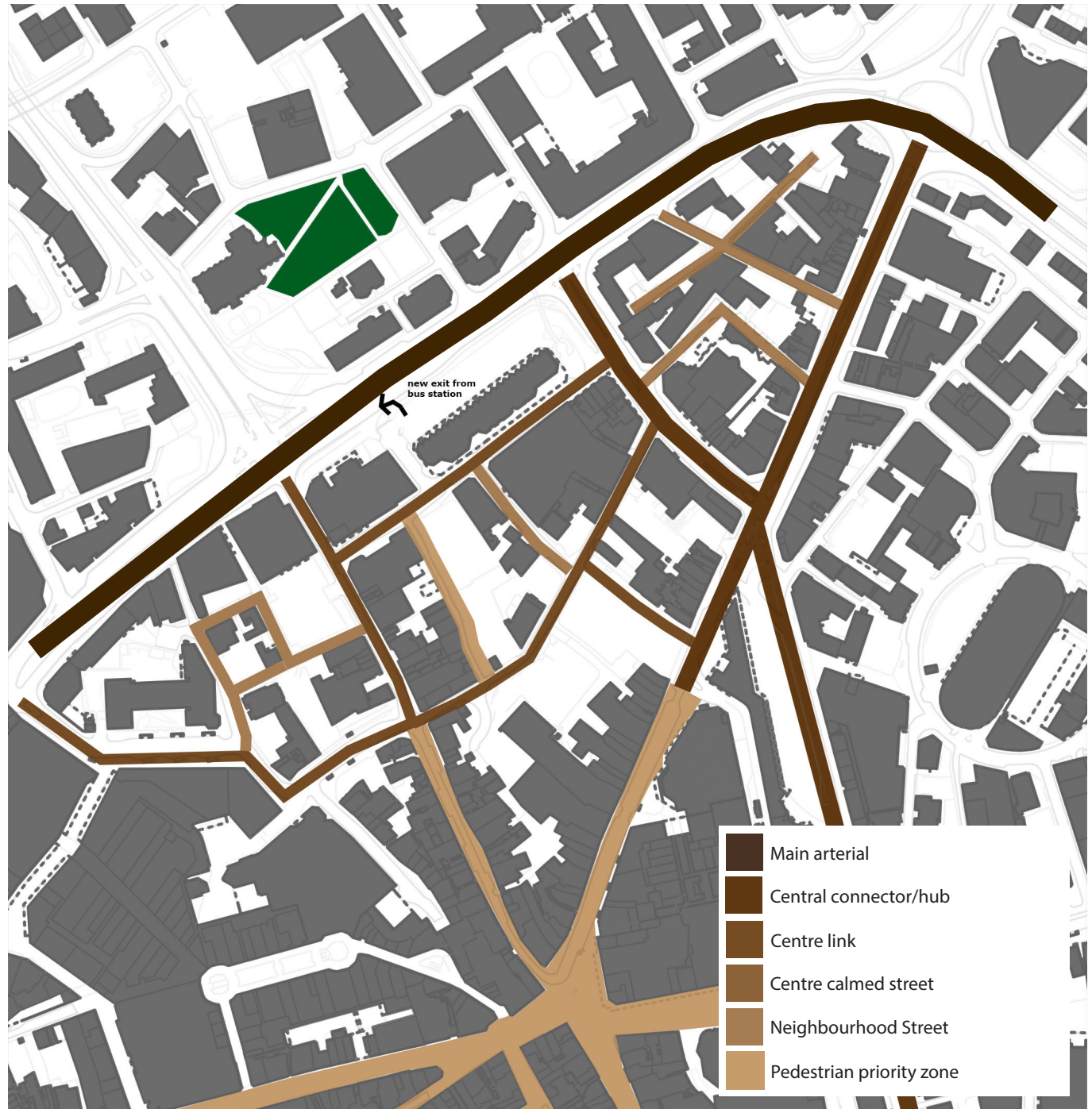


11. Street Hierarchy

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 in 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 hierarchy reflects the Connecting Leicester improvements to be made to Mansfield Street to create a new bus link and the pedestrianisation of Church Gate and Belgrave Gate.





