

New Walk Character Area Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

Evidence Document

Draft v.15

**Urban Design Team
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Part A: Townscape Analysis

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

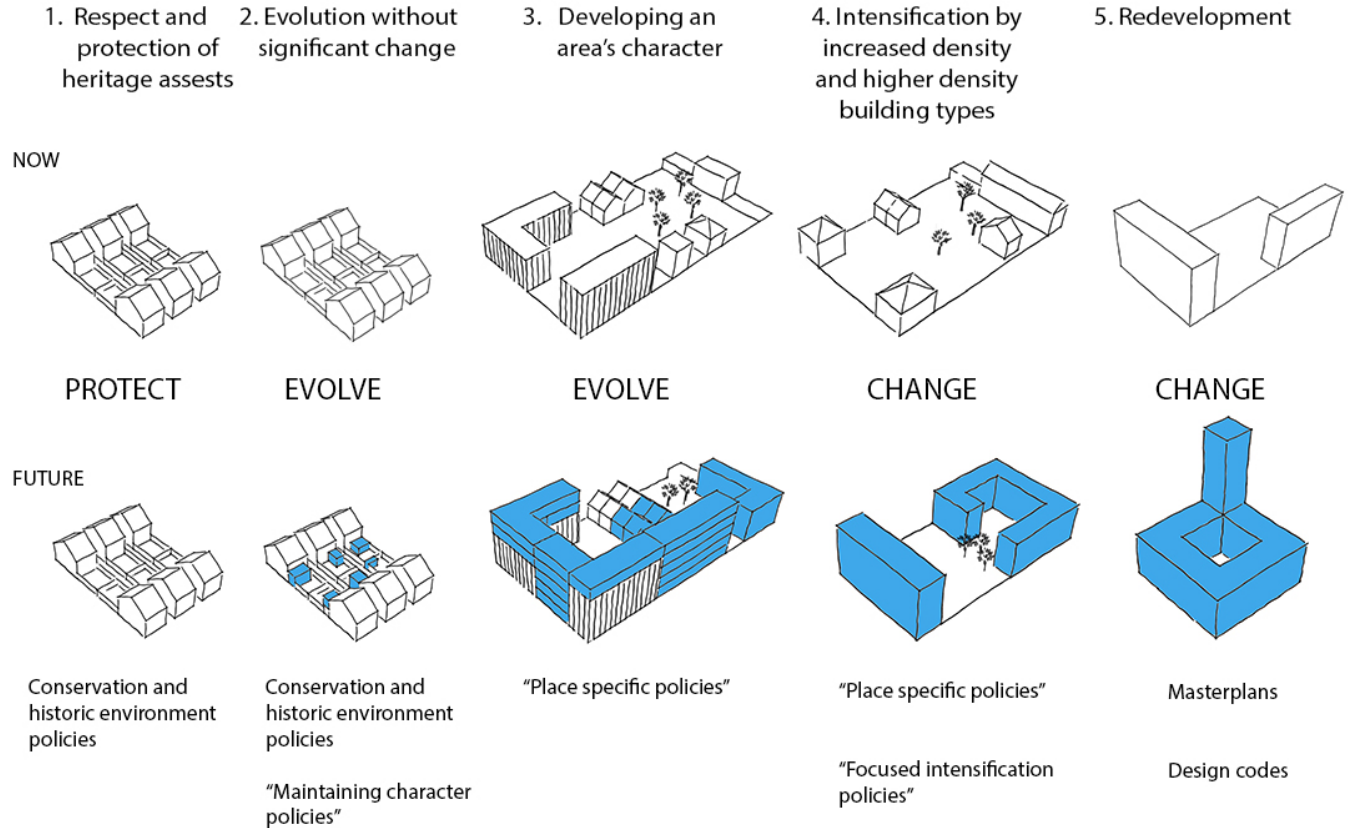
Townscape Character Management:

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

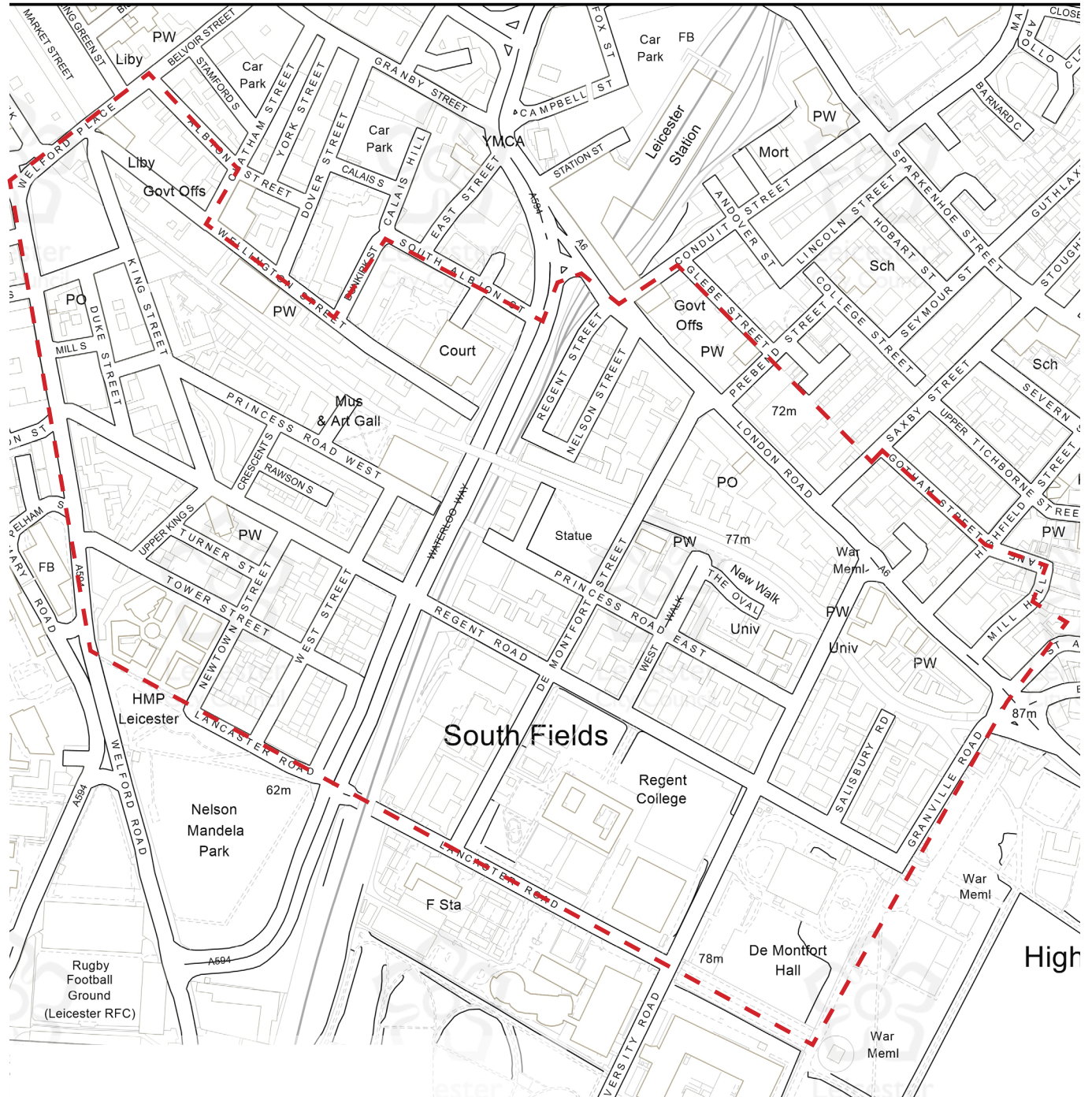
New Walk Character Area

The New Walk character area is located in the South east of the city centre. The Character Area is one of Leicester's most distinctive and recognisable places. The Walk itself is a nationally rare example of a Georgian promenade and marks the ambition and growing wealth of the Borough Corporation in the late 18th Century.

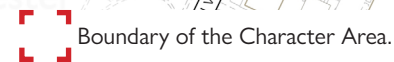
The character area lies predominantly within the New Walk Conservation Area. It is in close proximity to Leicester Railway Station and is bisected by the Midland Mainline that leads south towards London.

In recent years, the New Walk character area has seen major improvements to the public realm most notably on the site of the former New Walk Centre. This has seen the creation of a new public space and improved connections into and out of New Walk.


Leicester City Council recognises both issues and opportunities within the New Walk character area. Hence, we have undertaken this townscape analysis to aid a comprehensive but sympathetic approach to development in this area, rather than consider sites in isolation. The eventual aim is to help protect and preserve the New Walk's distinctive identity that is successful, sustainable and attractive.

