

Old Town Character Area Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

Evidence Document

Draft v.13

**Urban Design Team
February 2020**

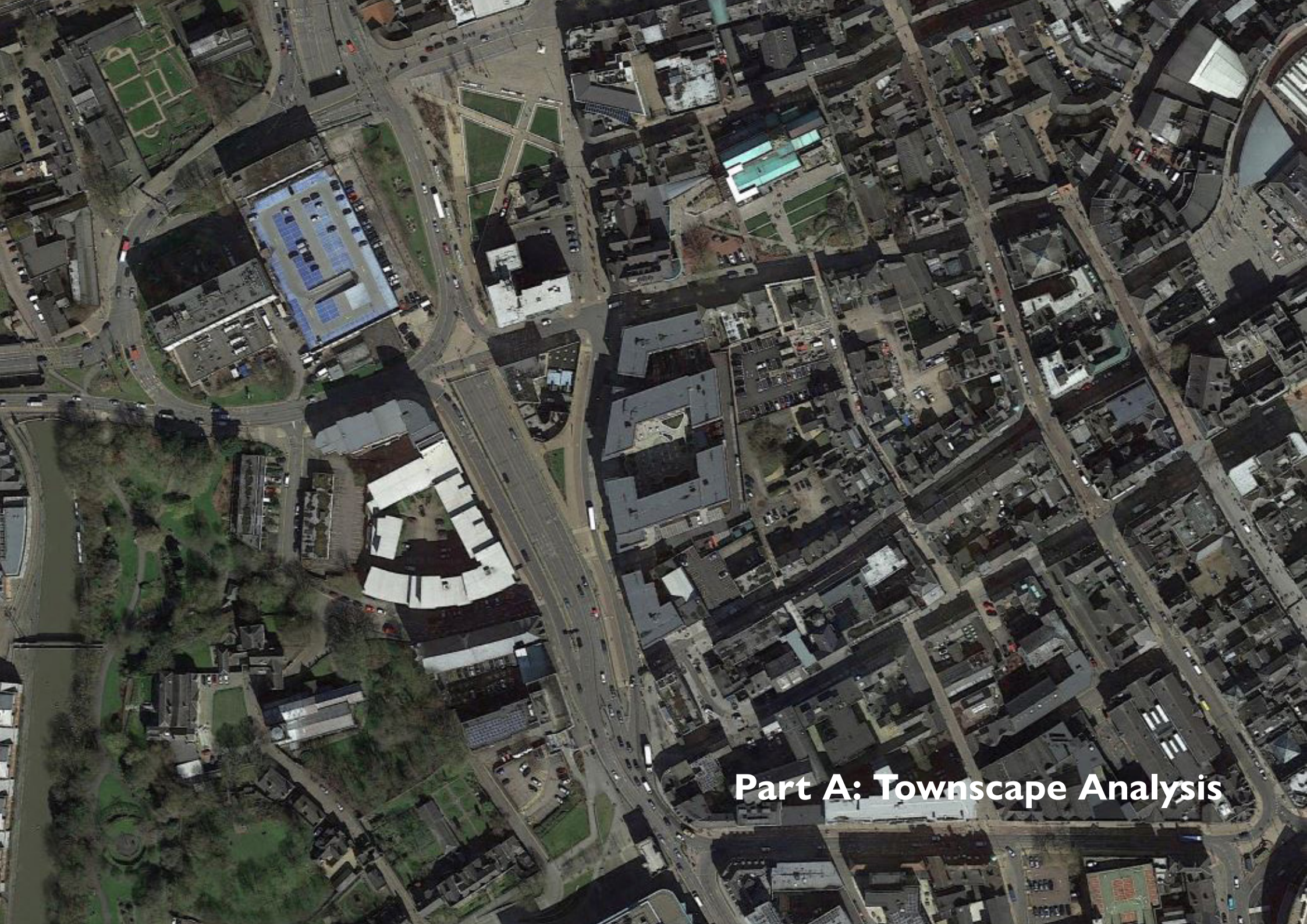
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Part A: Townscape Analysis

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

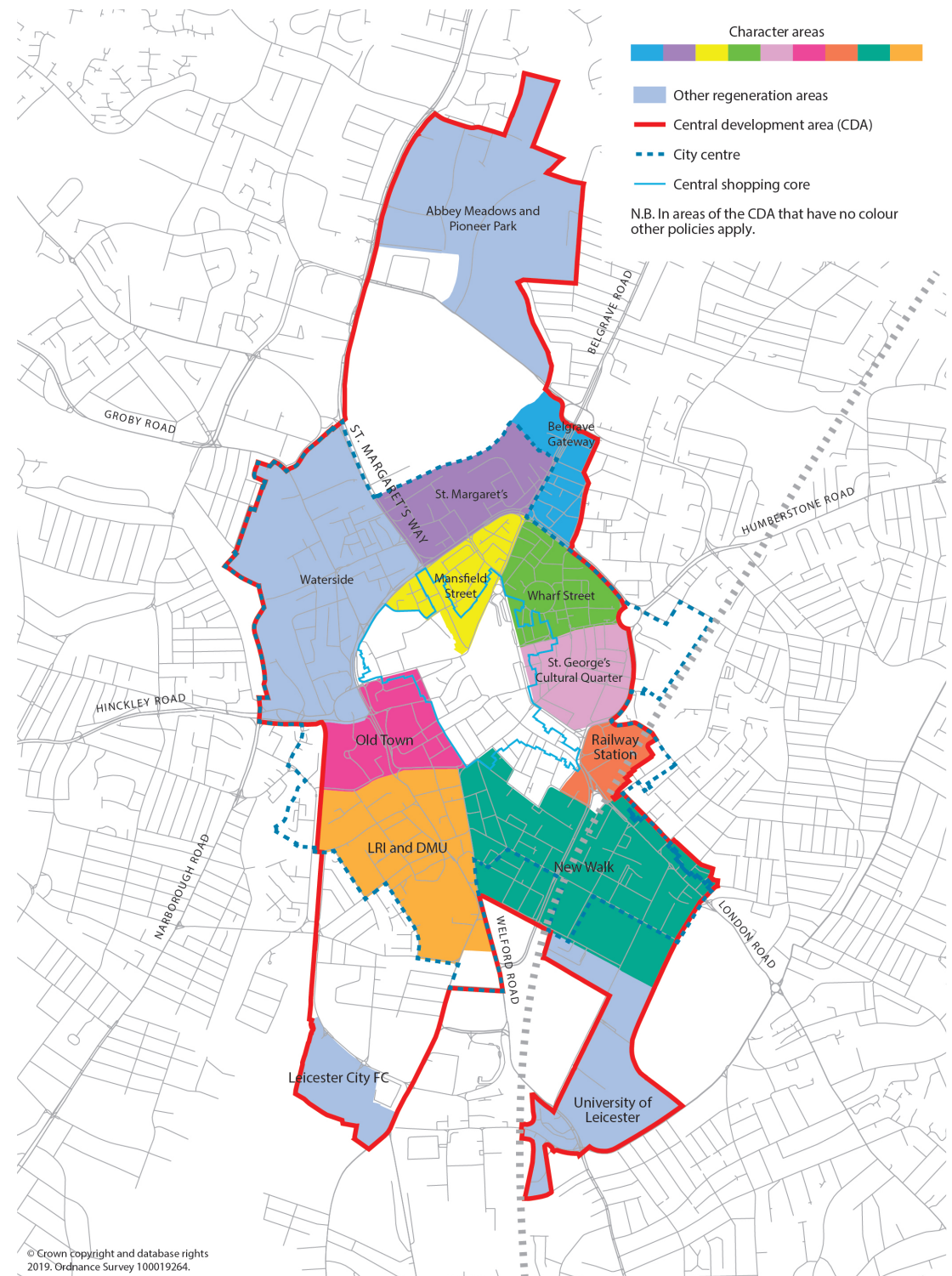
The regeneration of Leicester is a key theme of Leicester's development plan. In considering the central area of Leicester, areas have been identified which have distinctive characters and context, identity, opportunities and challenges and therefore different development objectives. These areas will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