Part B: Guiding Future Development

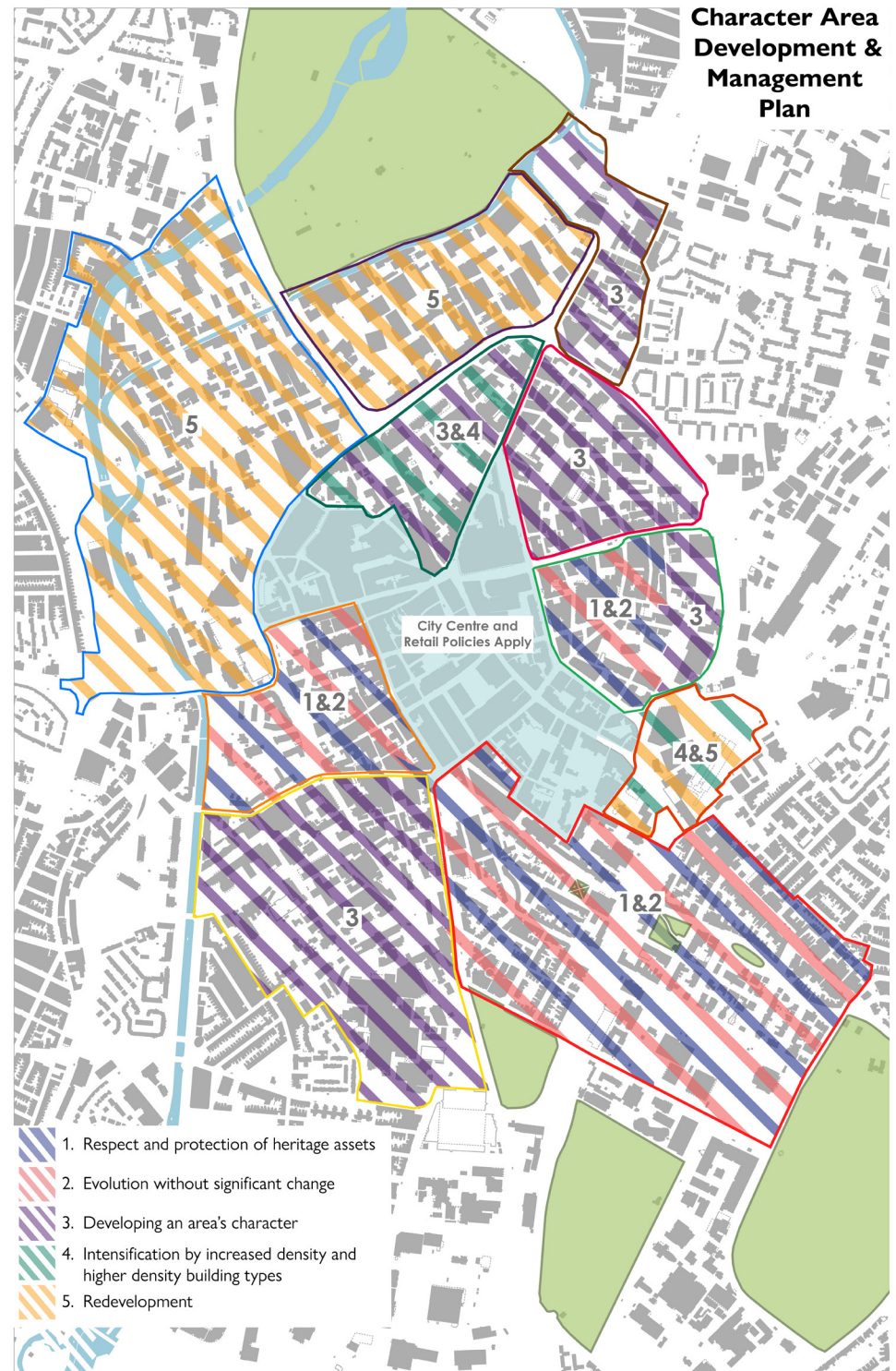
Part B: Guiding Future Development

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

Mansfield Street Character Area is categorised under 3. Developing an area's character and 4. Intensification by increased density and higher density building types.