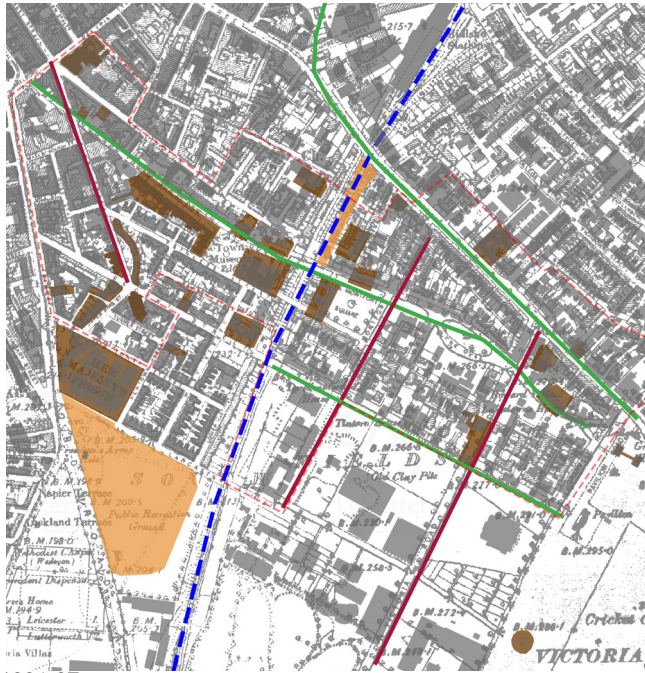


Plan of the character area and boundary.



2. History of the Area

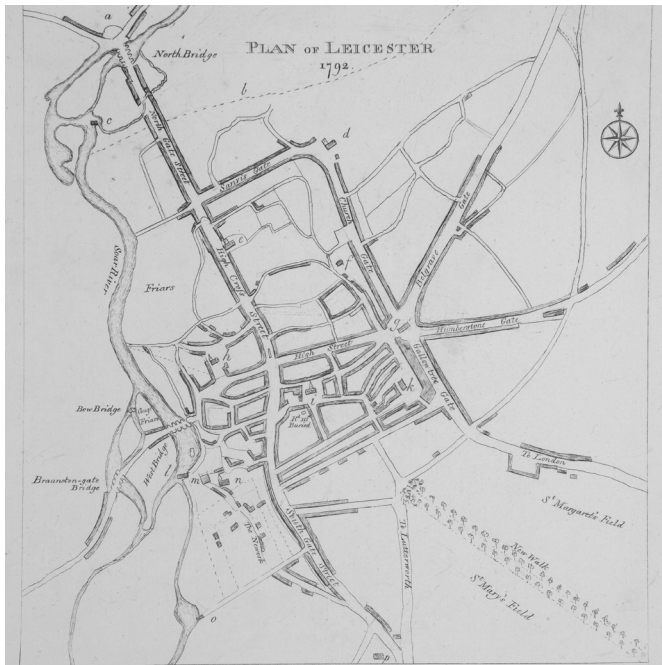
-  Key North-South Route
-  Key East-West Route
-  Midland Mainline Railway
-  Listed building
-  Locally listed building



1886-87



1914-16



1792 Throsby Map (Leicester City Council)

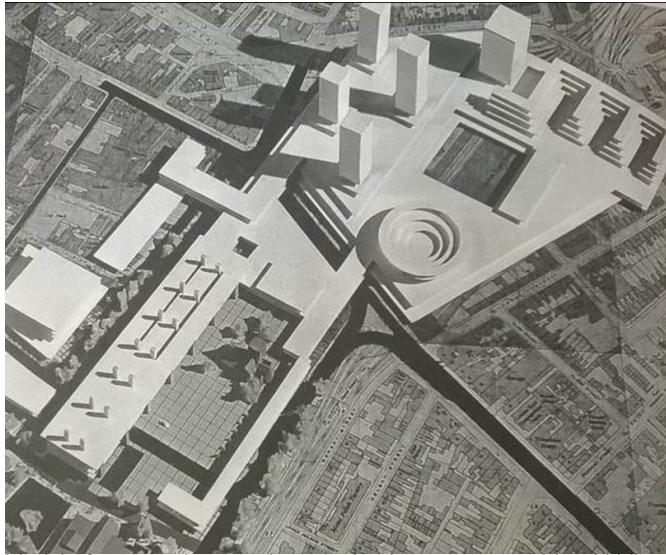


1940



1952

2. History of the Area



Model of proposed comprehensive development across New Walk, 1950s (Leicester City Council).

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

The 1792 map shows the area now forming the New Walk Conservation Area was part of the town's South Fields, a large area of unenclosed open fields owned by the Borough Freemen and used for grazing. A footpath leading to Gartree ran through the fields, possibly on the line of the Roman road from Leicester to Colchester. The land was above the River Soar flood plain and outside the increasingly cramped confines of the town's medieval core and, to the Corporation Of Leicester this made the South Fields highly desirable for building. The promenade was laid out by the Corporation of Leicester in 1785.

The provision of a pleasant formal pathway linking the town's more affluent residents with the open countryside and the Leicester race course (now Victoria Park) would have been another desirable outcome. However, despite this first move, it was not until nineteen years later, in 1804, that the Inclosure Act was passed. The Inclosure Award was issued in 1811 and following that King Street was laid

out. This was followed by Wellington Street, Princess Road and the streets surrounding Holy Trinity Church in 1812, 1815 and the 1820s respectively.

In 1840 the railway line was built and effectively formed a boundary between the developed north and the undeveloped south of the Character Area. This boundary is evident in all the historical maps and still maintains to the present day a clear separation.

The social history of New Walk reflects its changing function within the city from an upmarket residential area to a more varied area of mixed use development. The houses initially built on New Walk were designed for wealthier large families with servants. Spaces along the promenade such as The Oval were popular with nannies employed by wealthy families. By the late 19th Century, with the decrease in family sizes, some of these large houses became lodgings or apartments.

University Road and De Monfort Street are key north to south connections. Even today the railway line divides the character area between a more rectilinear grid layout of the blocks in the east and a less rectilinear but still well defined layout in the west of the area.

By the 1930s the south east of the of the Character Area had seen the construction of the De Montfort Hall (1913), Regent College (1926) and Leicester Fire and Rescue Station (1925-1927).

In the 1950s proposals were made for a central ring road and a major Civic Centre, both of which would have required the demolition of, amongst other buildings, The Crescent on King Street (shown in the image to the left). Although the original proposals were abandoned, a number of buildings in the area deteriorated substantially because of planning blight and were eventually demolished. Many were replaced by offices, such as 20-40 New Walk, Provincial House (37 New Walk) and the buildings at 20-34 and 9-43 Princess Road West.

It was the blighting of the area that led to the designation of much of the Character Area as one of Leicester's first Conservation Area in 1969. The first improvements to New Walk were also undertaken at that time when it was relaid in red tarmac, with granite and concrete setts forming drainage channels and edging. Consequently, when a central ring road (Waterloo Way) was again proposed in the 1970s, the Council succeeded in having it built in a cutting to minimise further damage to the continuity and character of New Walk. Although, Waterloo Way's construction did lead to some buildings of note being demolished.

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.

New Walk's historical importance to the city of Leicester is evident by the numerous heritage assets that are both nationally designated and locally listed. Almost the entirety of the character area is situated within the New Walk Conservation Area. The very north-west of the character area (including London Road) is located within the South Highfields Conservation Area. Following Connecting Leicester improvements to the site of the old New Walk Centre (New Walk Place (5)), the public realm captured in this document is considered to make a positive contribution to the townscape.

Most of the houses to the south of New Walk, on Princess Road, West Walk, De Montfort Street and Regent Road were built between 1862 and 1875. They depart from New Walk's style and begin to introduce more decoration. Some remain Classical, while others proclaim their owner's wealth and status, such as 44 Princess Road East (A) (which was built in 1870 for F J Morley, the owner of Morley's department store on Cheapside, by his brother). One of the most distinctive row of buildings in the Character Area is The Crescent (4) on King Street. It is set behind an area that was originally fenced off, and has a gently curved and well-proportioned façade of plain red brick with a slightly projecting central section featuring a pediment. Semi-circular fanlights above the doors and finely detailed wrought iron balconies and pediment porches combine to create a building of considerable architectural distinction.

The Character Area features registered parks and gardens. The New Walk Promenade is designated as a Grade II registered park and garden. This also includes De Montfort Square (C), Museum Square (D) and Victoria Park (E). This sits immediately to the east of the Character Area and is also designated as a Grade II registered park and garden by Historic England.



In 1980, the area surrounding the Holy Trinity Church (3) was declared a Housing Action Area (HAA). Due to this the Council agreed to extend the boundaries of the New Walk Conservation Area and to declare an Article 4 Direction in order to preserve the character and appearance of the houses adjacent to the south-west of the Character Area. There is also an Article 4 Direction within the South Highfields Conservation Area (B), which was declared in 1981.

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 is defined as an archaeological alert area and indicates where development is most likely to have an impact upon archaeological remains. While the Archaeological Alert Area does not extend into the Character Area, Belvoir Street in the north and Welford Road, in the west of the Character Area, are both within the Archaeological Alert Area. Therefore the presence of sites of archaeological importance cannot be ruled out if developments come forward that front onto those streets.