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

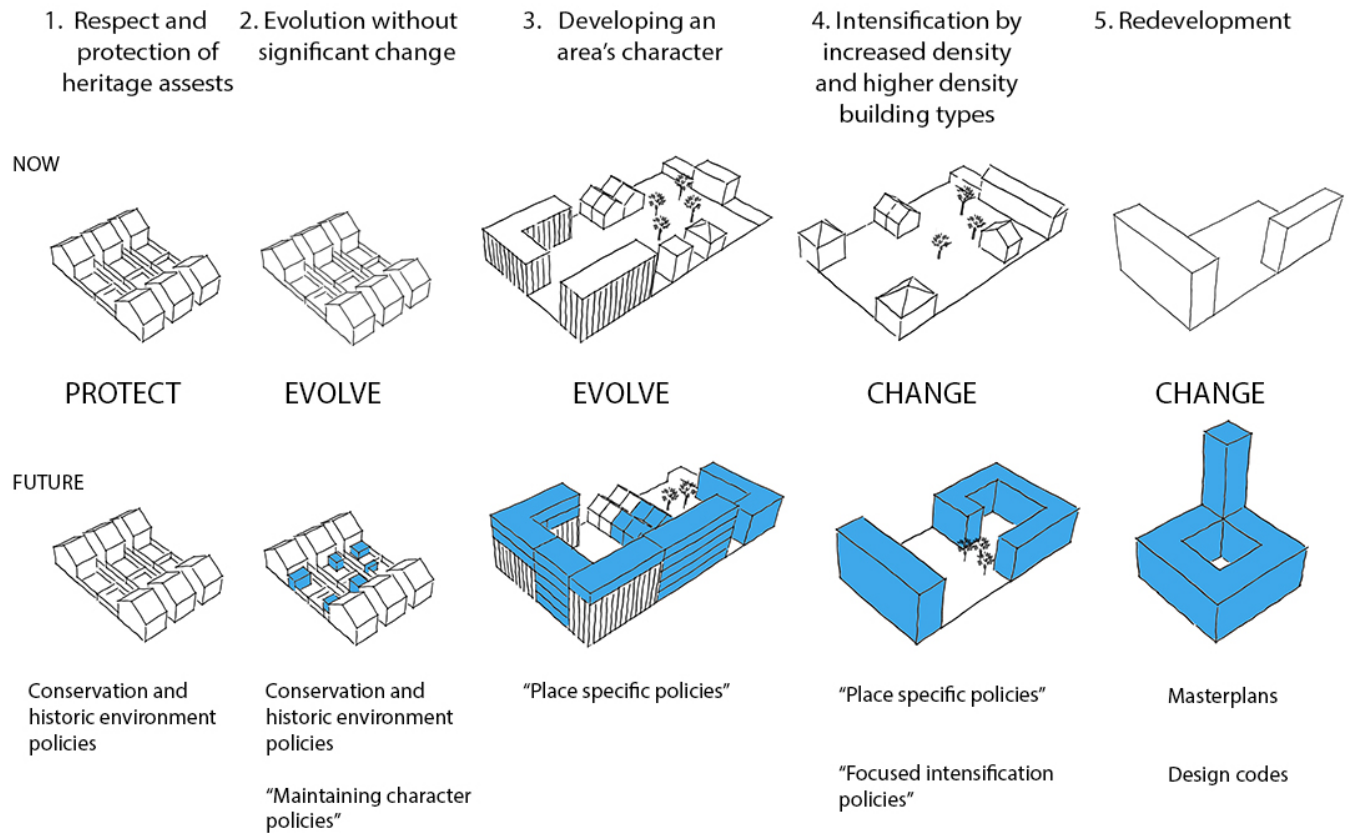
Townscape Character Management:

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

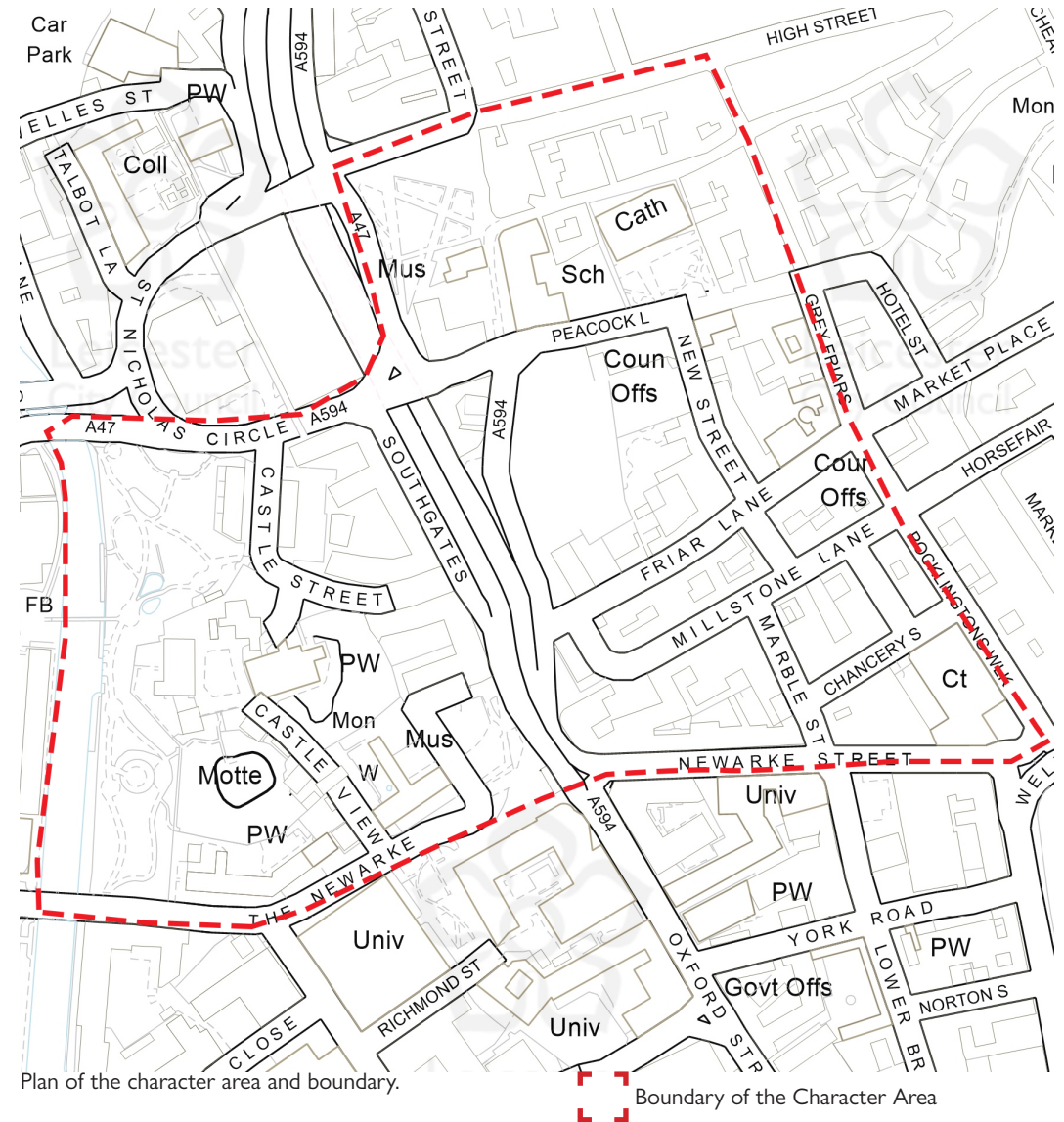
Old Town Character Area

The Old Town character area is located on the western side of the city. It is the historic core of the city and contains numerous heritage assets (including St Martin's Cathedral and St Mary De Castro Church).