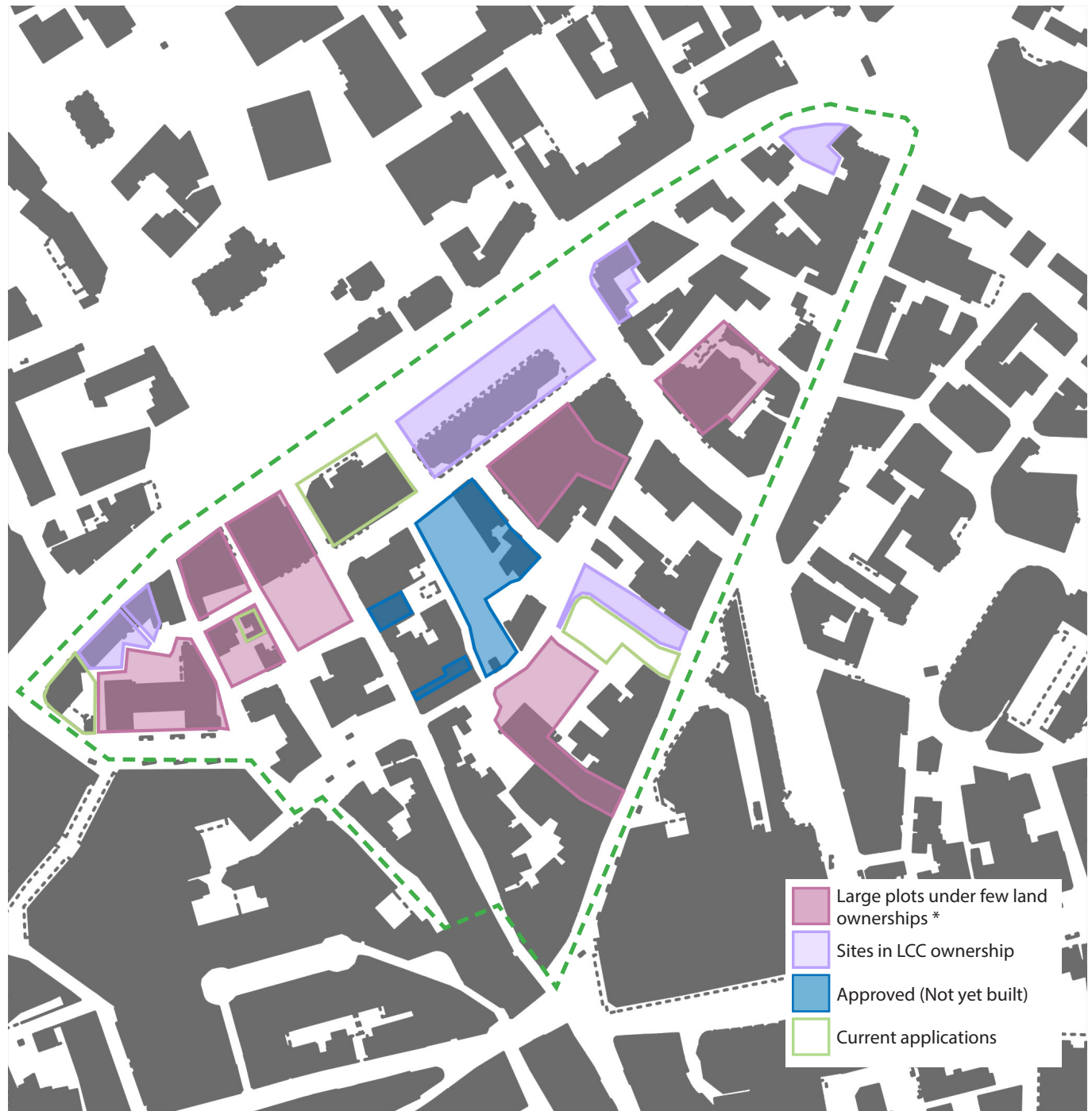


12. Growth and Development Potential

It is essential to understand the growth and development potential of each character area and the likely rate and scale of change for the 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.

The Mansfield Street area has a number of large plots under few land ownerships. There is potential that they could come forward and be developed in the future. These are principally located to the west and the centre of the character area away from the fine grain plots of Church Gate and Belgrave Gate. In addition, with the approval on Sandacre Street for a development of 267 flats and the current applications on Church Gate and Mansfield Street for further residential, there is evidence of developer interest. It is recognised however that the schemes have not been built as yet.