Building Frontages of some of the key heritage assets within the area:

1. Lancaster Road Fire Station
2. Belvoir Street Chapel
3. Holy Trinity Church
4. The Crescent
5. New Walk Place
6. The Pick Building
7. Bob Treweek House, De Montfort University
8. St Stephen's Church
9. New Walk Museum.



1. Lancaster Road Fire Station



2. Belvoir Street Chapel



3. Holy Trinity Church



4. The Crescent



5. New Walk Place



6. The Pick Building



7. Bob Treweek House, De Montfort Square



8. St Stephen's Church



9. New Walk Museum

Please see the plan on previous page for the location of key building frontages



Holy Trinity Church, viewed from King Street (Wigston Historical Society).



New Walk Museum shown in 1860. (Story of Leicester).



Postcard of St Stephens Church 1905 (Leicestershire Records Office).



The Friars, 154 Upper New Walk. (Story of Leicester/English Heritage).



Belvoir Street Chapel, 1909. (Story of Leicester).



New Walk Centre newly built. Image taken in 1975. Holy Trinity Church seen in the foreground (ITV News Central).



The Crescent on King Street, 1950. (Leicester City Council).



Cramant Cottages, behind King Street. Built 1820s (Story of Leicester).

4. Key Views

Key Views:

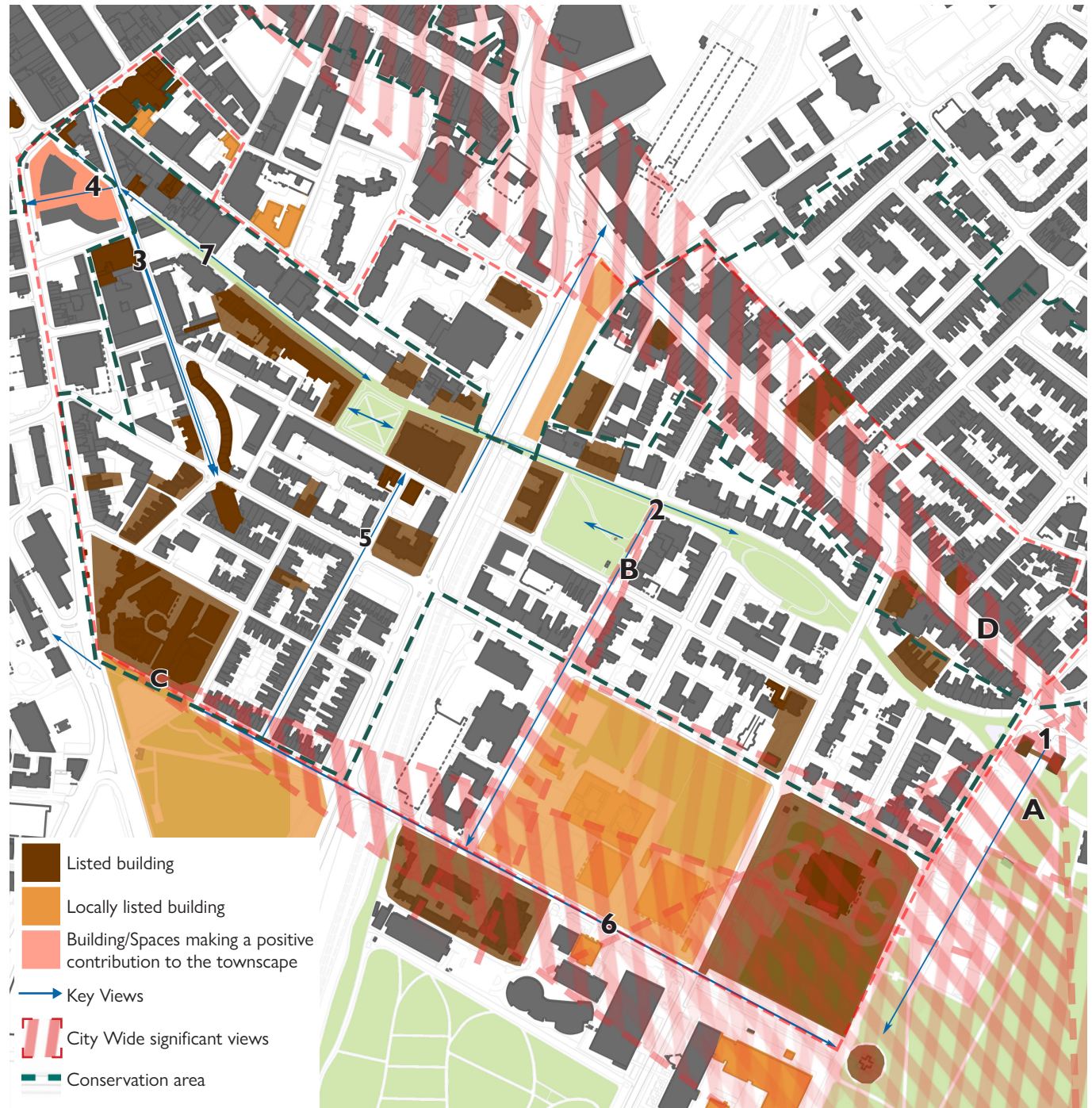
The plan shows the location of some of the key views within the New Walk Character Area. Some of the views have been captured in the New Walk and South Highfield Conservation Area Appraisals.

In addition, the plan also shows the four of the city-wide significant views and vistas that are of heritage and townscape value. These views in New Walk are:

- A. The view south from London Road and Granville Road, towards the War Memorial and the University of Leicester's cluster of tall buildings (the Engineering Building, Charles Wilson Building, the Attenborough Building). This view takes in part of Victoria Park.
- B. The view south along De Montfort Street that is terminated by the Grade II listed Fire Station
- C. The long view south east along Lancaster Road which is terminated by the Grade I listed War Memorial in Victoria Park.
- D. The view north-west along London Road towards Bradgate Park.

The plan on the right and images on the following page highlights some of the key views that this document captures:

- 1. The view south from London Road, through the Victoria Park Gates and listed Lodges, towards the War Memorial and University of Leicester's Attenborough Building beyond.
- 2. The view south along De Montfort Street towards the Grade II listed Fire Station.
- 3. The view south east along King Street towards the Grade II listed Holy Trinity Church
- 4. The view west through New Walk Place onto Welford Road. This an important view out of the Character Area and aids legibility between New Walk and the LRI/DMU character areas.
- 5. The view north-east along West Street that is terminated by the New Walk Museum.



- 6. The view south-east along Lancaster Road that is terminated by the War Memorial in Victoria Park.
- 7. The view north-west from the New Walk Promenade towards the New Walk Place



1



2a



2b Zoomed in showing station tower



3



4



5



6



7

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.

The New Walk Character Area's layout is informed by its long history. There is much that should be protected and enhanced.

New Walk has an urban grain that consists of perimeter blocks that provide well defined building lines; however, there are examples of fragmentation to the urban grain. For example, surface level car parks on the corner of Duke Street and Regent Road. Additionally, there appears to be a divide along the railway line, between the east of the character area (with larger blocks, more space and larger pavilion buildings) and the west of the character area (which has a fine grain, with tight and well defined blocks).

Heritage and townscape assets of the Character Area (such as Holy Trinity Church (A) and New Walk Place (B)) contribute positively to its identity and help with the legibility through the character area. One of the key spaces in the area is the New Walk Promenade which is designated as a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The promenade features two green squares, De Montfort Square (C), Museum Square (D) and The Oval (E). Adjacent to the Character Area is Victoria Park (F), one of the City's prominent public parks, and Welford Road Cemetery. Both are Registered Parks and Gardens (G).

Gateways into the area are varied. Some have strong legibility such as the gateway at New Walk Place. Others could be improved such as the crossing at Waterloo Way and Regent Road.



5. Streets and Spaces

A major detrimental impact upon the urban grain of the New Walk Character Area are the developments that are taking place to the rear of the perimeter blocks (as can be seen in image 3). These are occurring both as extensions onto single storey rear projections (2) or as independent buildings within the blocks.

As the historical plan from 1914 shows, such developments are not in keeping with the grain and heritage of the New Walk Character Area.

There is an established hierarchy of building scales. Larger developments to the rear of sites upset this established hierarchy. Moreover, the character of rear yards and garden spaces is an integral aspect of the urban character and helps provide the space to contextualise the existing structures.

Backland developments can often lead to units with poor residential amenity. If several blocks in New Walk see development come forward, the cumulative effect would result in a detrimental change to the character of the area.

On some streets, the majority of the original garden walls have been demolished, although many were rebuilt during the HAA improvement programme. It is evident that some boundary walls have been lost and either replaced with inappropriate boundary treatment or open areas for parking.

Image 5 is taken from De Montfort Street and highlights this problem. This is fundamentally changing the character of New Walk.