There are influences from the Roman, Medieval, Georgian and Victorian periods within the Character Area. The Old Town Character Area has four Conservation Areas within its boundaries; Market Street (in the south east), Castle (in the west), Greyfriars (in the east) and High Street (in the north-east). In December 2017 Greyfriars was scheduled by Historic England.

Old Town has seen major improvements to the public realm in recent years, primarily delivered through the Connecting Leicester programme and Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). These include Peacock Lane and the various streets south of The Cathedral, alongside the creation of new public spaces at Cathedral Gardens and Jubilee Square. Such interventions have improved the setting of heritage assets and enhanced the pedestrian connectivity in the area.

Leicester City Council has undertaken this townscape analysis to inform development that is sympathetic to the Character Area's heritage. The eventual aim is to help protect and preserve the Old Town's distinctive character and identity.



2. History of the area

- Key North-South Route
- Key East-West Route
- Path of River/Canal
- Listed building
- Locally listed building
- Jubilee Square



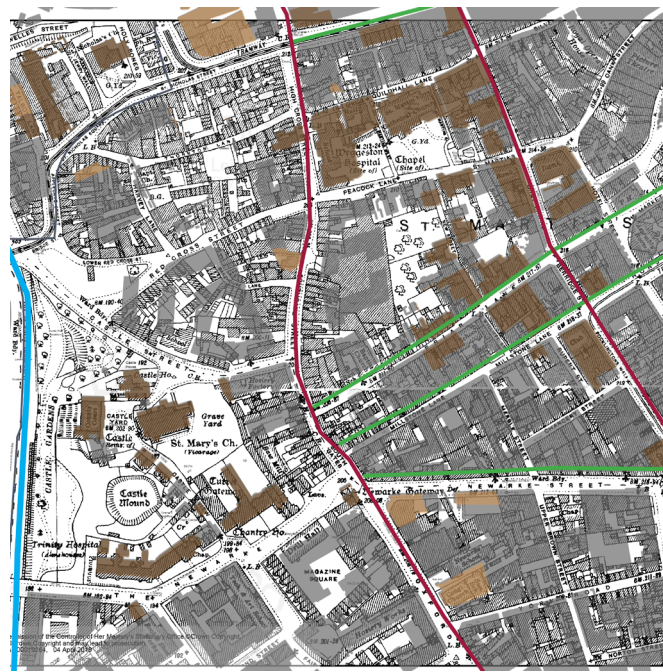
1886-87



1914-16



1741



1940



Late 1960s



2013-17

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

Despite the changes to parts of the ancient town and Character Area around St Nicholas Circle over the decades, there is still some evidence (especially in the east of Old Town) of the medieval street pattern and narrow plots from that era.

The narrow streets such as Loseby Lane give an impression of the organic street growth following the Roman retreat. Three of the oldest surviving buildings from the Medieval period are within the Character Area; The Castle, the Magazine Gateway and The Guildhall (Great Hall).

The Guild was the original meeting place of local governance at the Great Hall. Built in 1390, the Great Hall was a meeting place for the Guild of Corpus Christi, a select group of influential businessmen and gentry founded in 1343. This guild was the richest in the town and a powerful force in medieval Leicester. The Guild had their own altar in the Church of St Martin (now Leicester Cathedral) and used the Great Hall for banquets at times of high festivals.

Leicester Cathedral, located to the east of The Guildhall, was built on Roman ruins as a church dedicated St Martin (a Roman officer who became a Bishop). Portions of the current building can be traced to a 12th century Norman church which was rebuilt in the 13th and 15th centuries. The building today is predominantly Victorian and the tower and 220 foot spire were designed by the architect Raphael Brandon and were rebuilt in the 1860s.

In 1927 St Martin's was dedicated as Leicester's Cathedral when the diocese was re-created, over 1,000 years after the last Mercian Bishop of Leicester fled from the invading Danes.

The route that takes in Pocklingtons Walk, Greyfriars and Loseby Lane has been a key north-south route through the character area since the 19th Century. The 1741 plans of Old Town show Friar Lane and Millstone Lane as the main east-west routes through Old Town. Newarke Street, Friar Lane and Millstone Lane (and their frontages) have remained relatively consistent since the Georgian era.

The River Soar has always formed a natural barrier between the Character Area and the west of the city.

During the 18th Century, with an increasing population more land was needed and many new buildings were constructed in the south-east of Old Town. This location was attractive as it was far away enough from the congestion of the market and coaching inns, but not too far

away to be inconvenient for access to the commercial heart of the town. This was also attractive to many of the wealthiest businesses and social classes.

In 1886 St Nicholas Circle consisted of densely populated blocks and Southgate Street forms the key north-south route out of the character area. From this time period, the west of the character area has always been less densely populated with the Castle Motte and Castle Grounds.

By 1914 the city's tramway had been constructed and the plan shows a light rail track running along St Nicholas Square and High Street. By 1940 the Bus Depot has been constructed on the corner of Southgates and Peacock Lane.

During the 1960s, medieval streets and blocks around Southgates/St Nicholas Circle were levelled and cleared for the construction of the new underpass and ring road. The underpass was eventually opened in the late 1960s. The construction of the ring road, underpass and St Nicholas junction detrimentally altered the character of the centre of Old Town into a motor vehicle dominated area. Moreover, a major barrier was created between the west and east of the character area.

The legacy of this impact upon the townscape is still evident today with the filled in pedestrian underpass at Southgate House (A). This has left an unused space centred by a building that has a very poor ground floor relationship to the street. In recent years, work has been undertaken in addressing the problems created following the construction of the ring road. One of the most successful improvements has been the conversion of Jubilee Square (adjacent to St Nicholas Circle), shown on the 2013-17 plan, from a car park to a public outdoor space. The pedestrianised Jubilee Square today has helped to counteract some of the dominance by vehicles, providing a space that is sympathetic to the adjacent conservation areas and heritage assets.

During the Civil War, Leicester was besieged twice during 1645. The Guildhall on Guildhall Lane was where the Mayor and Corporation of Leicester met to make their key decisions on how to respond to the Royalists' demands for money. When Leicester was attacked on 30th May 1645, the last stand made by defenders was outside the Guildhall and St Martins. The Royalists then entered the Guildhall and looted the town's archives, mace and seal. A few weeks later the Royalists were defeated at the Battle of Naseby and Oliver Cromwell advanced on Leicester. To celebrate Cromwell's victory, the Guildhall was the venue for a thanksgiving dinner.

The motte and bailey Castle was built in about 1068 and up until the late 15th century the castle was still occasionally used as a royal

residence. Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI and Edward IV are all known to have stayed there. Richard III also stayed there twice in 1483. During his stays he signed off his letters "from my castle at Leicester." This was the last known record of residency from a member of the royal family at the Castle. In 2012, the remains of Richard III were discovered following archaeological excavation within a Leicester City Council car park in the Greyfriars area of Old Town. The remains were re-interred less than 100m from the original burial site and in a new tomb in Leicester Cathedral.



Southgates shown in the 1950s prior to clearance for the underpass. (Leicester Mercury)



Construction of the underpass in the 1960s. As can be seen many of the blocks adjacent to Southgates had been cleared. (Leicester Mercury)

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.

The townscape of the Old Town is relatively consistent in the east; however, across the wider area there is some variation. This is due to the many changes that have occurred to the built environment over the decades. The townscape ranges from the enclave of the Castle Yard and St Mary de Castro to larger University buildings along a comparatively wide ring road and underpass.

The west of the Character Area falls under the Castle Conservation Area, the east of the character area falls under the Greyfriars Conservation Area, the south-east of the area is within the Market Street Conservation Area and the north of Old Town falls within the High Street Conservation Area (See Plan).