There is potential for significant growth in the area which will have an impact on the townscape and its identity within the city centre. It requires, therefore, a coordinated and comprehensive approach to guide development to ensure Mansfield Street becomes a place with a coherent character, a sense of place and distinctive identity. Development sites must not be considered in isolation of the wider objectives for the area.



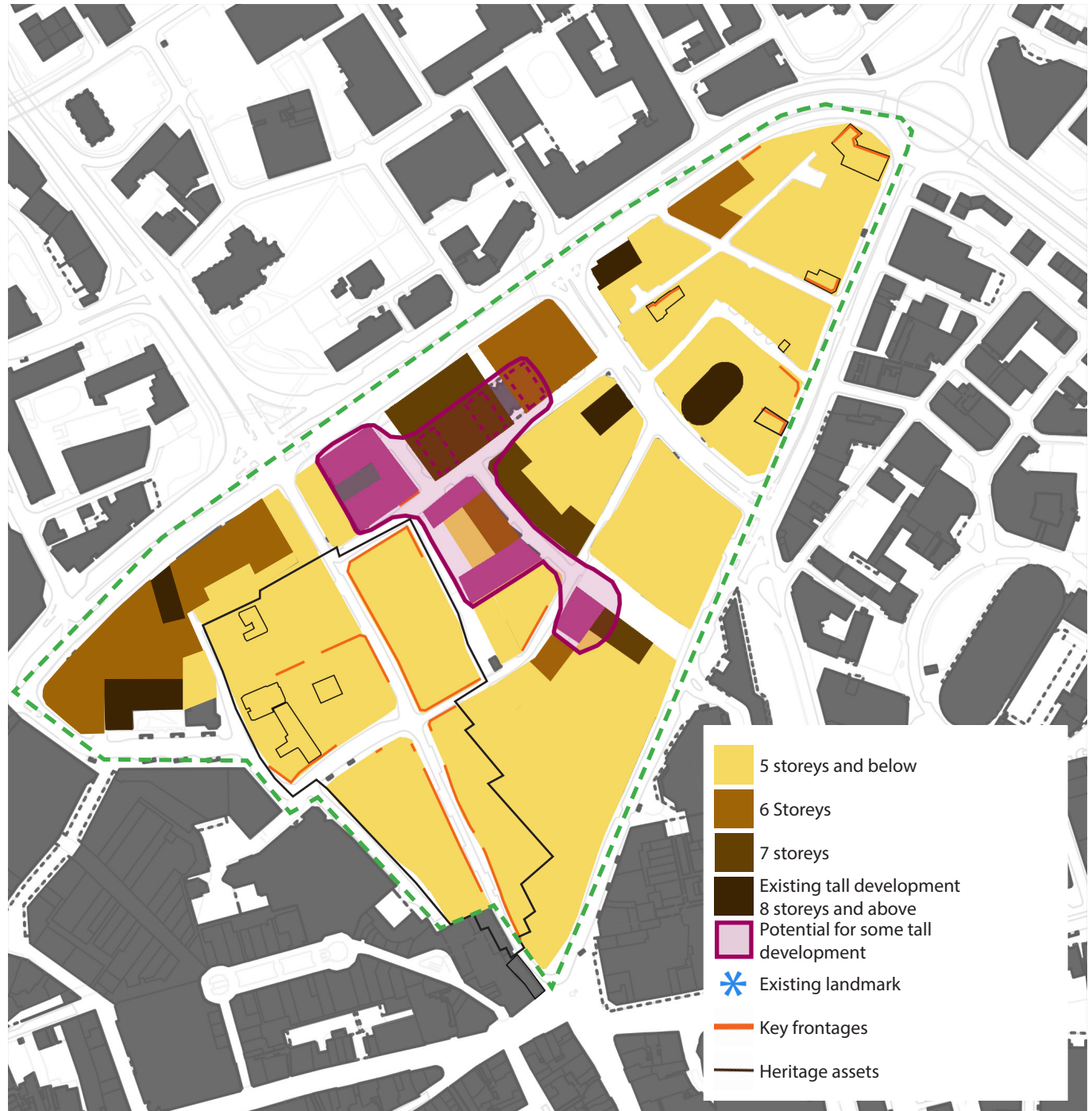
13. Proposed Building Heights

The 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. 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.

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 building heights reflect the Council's up to date view. Taller buildings 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.