1. Perimeter Block on New Walk.



2. Perimeter Block on New Walk: Historic 1914 Plan.



3. The rear of the block north of the Oval.



4. Multi storey extensions on to the rear of 130 New Walk have been proposed.



5. Example of boundary removal for parking on University Road.

6a. Existing Building Heights and Planning History

Context:

The heights shown are based on 1 storey at 3m. 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 existing heights in the New Walk Character Area consists mostly of buildings that are less than 4 storeys.

There are heritage assets that provide legibility and a sense of place such as the spires of St Stephen's Church, Holy Trinity Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church, along with the Fire Station's tower; these are identified in the document as tall structures.

Newer developments such as the residential and office buildings on the site of the former New Walk Centre are generally above 4 storeys.

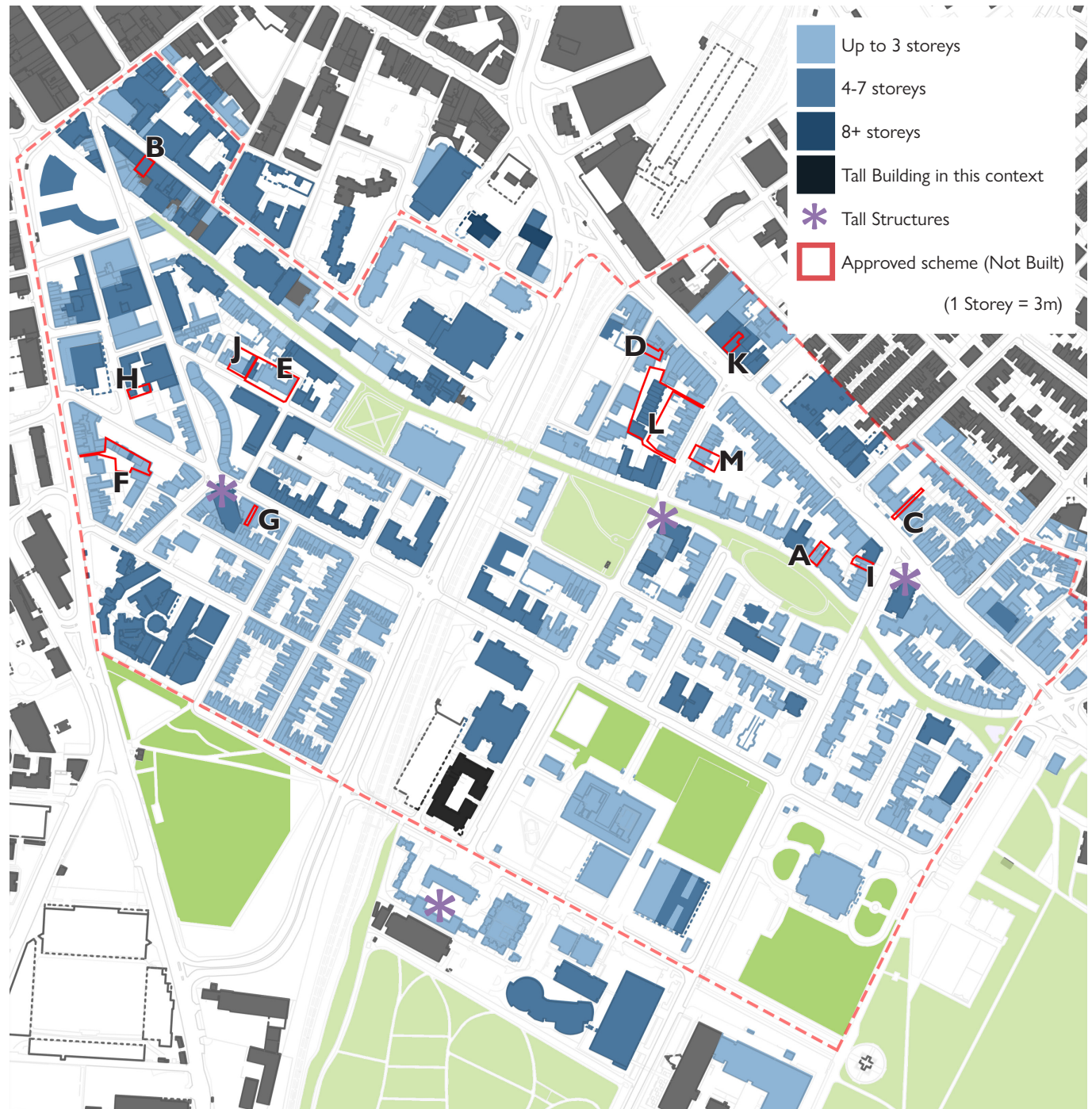
With a height of 16 storeys, the Opal Court student accommodation building on Regent Road is the only example of a tall building within the context of the Character Area. The building does have a detrimental impact on the adjacent heritage assets such as the Fire Station, the WQE College (Regent College) and the view of the Grade I listed War Memorial from Lancaster Road.

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:

- A. 20130647 at 136-138 New Walk (A) - Retrospective application for change of use from offices (class b1) to student accommodation comprising 30 studio flats (no use class); extensions to rear; external alterations
- B. 20162462 at 31/2-5 Wellington Street (B). Change of use of first, second and third floor from community centre and place of worship (class d1) to 12 self-contained flats (4 x studio, 4 x 1 bed, 4 x 2 bed) (class c3); change of use of ground floor from use class a2 to classes a1, a2, a3, a5; construction of single storey roof



- top extension. 4 storey eaves height maintained, but building will have a fifth storey set back.
- C. 20170020 at 98 London Road (C) - Notification Change of use from offices (class b1 (a)) to one flat (class c3) (amended plan received 13/01/2017)
 - D. 20170916 at 6-8 Nelson Street (D) - Notification of proposed change of use from offices (class b1 (a)) to 19 studio flats (class c3)
 - E. 20170940 at 22-24 Princess Road West (E) - Construction of third floor extension with dormers at front to form 2 studio flats (2 x 1bed studio) (class c3). Site currently being built as a prior approval
 - F. 20171730 at 100 Welford Road, Land Rear Of (F) - Demolition of three buildings; change of use of retained buildings from industry (class b2) and construction of three and four storey buildings to provide 13 flats (7 one bed; 6 two bed) (class c3) and office (class b1) (amended plan) (subject to section 106 agreement)
 - G. 20182256 at 55 Regent Road (G) - Construction of studio flat in roof space; dormers at rear; alterations (class c3)
 - H. 20182393 at 42 Duke Street- Change of use from offices (class b1) to six flats (1 x 2 bed, 1 x 1 bed, 4 x studio) (class c3)
 - I. 20182405 at 5 University Road (I) - Construction of upper floor extension at rear of premises (class b1/c3); alterations. No change to the overall height of the building.
 - J. 20182139 at Renaissance House 14-20 Princess Road West (I) - Change of use of building from offices (class b1(c)) to student accommodation (43 x 1 bed studios) (sui generis); external and internal alterations
 - K. 20182658 at 64 London Road (J) - Change of Use of First Second and Third Floors from Offices (Class B1 (a)) to 35 Flats (35xstudio) (Class C3).
 - L. 20180528 at De Montfort Mews (K) - Demolition of Buildings; Construction of Three/Four Storey Building to provide 91 Studio Flats (sui generis) (amended plans) (S106 Agreement). This is now under construction.
 - M. Change of use from offices (class b1) to student flats; part demolition; construction of 3 storey rear extension; to provide 18 student studio flats (sui generis)

6b. Examples of Positive Development

There are examples in the New Walk Character Area of recent developments that have respected and enhanced the character of the area and are of an appropriate height and massing for their context. The four examples shown on the right are: The Oval on 57 New Walk (20161047), 8-10 West Walk (20162277), 67-75 Princess Road East (20160758) and the New Walk Centre following redevelopment (20150946).

The Oval Living scheme at 57 New Walk was for the construction of a four storey building for 54 residential units. The articulated façade helps to break up the elevation. While the area predominantly consists of red brick buildings, it has been to the building's benefit that quality detailing and materials were used. This has allowed for a positive contemporary scheme.

The scheme on West Walk was for the change of use from B1 offices to student accommodation. This included the construction of a 4 storey building. A positive townscape aspect of this building was that it provided good surveillance onto the street. The ground floor in particular has a good size opening that should theoretically provide an active frontage to West Walk.

The development at 67-75 Princess Road East was for a 4 storey building comprising of studio flats for student accommodation. The building sits well in the setting around De Montfort Square and when viewed from the New Walk promenade as the photograph shows.

One of the most significant changes to the New Walk Character Area was the demolition of the 8 and 13 storey towers of the old New Walk Centre and the redevelopment of the site. The redevelopment is of an appropriate mass and scale. It also provides a new public space and extension to the New Walk Promenade. Furthermore, the adjacent streets and public space benefit from good surveillance from the building's ground floor uses (i.e. cafés) and the footfall of pedestrians.