The Character Area consists of numerous heritage assets that are either nationally designated and locally listed. The locations of some of the many heritage assets in the Character Area are shown on the plan on the right. The images of these building's frontages are shown on the following page.

1. The church of St Mary de Castro, located close to the Castle. The spire of the church was dismantled in 2014 after cracks had rendered the structure unsafe.

2. The second asset shown is Number 1 Grey Friars which was built in 1936, on the site of the Herricks' Mansion, and served as the offices of Leicestershire County Council until the completion of County Hall in 1965.

3. The former Savings Bank at 4 St. Martins. Despite the area being predominantly Georgian, the building was built in Neo-Gothic style that contrasts with the surrounding buildings. The Grade II listed building had been vacant for more than 10 years. The building was restored in 2016 as part of the Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative.

4. St Martin's Cathedral, which is shown in image 4.



5. The Magazine Gateway terminates the vista along Newark Street. The setting of this heritage asset is very important to the legibility within the Character Area.

6. The Guildhall, built in 1390, served as Leicester's first town hall.

7. Leicester Castle Great Hall, shown within its grounds and sits opposite the western façade of St Mary De Castro.

8. Chantry House and Skeffington House located on The Newark. Skeffington House is the only surviving Elizabethan urban gentry house in Leicester. The house was originally a rubble stone building (like Chantry House) when built between 1560 and 1583. However, the building was much altered in the 18th century with a brick extension and was clad in stucco to provide a Georgian appearance.

9. 17 Friar Lane is a Georgian era house built in the 1750s for William Bentley. The house has had numerous uses such as being occupied by Wyggeston Girls Junior School and also housed offices for Leicestershire County Council.

10. It should be noted that just outside of the Character Area's north-west boundary is the Grade I listed St Nicholas's Church and the Scheduled and Grade I listed Jewry Wall, one of the largest surviving section of non-military Roman masonry in Britain.

Scheduled Monuments:

Scheduled Monuments are the most notable historic sites in Leicester and are protected by a consent regime administered by Historic England. The Magazine Gateway is part of the scheduled monument at Leicester Castle. Additionally, Greyfriars is designated as a scheduled ancient monument. Just outside of the Character Area, the Jewry Wall is designated as a scheduled ancient monument.

Archaeological Alert Area:

Leicester has a clearly defined historic core. The historic core encompasses town's defences, first established in the Roman era and re-adopted in the Medieval Period. The historic core of the city centre is defined as an Archaeological Alert Area and indicates where development is most likely to have an impact upon archaeological remains. The entire character area and immediate surrounding context is under the archaeological alert area.



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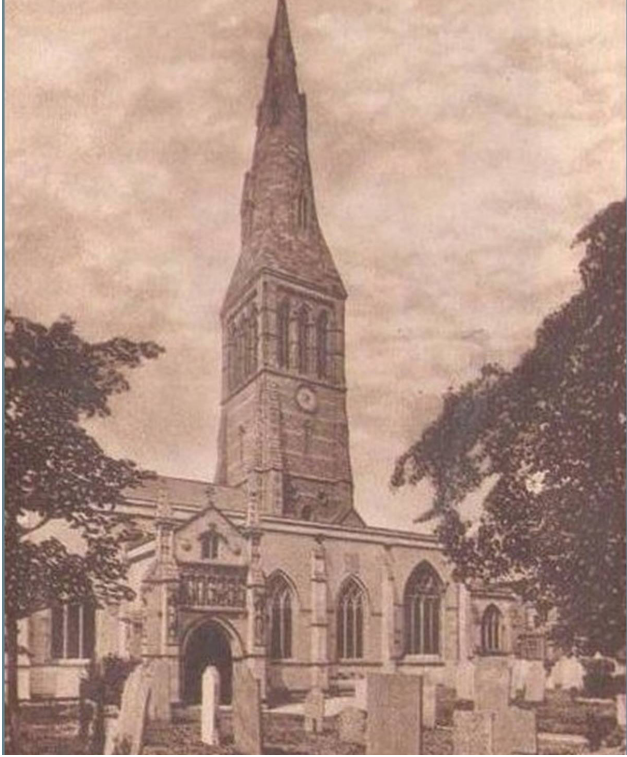


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Please see the plan on the previous page for the location of key building frontages.



St Martin's Cathedral 1910 (Leicester City Council)



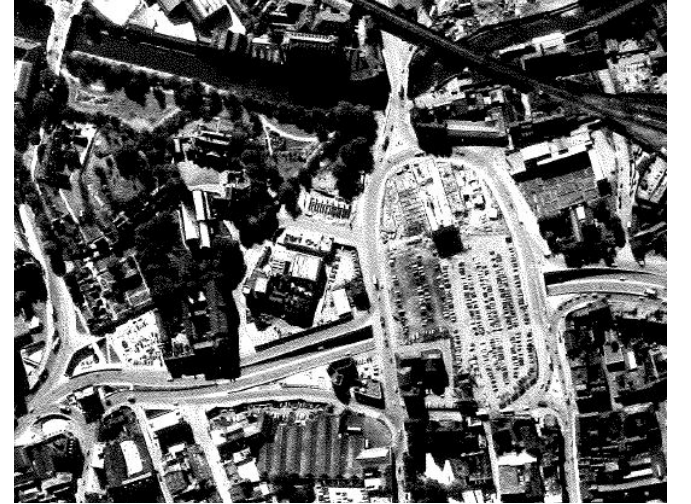
Postcard of Applegate Street (1891), (Leicester City Council)



The Magazine Gateway 1916. (Leicester City Council)



Old Town Viewed from St Martin's Cathedral 1867 (Story of Leicester)



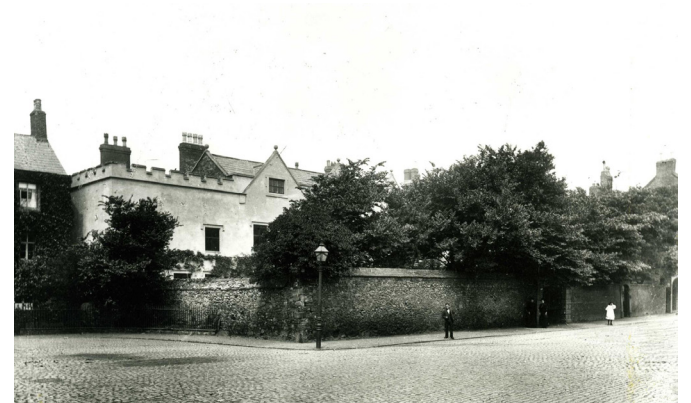
Newly constructed underpass, St Nicholas Circle and Southgates Bus Depot post 1969 (Leicester Then and Now, Ben Beazley)



The Globe, Pub 1861- located on the corner of Carts Lane and Silver Street (Leicestershire Records Office)



Turret Gateway & St Mary De Castro, c1900 (Leicester City Council)



Chantry House and Skeffington House with the wall to the Newark still standing. c1910 (Story of Leicester)