In response to the significant city wide views of Church Gate and St. Margaret's Church and along Belgrave Gate and the view of St. Marks Church, five storeys and below are proposed. This height is also proposed within the Church Gate Conservation Area. The junction of Causeway Lane and East Bond Street is shown at 5 storeys and below to respect the setting of the Grade II Great Meeting House with consideration given to pushing back the building line if the site is redeveloped.

Within the character area itself, between Church Gate and Belgrave Gate there are limited constraints and the council has considered heights in this area in detail given the recent applications. This has included 3D modelling using the city model and assessing the impact of development and associated heights and massing on the setting of heritage assets, including identified key views. This assessment has helped inform the heights for the



13. Proposed Building Heights

approved scheme at Sandacre Street and other ongoing applications, and interest, in this area. Heights shown within the red line of the Sandacre Street application reflect the approved heights. It should be noted however, that the application submitted was of an exceptional design quality. The scale and architectural quality were considered in combination.

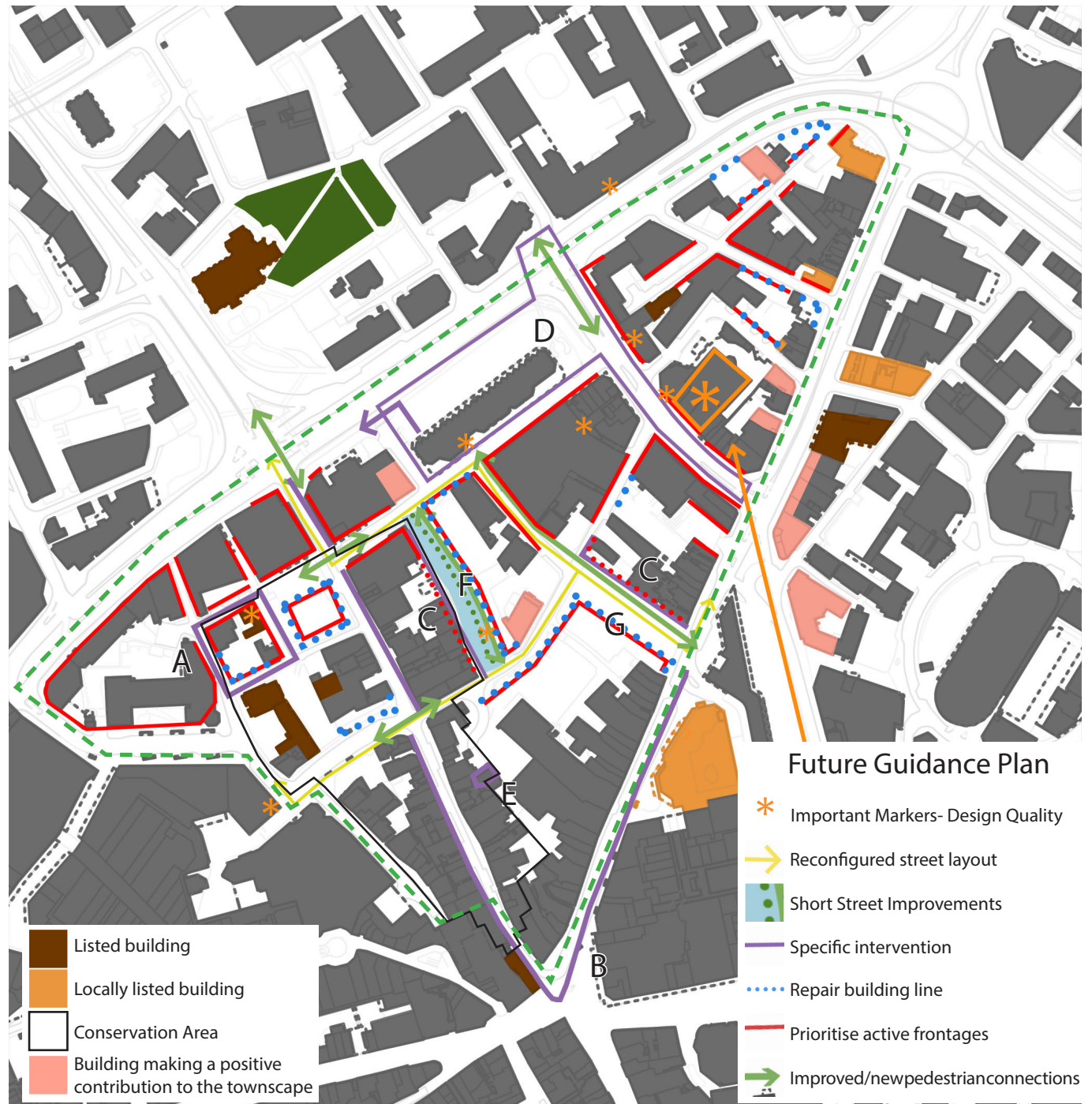
The ring road should not be seen as an argument for tall development in isolation. Tall development along the ring road will have an impact on the setting of St. Margaret's Church as viewed from St. Margaret's Way looking south. There is a concern that development of significant scale and mass may form a 'backdrop of development' to the church having a harmful effect on its setting.