Oval Living, 57 New Walk (20161047).



West Walk (20162277).



67-75 Princess Road East (20160758) viewed from the New Walk Promenade across De Montfort Square.



New Walk Place in 2019.

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.

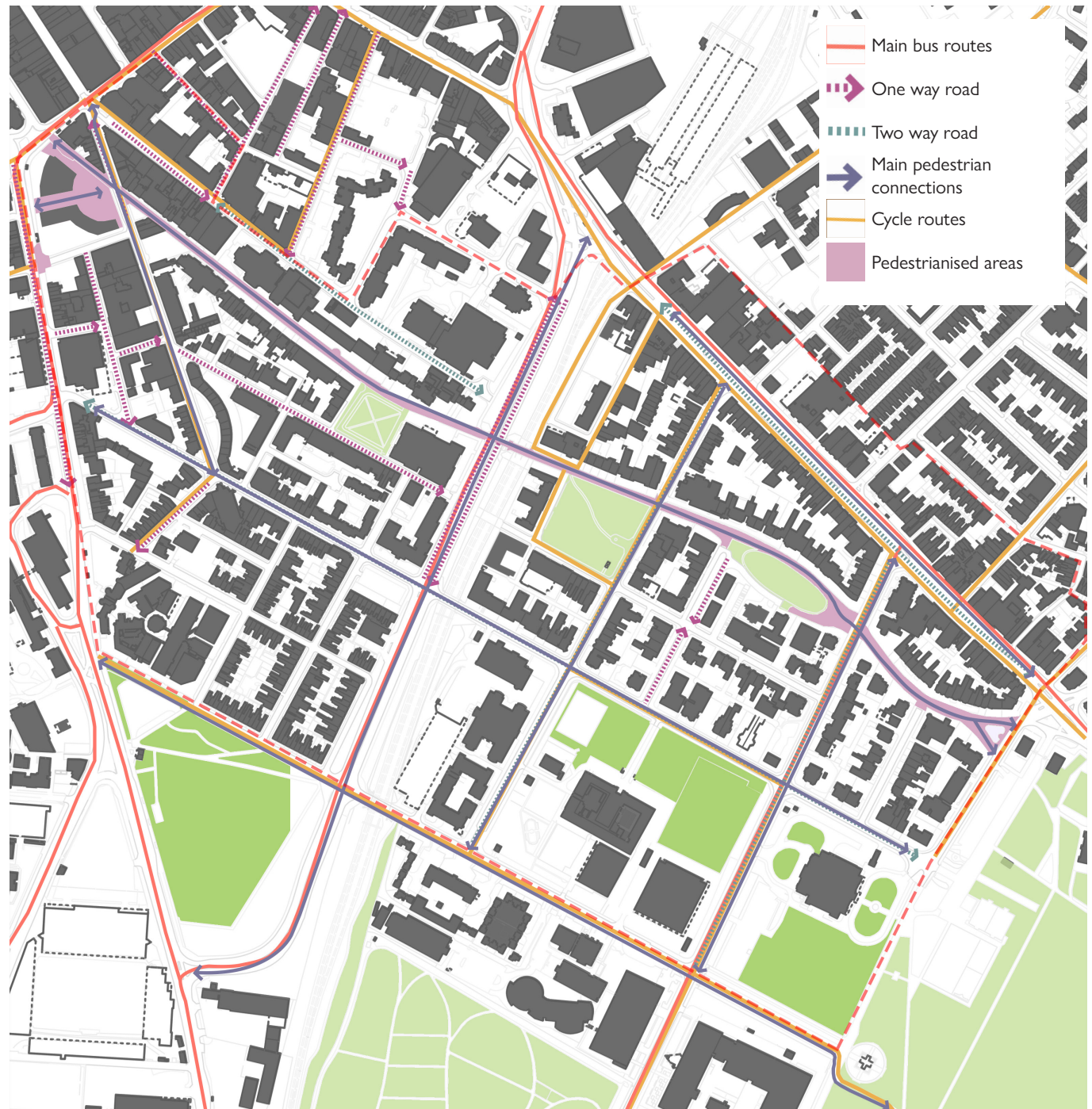
London Road is a key cycle, vehicular route and connection onto the ring road. Welford Road and Tigers/Waterloo Way are the main vehicular connections that traverse north to south through the area. Tigers Way/Waterloo Way provide a connection barrier in conjunction with the railway line between the two halves of the New Walk Character Area. This route is the least pedestrian friendly.

The New Walk Promenade is the main pedestrian connection through the area and spans the length of the character area. The New Walk promenade is the main crossing point (via a pedestrian bridge) over the Railway Line and Waterloo Way. The high footfall of pedestrians helps this key route feel active during the day. Other key pedestrian routes are King Street, Regent Road, University Road, De Montfort Street and London Road. On match days for the City's professional rugby and football teams, Tigers Way/Waterloo Way is a key pedestrian route that links supporters from the railway station to the stadia.

There is a significant one way road network in the west of the area off the main routes. Many of these streets have a comparatively lower order and are residential. Regent Road is the main two-way vehicular route through the Character Area from east to west.

Due to the greatest vehicular movements being on the peripheral streets, the Character Area has a noticeable number of pedestrians, particularly along the New Walk Promenade itself.

The Character Area is well served by bus connections that run along Waterloo Way, London Road and Welford Road.



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.

The use of the ground floor appears to have a significant impact upon how active a frontage is within New Walk. The Character Area has a significant number of office uses. During the day time, the area generally feels active, but outside of office hours there is concern that some of the spaces and streets may not feel as active as earlier in the day.

The pedestrian routes along the Railway line and Tigers/Waterloo Way has limited activity and due to the lower footfall (as a result of the vehicular dominance) is not a particularly active space.

There are instances of where the boundaries in some streets limits the effectiveness of an active frontage. The height of the boundary treatment has also led to frontages becoming blank for passing pedestrians. This is especially the case when the property's ground floor is not elevated.

Despite some high boundary treatments and set back buildings along the New Walk Promenade, during the day the space and route feels active due to the footfall, especially the site of the former New Walk Centre.

Overall, there is a good prevalence of doors facing and opening on to the streets within the Character Area. However, the northern portion of De Montfort Street does have examples of properties with doors on sides of the buildings not on principal elevations facing onto the street.



8. Active Frontages

The images on the right are examples of both successful and unsuccessful frontages, within the New Walk Character Area. Small changes and attention to detail regarding frontages can have a big impact upon the area's character.

1) By recessing the doorway and providing bays for seating next to a window (shown on London Road), a building frontage is successfully active and allows for a greater interaction and relation between the internal space and public realm. The seating within window bays is also utilised at the Belmont Hotel (2) and provides surveillance onto the New Walk Promenade.

3) By having the ground floor windows of buildings elevated half a storey (as shown on University Road) this offers a successful compromise between the privacy of the building occupants and the surveillance onto the street below.

4) Some of the boundary treatment within the Character Area (for example on Regent Road) causes the effect of a blank frontage by having high hedges with walls. In combination with the building line being set back, the public realm does not feel as well overlooked as it could be. Examples of frontages working that could work successfully include ground floor bay windows that offer surveillance around the perimeter of hedges and boundary walls (5).

6) The ground windows on West Walk are of a good size and a threshold is provided. Despite this, ground floor residents still cover the windows with blinds/curtains.

7) Regent Street, that connects London Road with Nelson Street, is narrow and lacks surveillance, with windows that are above head height on the adjacent building. This has led to signs of vandalism along the route.

8) Conversely, King Street and the spaces around the site of the New Walk Centre feel very active. This is achieved by transparent building frontages (and so called "thick frontages" with seating areas outside) working in collaboration with a public space with high footfall.

9) The Pick building on Wellington Street provides ground floor windows; however, the windows have been tinted. While surveillance onto the street may be provided from within the building, pedestrians may not feel that there is surveillance.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

10) The ground floor of the homes on the corner of Marquis Street and Duke Street have front doors that open onto the street. Each home has a space within the threshold (separated with railings) as a private space. As can be seen in the photograph, this space includes planting. The home features floor to ceiling glazing (which includes the front door). This example shows that providing surveillance onto the street, protecting the privacy of residents and making a positive contribution to the street is possible.

The removal of boundary treatment, especially to provide off street car parking, remains a concern.



10

9. Land Uses

Ground floor:

As the plan on the right shows there are a variety of uses within the New Walk Character Area. Historically, New Walk was primarily an upmarket residential area. By the 20th century, the area around King Street had become primarily commercial and industrial, a function which it retained until the collapse of the hosiery and footwear trades in the 1970s and 1980s. The Crescent and Crescent Cottages have been converted to offices and several former warehouses and factories have been converted into flats or demolished to make way for new office and residential developments.