4. Key Views

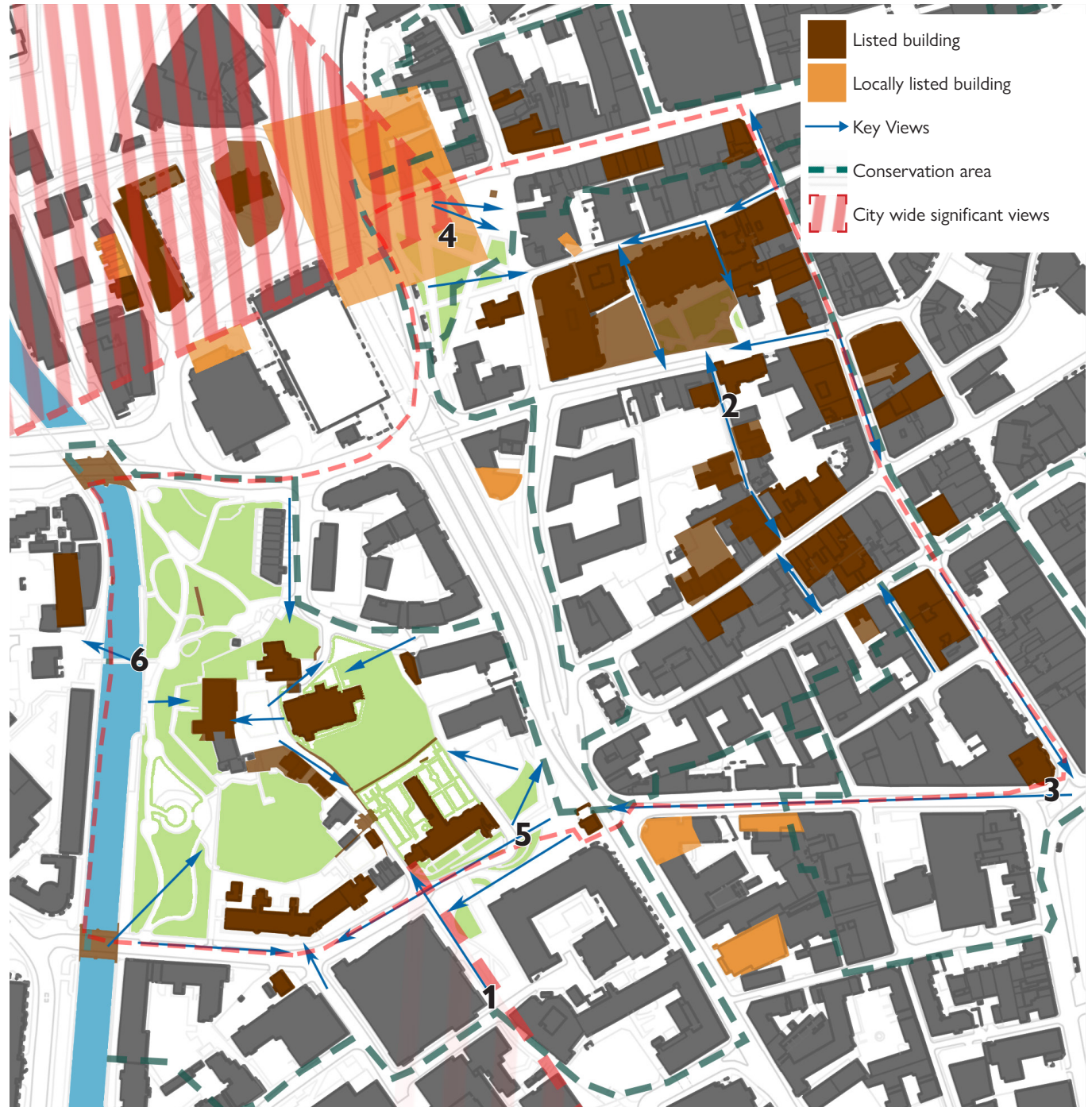
Key Views:

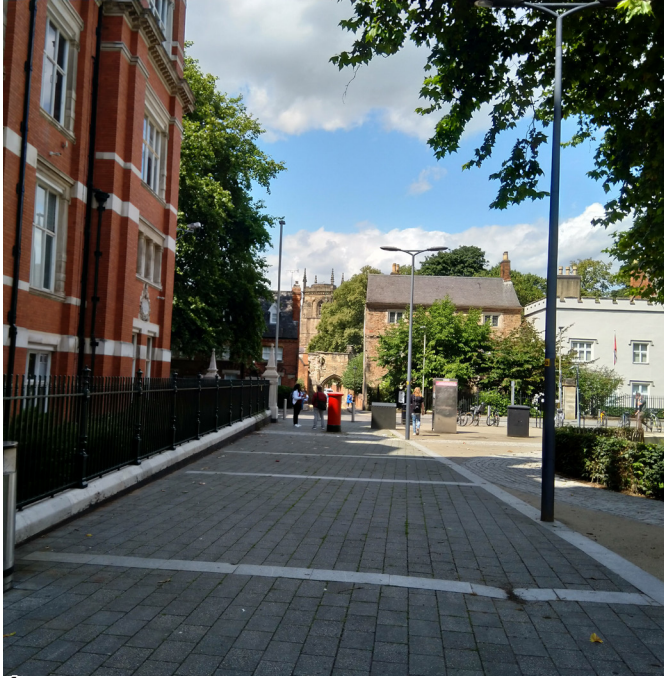
There are several key views within the Old Town Character Area that have been noted in this document as well as the respective Conservation Area appraisals.

The key views listed below are captured on the plan on the right and the images on the following page.

1. View north through the 15th Century Turret Gateway looking towards St Mary De Castro.
2. View north along New Street with the street and adjacent buildings framing the spire of St Martin's Cathedral.
3. The view looking west along Newarke Street is terminated by the Magazine Gateway.
4. The view south-east across Jubilee Square towards the spire of St Martin's Cathedral.
5. The view west from The Gateway towards the frontage of Trinity House.
6. The view north-west from the footbridge towards the Grade II West Bridge Mills building.

Additionally, the Old Town Character Area contains one of the city wide significant view of townscape and heritage value. The view originates from Jubilee Square and looks west towards St Nicholas Church and Jewry Wall.