The 8 storey buildings on the corner of Abbey Street and Burleys Way and along Gravel Street are both of a proportion and built form which works well in the context of the general height of the area, although the appearance could be improved. Any increase in height to the surrounding context of these buildings would have an impact on how they sit in the townscape, which is currently considered to be positive. The proposed heights around these two buildings reflect the need to avoid a scale of development adjacent to these buildings that would undermine their townscape contribution.

There is a potential for some tall development, as highlighted, which is within the central part of the character area. Tall development is defined as 8 storeys and above (24m and above). However, the height and massing needs to be considered carefully to not effect the setting of the heritage assets and key views in the area, the setting of the existing tall buildings in the area and to avoid reinforcing the barrier of the ring road. Development would need to be of an exceptional quality.

14. Future Planning and Future Guidance Plan

The Mansfield Street Character Area is an area of the city that has potential for residential led regeneration which could bring significant benefits. Given its proximity to both bus stations and main retail streets it is an area that is often passed through and its identity within the city is unclear. The townscape is fragmented, undistinct and generally poor. There is an opportunity through regeneration, alongside the significant transport improvements proposed, to develop it's character and identity and better integrate it with its surrounding context and the city centre. A mix of uses, and in particular, a new residential community will help.



Criteria to Guide New Development:

Building Heights:

Proposed building heights are outlined based on the contextual and townscape analysis undertaken.

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.

Consideration should be given to amending building lines of future development to improve the setting of heritage assets. Areas of focus include Darker Street to open up views to the Hosiery Masters House and the corner of Causeway Lane and East Bond Street to open up views to the Great Meeting Chapel.

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: see Future Guidance Plan - green arrows

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

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:

Abbey Street Car Park

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.

Designed to Repair Street Frontages

New development will be expected in design terms, to repair street frontages and fragmented urban grain, to reinstate perimeter blocks and recreate well defined and enclosed streets.

Areas of focus: see Future Guidance Plan - blue dashed line

Supporting the existing and future mix of uses

Development should allow for the retention and ongoing provision of a mix of uses in the area, allowing them to co-exist. This is an essential part of its character and contribution to the city centre.

Creating a place that is easy to find your way around

New development will be expected in design terms, to contribute to an improved townscape by providing distinctive local markers of high design quality to respond to key views.

Areas of focus: see Future Guidance Plan - orange asterisk

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:

Identified in the Future Guidance Plan.

A Darker Street and new Bond Street

Opportunity to repair and bring back into use the listed former Masters Hosiery House and workshop. Comprehensive consideration to be given to the whole block. Reconnect this area to Church Gate by considering the design of the adjacent area, in particular pushing back building lines to give the area more visual prominence

B and G Church Gate, Belgrave Gate, Mansfield Street, New Bus Link

Creation of new bus link and street improvements to provide a new route for buses using Haymarket and St. Margaret's bus station. Public realm improvements to improve the streets for pedestrians and cyclists along Church Gate and Belgrave Gate.

C Frontages to new streets

Improvements needed to frontages to improve appearance and if possible provide active frontages.

D St. Margaret's Bus Station

Improvements to St. Margaret's bus station, increased cycle parking and an alternative exit for buses onto the ring road. Also includes improved connections across the ring road and improvements to Abbey Street.

E Former factory to rear of 39 Church Gate

Encourage opportunities to redevelop and bring into re-use

F Short Street Public Realm Improvements

Improved connection providing a better cycle and pedestrian friendly environment.