Most of the buildings along New Walk have been converted for office use, but residential properties are an increasingly common use. Within the last 20 years housing uses have begun to return to New Walk. Some are conversions from offices, such as at 77-89 Princess Road East and 140 New Walk, and others are new build, such as 4 University Road, 19-61 Princess Road West and 2 Salisbury Road. The proximity of the area to the city's universities has attracted student halls of residence, such as 73 Princess Road East.

In the streets around Holy Trinity Church, most buildings remain in residential use, although many have been subdivided from larger units into flats. There is concern from a high number of office to residential conversions reducing the mix of the area. It is important that where there are new domestic uses, that there is a good ground floor relationships (especially onto the promenade). With the high amount of office use in some areas, there does seem to be little surveillance onto the public realm outside office hours.

The University of Leicester occupies many of the large properties, as shown by the education uses in the east and south of New Walk. Regent College is another education use in the south of the Character Area. There are also some hotels and guest houses and an increasing number of residential conversions. Closer to the city centre, there are more leisure uses. Unsurprisingly, London Road has a high concentration of units with retail pub and cafe uses.



9. Land Uses

(Including above ground distribution)



Domestic



Community



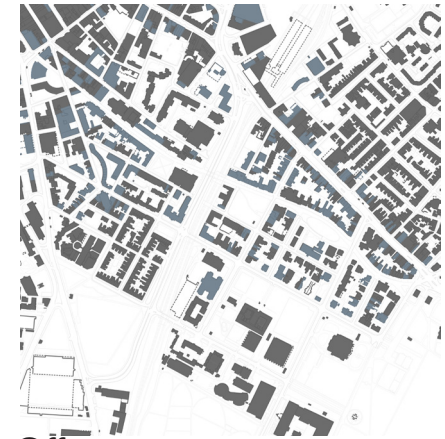
Industrial



Education



Leisure



Office



Places of Worship



Retail



Utilities

9. Land Uses

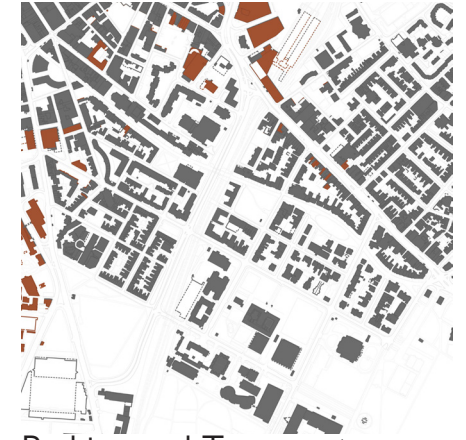
(Including above ground distribution)



Medical



Miscellaneous



Parking and Transport

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 New Walk Character Area has been subject to extensive public realm restoration schemes since 2000.

As has previously been mentioned in this document, the redevelopment of the site of the old New Walk Centre was carried out as part of the Connecting Leicester Improvements. The 8 and 13 storey towers of the old New Walk Centre were demolished and replaced with a 5 storey residential building and 5 storey office building. Additionally, the layout of the new buildings on site provided the opportunity for an open public space. Moreover, public realm improvements have enhanced the pedestrian connections between New Walk, Belvoir Street and Welford Road, and created a new well used public space. On the western boundary of the Character Area, there have been cycle lane improvements on Welford Road.

Currently, there are Connecting Leicester improvements being carried out on London Road. Some of the road space is being reallocated for dedicated off road cycle lanes, improved bus stops and road crossings. The new bus stops will channel cyclists behind the shelters, thus improving the safety for all road users. Additionally, side roads will be raised to pavement level at their junctions with London Road, helping to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

There are two proposed Connecting Leicester improvements within New Walk. The first of which is along Lancaster Road (east from the railway bridge to University Road). This will see the widening of the footpath on the north of Lancaster Road. There is also a segregated "with-flow" cycle lane proposed.

There are early proposals for improvements along the length of University Road and out beyond the Character Area. Some of the proposed improvements include the narrowing of the road on



10 Connecting Leicester Improvements

approach to the New Walk crossing.

Images 1 and 2 (on the right) show the site of the former New Walk Centre before and after the Connecting Leicester Improvements, respectively. What was a surface level car park and space that suffered from wind turbulence around the two buildings is now a successful well used public space that provides good pedestrian connections between Welford Road and New Walk.

Likewise, image 3 shows the image looking south east along London Road (with work having started) and image 4 is a CGI impression of what the London Road will look like following the Connecting Leicester Improvements. The proposed image of London Road shows the example of a side road (Saxby Street) that will be raised to pavement level at the junctions with London Road, to help give priority to pedestrians and cyclists.



1. View down into the site of the old New Walk Centre. (Alex Hannam, Flickr). N.d.



2. Site of the old New Walk Centre as it looks in 2019.



3. View of London Road. June 2019



4. CGI Image of London Road following 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.'

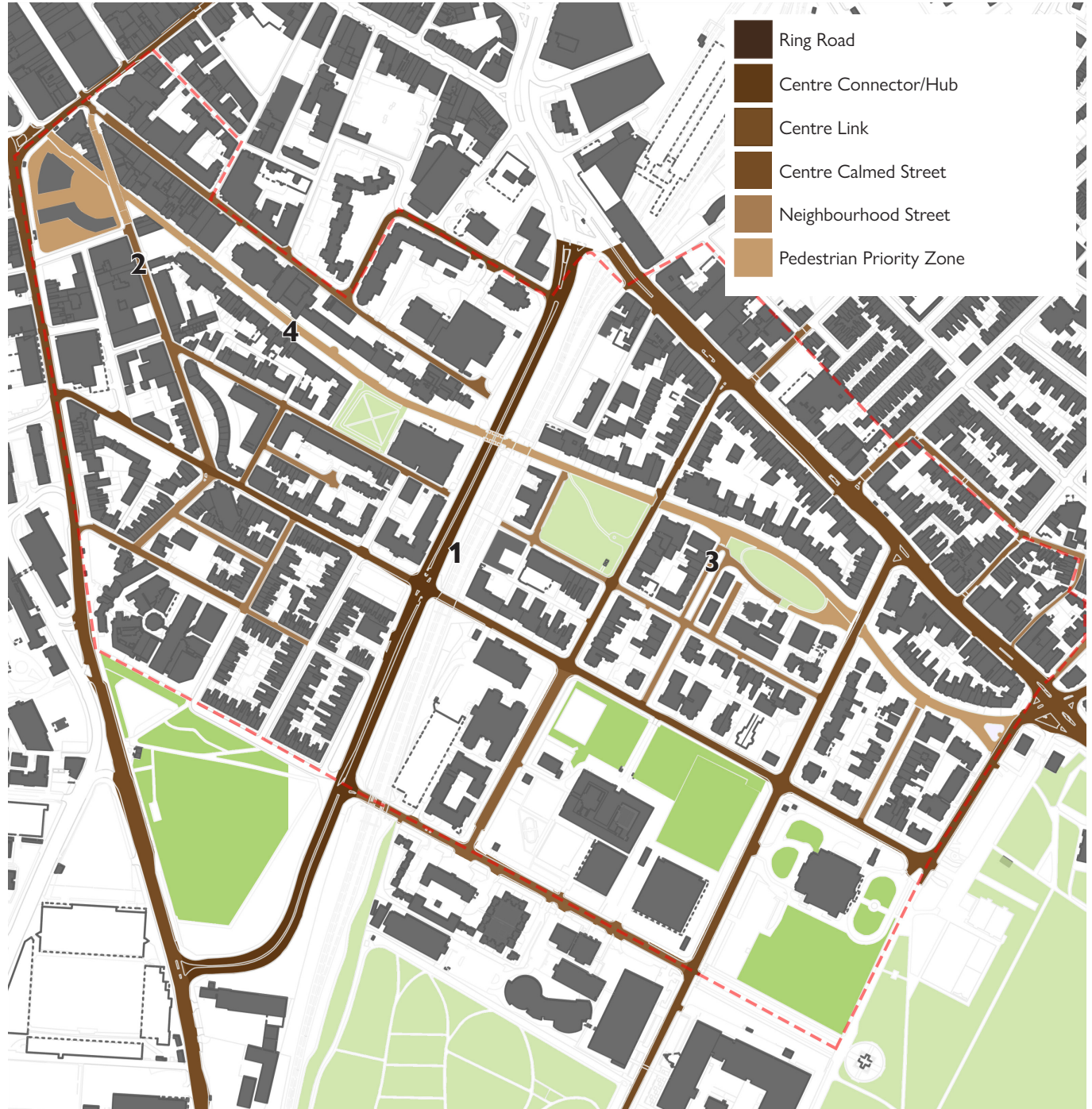
Important for place making is the contribution different street character types within a street hierarchy make to enable people to find their way around and easily understand a place. For example, the informality and lower building heights of a lower order neighbourhood street provides a very different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

Given that Tigers Way/ Waterloo Way feeds into the ring road, it is unsurprisingly the street with the highest order in the Character Area (A centre connector).