1



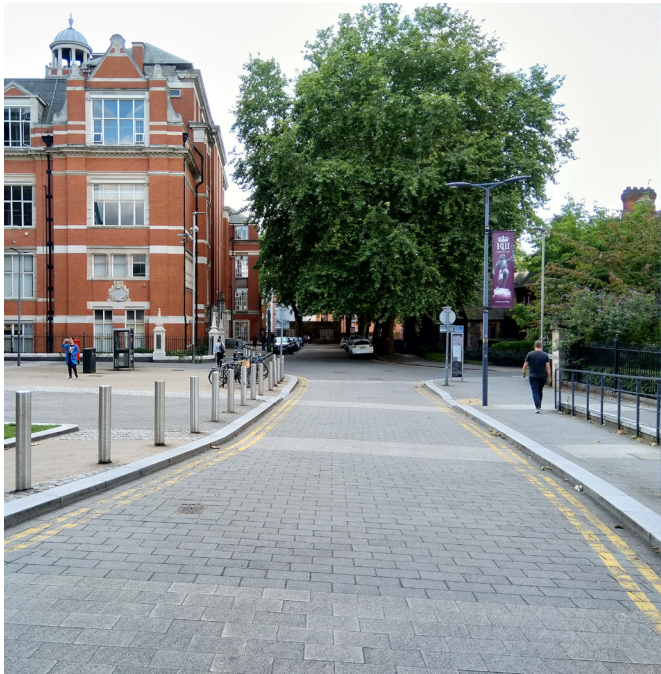
2



3



4



5



6

5. Streets and Spaces

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

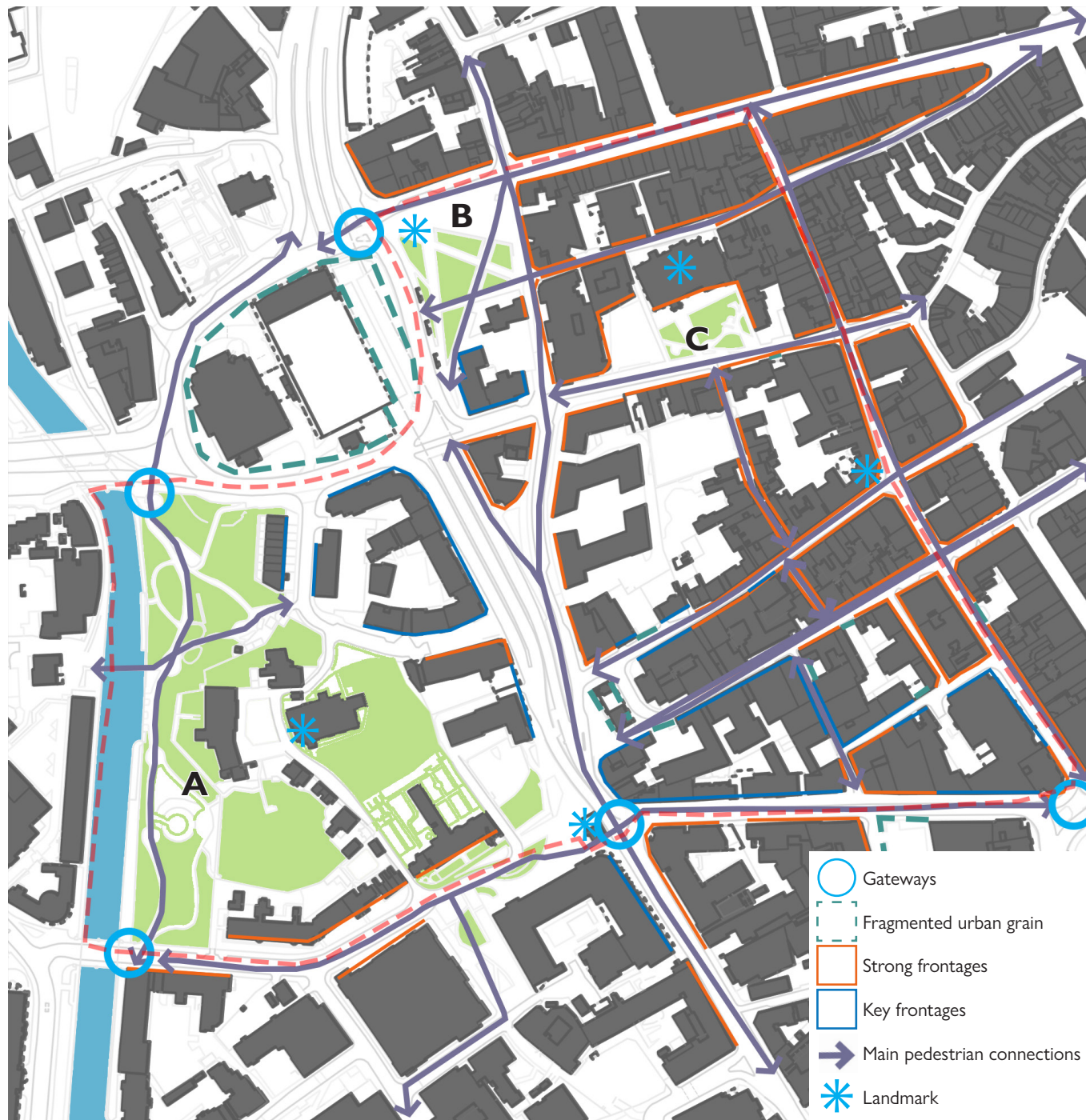
Fragmented urban grain identifies locations where perimeter blocks have been lost over time to the detriment of the townscape. Strong frontages are those frontages where both the building line and the building are important to the townscape. Key frontages are those frontages which provide a well defined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

The Old Town Character Area's layout is informed by its long history. One of the most successful aspects of the Character Area are the well defined streets in the east of the area. Streets such as Millstone Lane and Grey Friars have strong building lines and with little to no fragmentation. The urban grain in this part of the character area has remained largely consistent from the late 1800s. The pedestrian connections within the Market Street and Greyfriars Conservation Areas (e.g. Friar Lane and Newarke Street) are very legible and well used.

As the History section earlier in the document showed, much of the built environment around Southgates and St Nicholas's Square was cleared and demolished in order to construct the underpass and ring road. Hence, the urban grain is more fragmented in the west of the Character Area and adjacent to the ring road. The Holiday Inn and the car park are isolated on the roundabout.

The area is very legible- assisted by gateways, existing landmarks and heritage assets (such as the Magazine Gateway, Jubilee Square and the Cathedral's spire).

There are a large number of east to west pedestrian connections, which have remained from the historic street pattern. The main north to south connections are along Grey Friars and Pocklington's Walk. There are less direct north to south pedestrian routes through Castle Park or adjacent to the ring road (along Applegate Street).



A positive aspect of the Old Town Character Area is the three high quality public spaces in close proximity to each other:

- A. Castle Park
- B. Jubilee Square
- C. Cathedral Gardens.

This concentration of high quality spaces, of differing layouts, in such close proximity is unique to the Character Area.



A



B



C

Please see plan on previous page for location of key spaces

6. Existing Building Heights and Planning History

Context:

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

The existing heights in the Old Town Area predominately consists of buildings that are less than 4 storeys. Along key pedestrian connections such as High Street, Pocklington's Walk and The Newarke there are buildings that have a height between 4 to 7 storeys. The spire of St Martin's Cathedral (1) towers above the ambient height of Old Town. The cathedral's spire and tower is designated as a tall building in this context, at a height of 61m - the equivalent of 20 storeys. The Lumis Living student accommodation building (2) on Southgates has a comparatively higher storey height (with 6 storeys) than the ambient height of Old Town. However, the elements of the Lumis Living student accommodation buildings that are 6 storeys are adjacent to the ring road and the impact on heritage assets is not as significant. The eaves lines of the buildings along Millstone Lane (3) and Friar Lane (4) are consistent within their respective plots. There is a general consistency of scale, but especially within the Greyfriars Conservation Area.

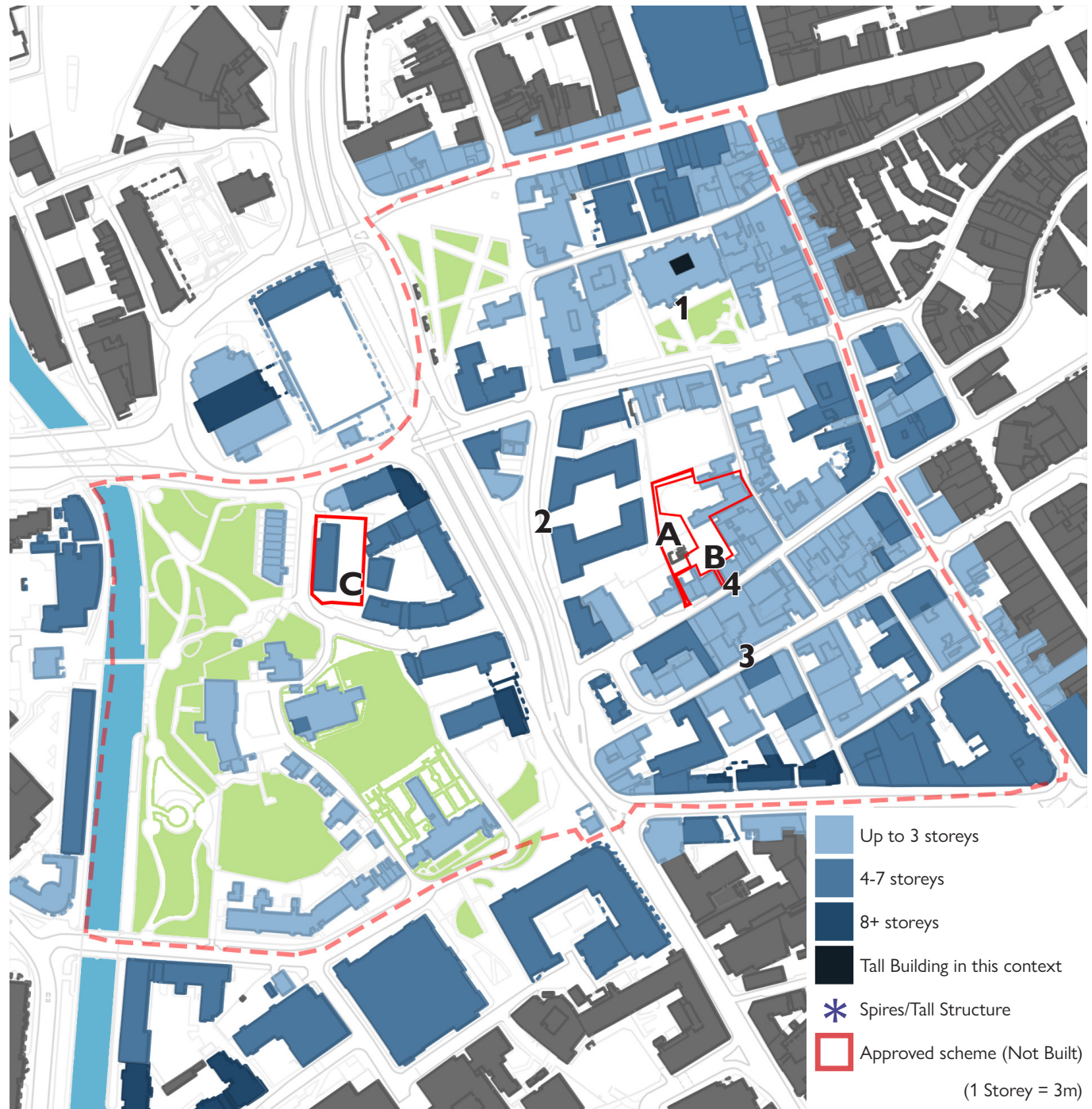
Planning History:

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

A. 20160613 Land to Rear of 10-14 New Street, Demolition of outbuilding; construction of four houses (1 x 2 bed and 3 x 3 bed) (Class C3)

B. 20170967 Land to Rear of 10-14 New Street, Construction of two houses (2 x 3 bed) (Class C3).

C. 20180604 at 39-41 Castle Street- Demolition of existing two storey office building (Class B1) and redevelopment of the site to provide a part 3, part 4 and part 5 storey building comprising 20 cluster flats (122 student bedrooms) and 3 x 1 bed student studio flats) (Sui-Generis).



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.

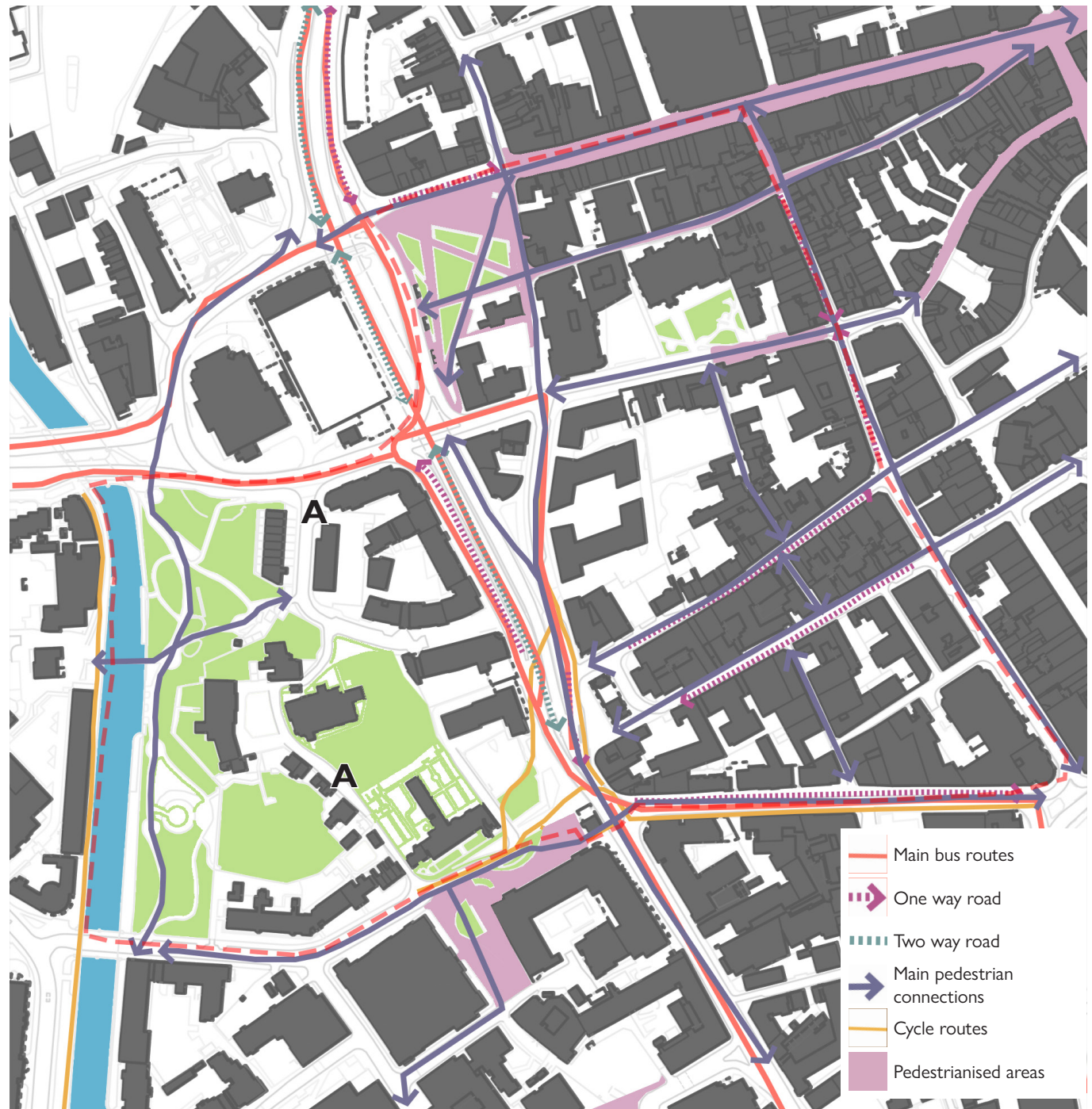
The main pedestrian connections are identified through a combination of local knowledge, observation, previous research undertaken by Leicester City Council and Space Syntax™ online information.

In keeping with the historical maps, the principal north and south vehicle route through the Character Area is the underpass and Southgates. The main north to south connections are along Grey Friars and Pocklington's Walk. There are less direct north to south pedestrian routes through Castle Park or adjacent to the ring road (along Applegate Street). The main east to west connections are through the Greyfriars Conservation Area. Friar Lane and Newarke Street are also important key pedestrian connections for pedestrians aiming to access the De Montfort University campus.

The character area has undergone improvements to the public realm in recent years and as a result there is a significant number of pedestrian priority zones, such as High Street to the north as part of the retail core and THI area.

Since their construction, the underpass and ring road have limited connectivity for pedestrians between the east of Old Town to the west. As has been noted in this document, the base of Southgate House had a pedestrian underpass that connected pedestrians between the east of the area to the west. This underpass was filled in. There have been interventions and improvements in recent years to attempt to address the barrier of the ring road. This will be covered later in Chapter 10 (Connecting Leicester).

Cycle routes in Old Town are concentrated in the south of the area along Newarke Street, towards the DMU campus. The cycle lanes on the roads adjacent to the ring road were added as a part of Connecting Leicester improvements.



Castle Street (A) has a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in progress with the intention to improve this connection for pedestrian and cycle use.

The Old Town Character Area is well served by bus routes and the main bus stops in the area are located adjacent to Jubilee Square.