The New Walk Character Area has its highest order of streets on the edge of the area and the centre of the area has lower order streets, with London Road and Welford Road being designated as a Centre Link streets. Some of the key routes through New Walk such as Regent Road and Lancaster Road have also been designated as centre link roads that reflect their importance as major east-west and north-south routes in New Walk.

Many of the internal streets of New Walk have a lower hierarchy and this reflects much of the uses of the adjacent buildings as small offices and residential accommodation. For example Wellington Street has been designated as a Centre Calmed street and Turner Street which predominantly serves residential accommodation is classed as a neighbourhood street.

The New Walk Promenade and the public space on the site of the



former New Walk Centre are designated as Pedestrian Priority Zones (PPZ).

Given that there is a dominance of relatively lower order streets within New Walk this will have an impact and will be a consideration upon height that would be appropriate on potential development sites.



1. Centre Connector Hub, Tigers/Waterloo Way.



2. Centre Calmed Street, King Street.



3. Neighbourhood Street, West Walk.



4. Pedestrian Priority Zone (PPZ), New Walk Promenade.



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).

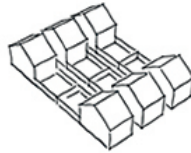
Development guidance includes;

- 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 New Walk Character Area falls under category 1 and category 2 in the Townscape Character Area Management Plan. It is anticipated there will be evolution without significant change and most importantly a very strong emphasis on the protection of heritage assets and conservation led development based primarily around small-scale office development.

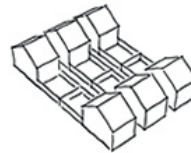
1. Respect and protection of heritage assets

NOW



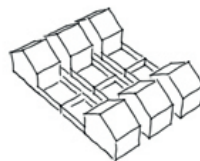
PROTECT

FUTURE



2. Evolution without significant change

NOW



EVOLVE

FUTURE



Character Area Development & Management Plan



12. Growth and Development Potential: Potential Development Sites

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.

Given that New Walk was 'built out' over 100 years ago, there are very few identified sites for new development in the Character Area. The plan shows those identified within the revised New Walk Conservation Area Appraisal (adopted 2020).

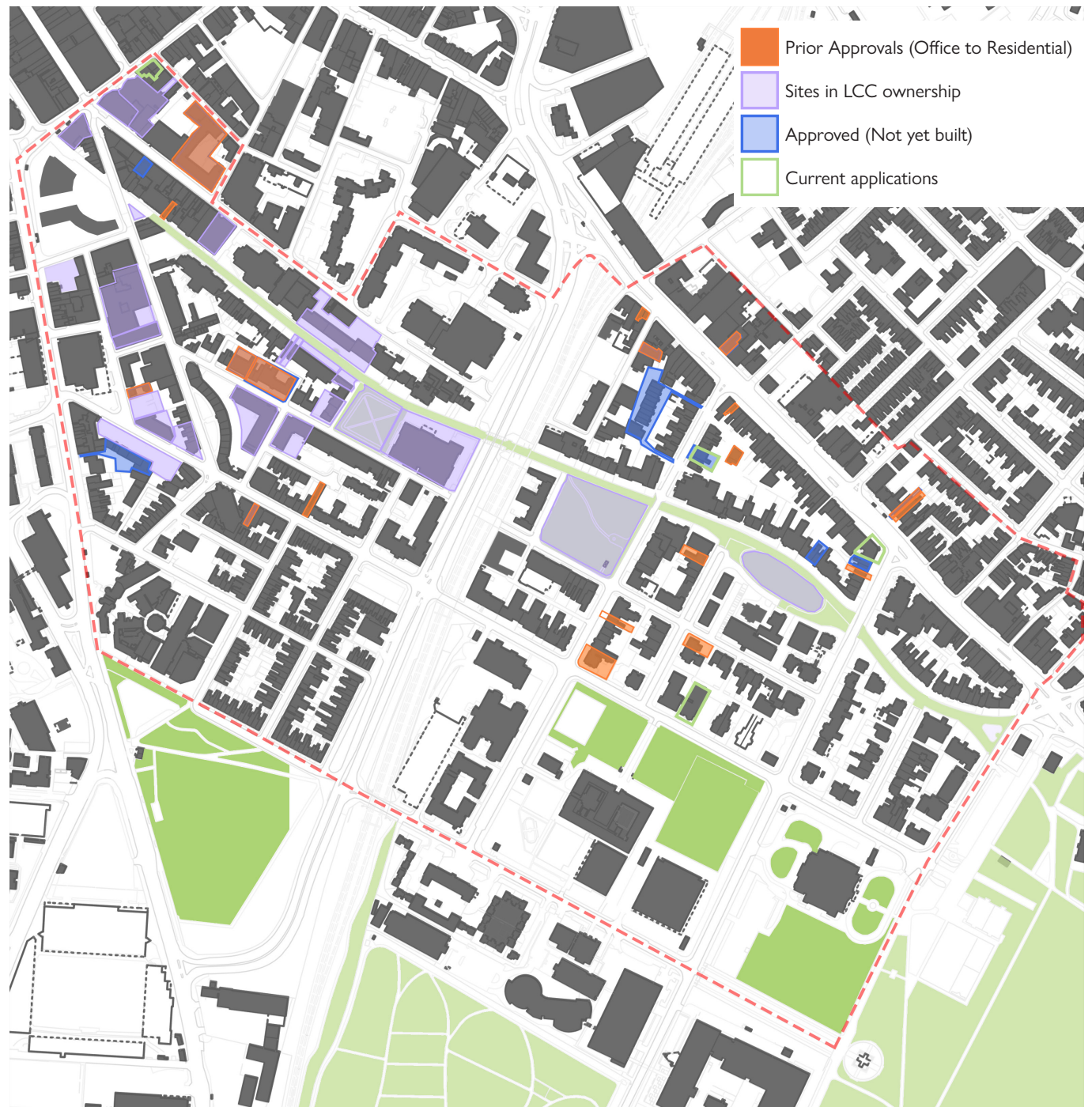


12. Growth and Development Potential

Whilst there are limited sites for new development, there is a high level of planning activity in the area. Part A showed that there are a large number of prior approval applications for the conversion of offices to residential accommodation. Some of those include extending and/or building in the rear of the perimeter blocks. There are a handful of sites that are under Leicester City Council ownership, including Regent Road car park and Duke Street car park.

Based on recent applications and approvals the most likely types of residential proposals to come forward are conversions from offices to apartments to let - many of these being studios for students.

There is concern over the number of office to residential conversions. The plan shows the location of current prior approval applications (where construction has not started) for office to residential conversion. Residential developments are either flats (often studio apartments) or HiMOs (Housing in Multiple Occupation). The transient nature of the occupants has the possibility to change the character of the area, while the loss of employment land may impact the vitality of the local economy.



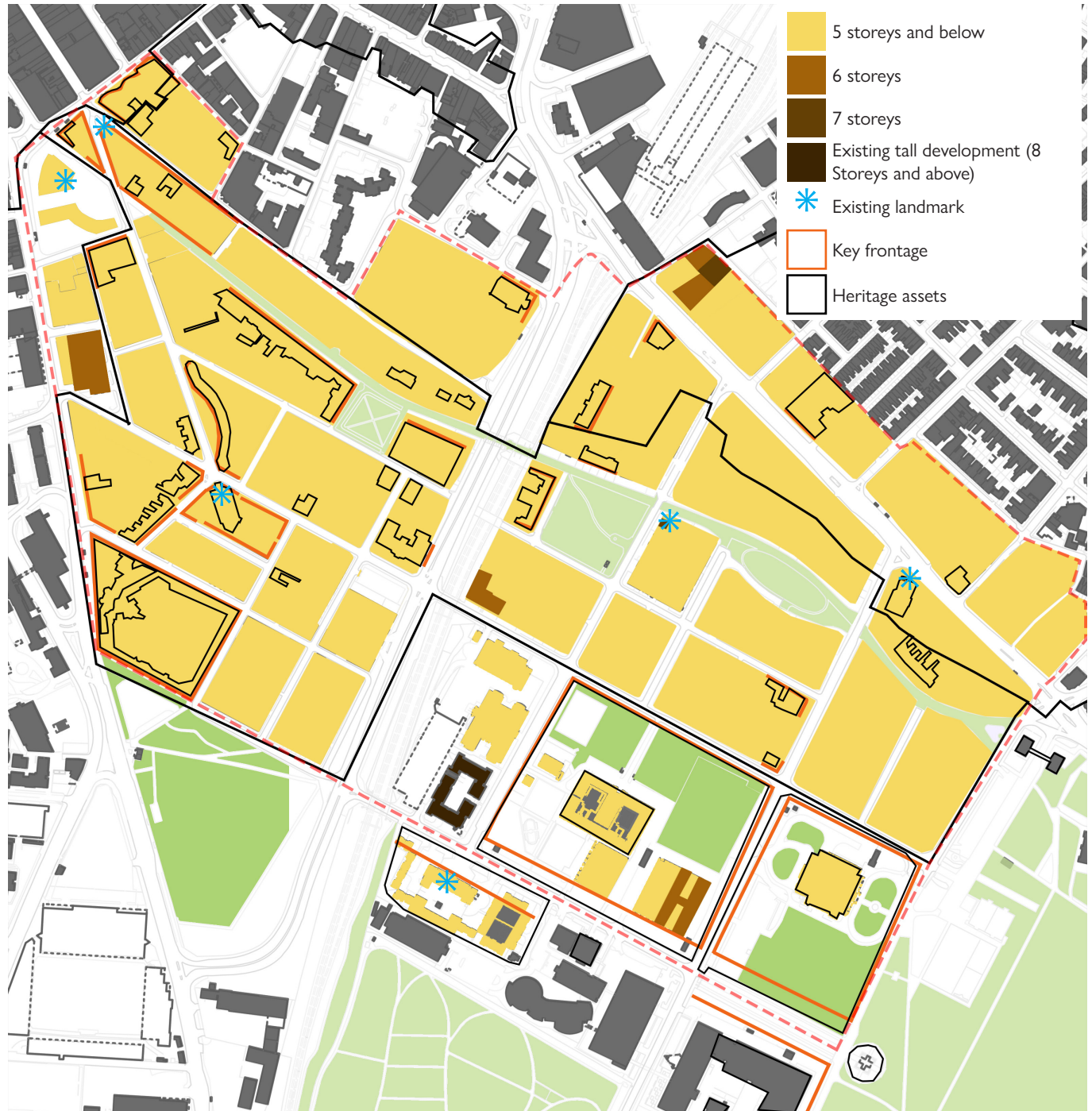
13. Proposed Building Heights

The proposed maximum 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 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.

As the previous pages show, the New Walk Character Area falls under section number 1 "Protect" on the Townscape Character Area Management Plan. There are few potential development sites and thus very limited opportunity for further residential development.

The character area will have an average proposed height of 3, 4 and 5 storeys. Overall, this is very much in keeping with the ambient height of central Leicester as a whole. The plan shows the vast majority of sites in the area with a proposed heights being 5 storeys and below. It should be noted that these are general heights and each individual site will need to be considered in relation to its context. Proposals must have a mass, scale and form that are appropriate and respect the general scale of the area. Additional guidance will be provided from the relevant conservation area character appraisals and management plans.



14. Future Planning

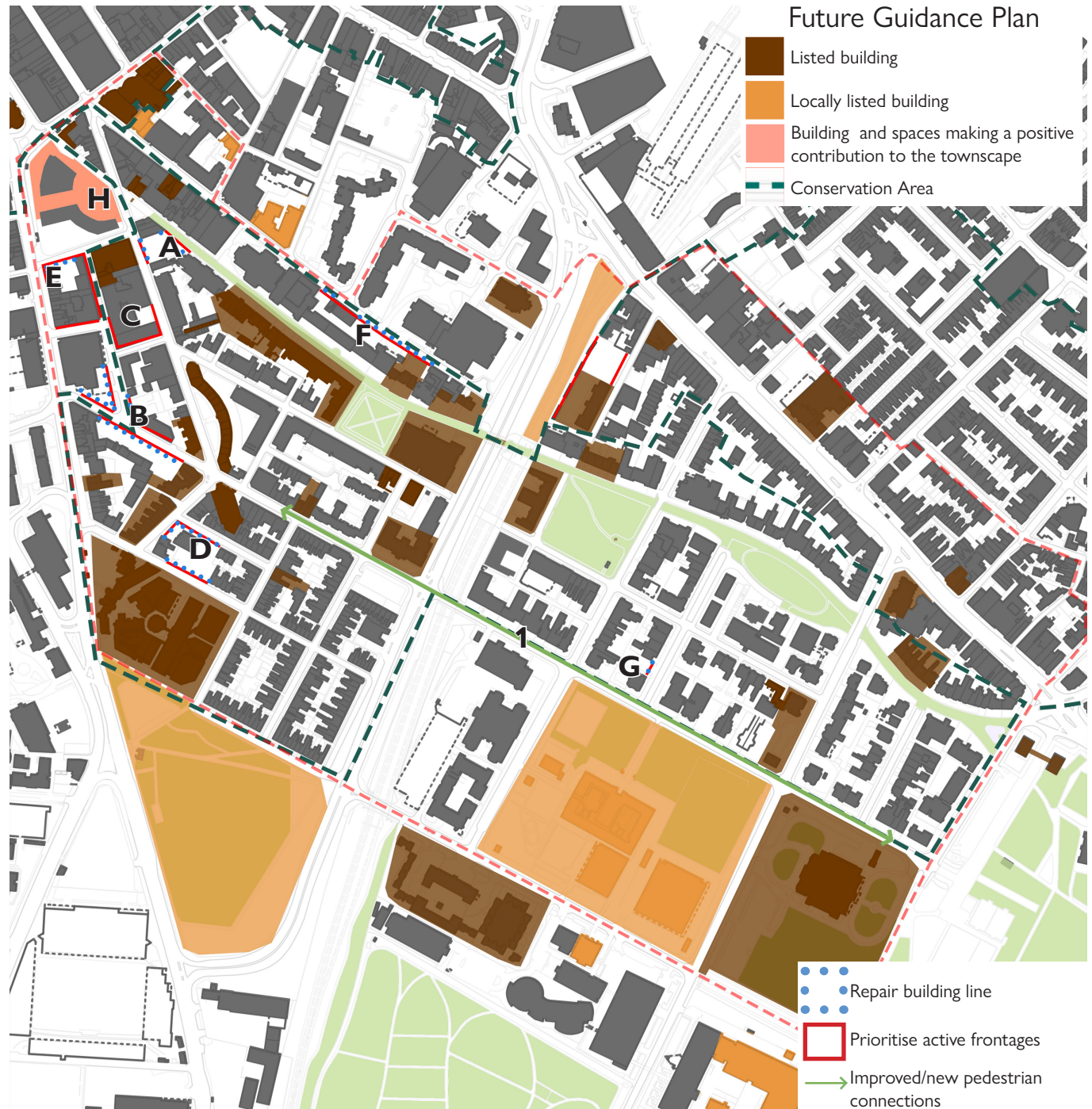
The vision for the New Walk Character Area is for an area which protects the existing heritage assets but also allows for conservation led development based primarily around small-scale office development. Residential development (Class C3) and Student Accommodation (Sui Generis) will be acceptable in the form of new development on existing vacant plots. When planning permission is required, existing offices will be retained wherever their quality permits. All new development or conversions will be expected to help create a high-quality environment in which to live and work. Proposals also should also promote the conservation, enhancement and sensitive use of Listed Buildings and Conservation areas. Also, within this area changes to D1 uses will be acceptable, where they do not adversely affect residential amenity.

The New Walk Character Area falls under category 1 and category 2 in the Townscape Character Area Management Plan. It is anticipated there will be evolution without significant change and most importantly a very strong emphasis on the protection of heritage assets. There are very limited opportunities for development across the character area.

Should development on sites come forward then the following principles must be adhered:

The development on site should respect the prevailing character and ambient height of development within the area. This document recommends a height that is below 5 storeys. The urban grain should be respected. Therefore there should be a continuation of building lines with frontages. A traditional materials pallet but with a contemporary architectural style that continues the principles from the wider existing context.

Again, it must be stressed that each individual site will need to be considered in relation to its context



Criteria to Guide New Development:

Future development

Development sites should not be considered in isolation of the wider objectives for the area.

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.

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.

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

Locations where active frontages should be prioritised are predominantly located in the north west of the Character Area. These streets include:

- (A) The former site of Fenwick's Car Park between Kind Street and New Walk.
- (B) Where Duke Street meets Regent Road
- (C) Duke Street Marquis Street and King Street
- (D) Tower Street
- (E) Marlborough Street
- (F) Wellington Street
- (G) Gap sites such as the car park adjacent to 2 West Walk

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

- 1. East – West along Regent Road and crossing with Tigers Way

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.

Areas of focus.

- (A) The former site of Fenwick's Car Park between Kind Street and New Walk.
- (B) Where Duke Street meets Regent Road
- (C) Duke Street Marquis Street and King Street
- (D) Tower Street
- (E) Marlborough Street
- (F) Wellington Street
- (G) Gap sites such as the car park adjacent to 2 West Walk

Address the fragmentation to the urban grain caused by the removal of traditional boundary treatment in place of off street parking.

Backland Development

The increased density of development needs to be managed. Development within the rear 'backlands' of perimeter blocks which has a detrimental impact on the character and fine urban grain of New Walk will not be acceptable.

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.

Supporting the existing and future mix of uses

When planning permission is required, existing offices (Class B1a) will be retained wherever their quality permits (i.e. unless they are unsuitable for modern office uses). Economic Development Needs Assessment shows which offices should be retained. Residential (Class C3) and Student Accommodation (Sui Generis) will be acceptable in the form of new development on existing vacant plots.

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