8. Active Frontages

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

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

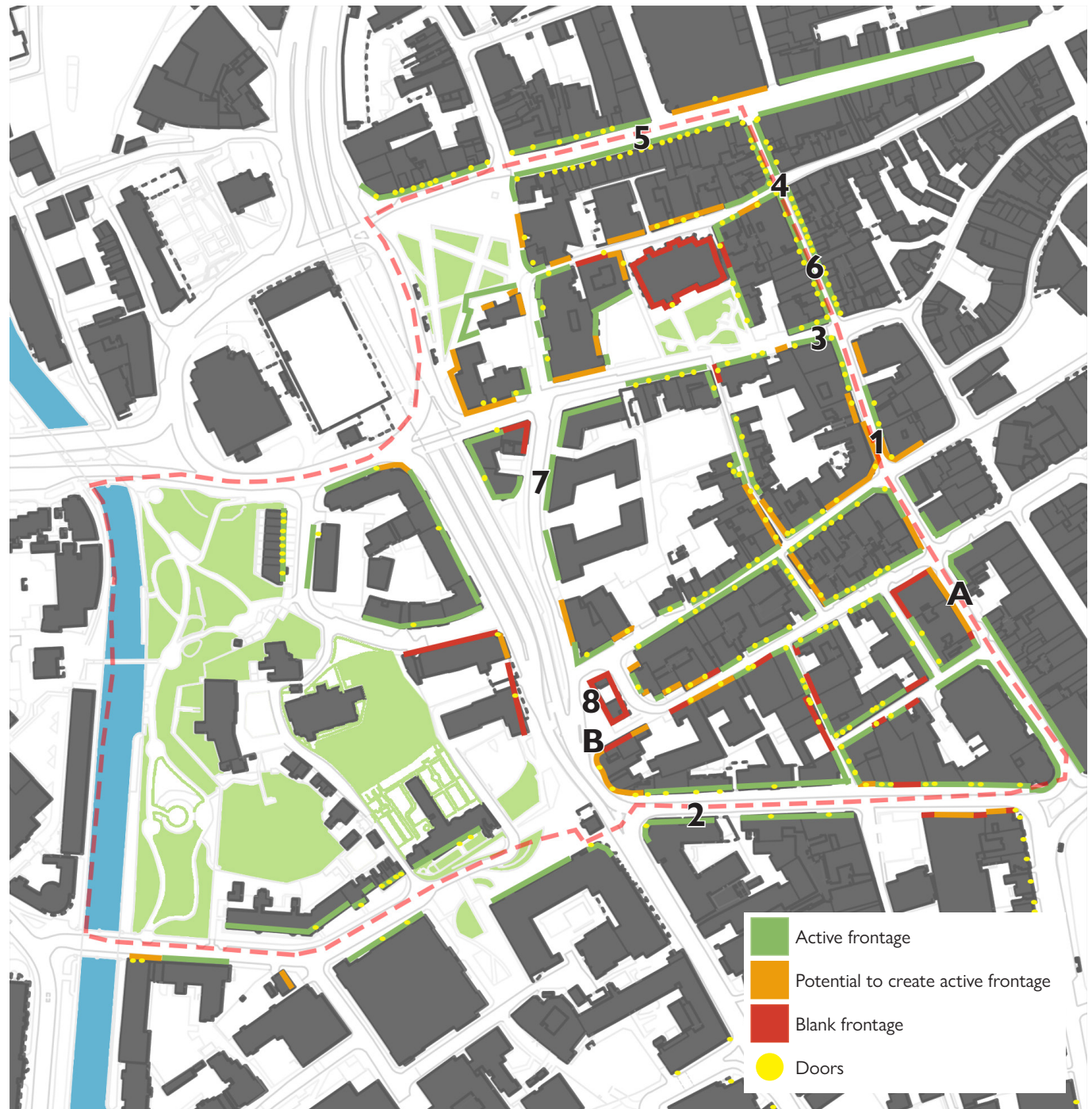
There is a good concentration of active frontages within the Old Town Character Area. The portion of the Old Town that is within the Greyfriars and Market Street Conservation Areas is especially active with frontages providing good surveillance on to the public realm. The most active frontages are found on the primarily retail dominant streets of High Street, Carts Lane and Loseby Lane.

There are some streets that could have windows and frontages opened up by replacing frosted glass with clear glass, as occupants (particularly in offices) wish to “turn their back” on the streets.

A significant amount of activity is provided by pedestrians moving through the area and enjoying the high quality public spaces.

As has previously been noted in the document, Southgates House has a very poor relationship with the street. The ground floor is dominated by an under-croft car part and redundant pedestrianised underpass.

Among the areas that could be improved include Pocklington's Walk (A) and the space where Southgates and Millstone Lane meet (B).



The images on the right are examples of frontages that are successful and frontages that are poor at providing activity and surveillance within the Old Town Character Area.

1. The image is taken from Grey Friars, looking north. The ground floor of 1 Grey Friars has good size openings looking out onto the public realm. However, with the ground floor windows being frosted, the potential for an active frontage is negated.



1

2. The image is taken at the Glassworks Student accommodation building along Newark Street. Ground floor window sizes are inconsistent, often small and they are covered with curtains by the occupants, thus limiting an active frontage.



2



3

3. The former Savings Bank on 4 St Martins was renovated and redeveloped following a 10 year vacancy. As part of the works the existing ground floor windows were sympathetically lowered to improve views into and out of the building. As can be seen in the photo the lighter and less weathered stone denotes the difference in height between the original and renovated windows.



4

4. There many good examples of units that turn the corner well and provide surveillance onto two streets. The pedestrianised crossroads of Loseby Lane and Guildhall Lane utilises doors facing into the centre of the space at the crossing.



5

5. High Street is an example of space that is successfully active. The active ground floor windows and the pedestrian priority street both provide good natural surveillance.



6

6. A further good example of active space is Loseby Lane. Not only do the buildings' ground floors have a good relationship with the street, but the cafés and restaurants have outdoor seating that provides a "thicker" active frontage onto the space.



7

7. Lumis Living student accommodation building manages to balance the need for surveillance and privacy. Not only are the openings of a good size to provide surveillance, but also the careful use of planting and trees provides a soft buffer between the windows and the street in order to offer residents a threshold and some privacy. Communal uses, serving the building, are located along Southgates.



8

8. Southgates House is an example of a building with a poor relationship to the street. A blank wall, under-croft car park, along with access to a disused pedestrian underpass limits the surveillance onto the street.

9. Land Uses

Ground floor:

There are a variety of uses within Old Town. Some of the uses are located amongst specific streets and locations within the Character Area. For example, retail uses are unsurprisingly predominately located along key shopping streets such as High Street and Loseby Lane.

There are some buildings that have education uses on the ground floor. The vast majority of these are located in the south-east of the Character Area along The Newarke, where Old Town borders the De Montfort University (DMU) Campus.

As the plan on the right also shows there are many domestic uses within Old Town. With the Character Area's close proximity to the DMU campus, many of these domestic uses consist of student accommodation, including buildings such as Lumis Student Living on Southgates, Liberty Court on Castle Street and the IQ Student accommodation building on Newarke Street.

There is also a significant number of offices within the area and especially in the Greyfriars and Market Street Conservation Areas.

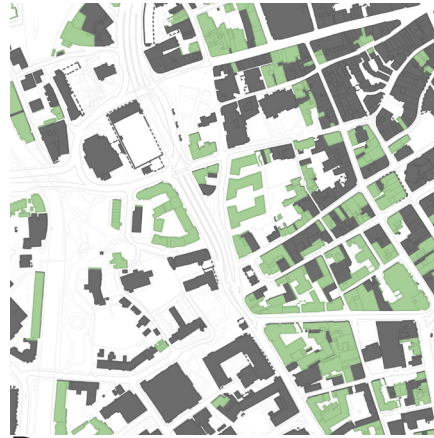
Old Town has at least three significant places of worship within its boundary- St Martin's Cathedral, St Mary De Castro Church and the Buddhist Centre (on Guildhall Lane),



From the Local Taxation and Gazetteer, August 2019

9. Land Uses

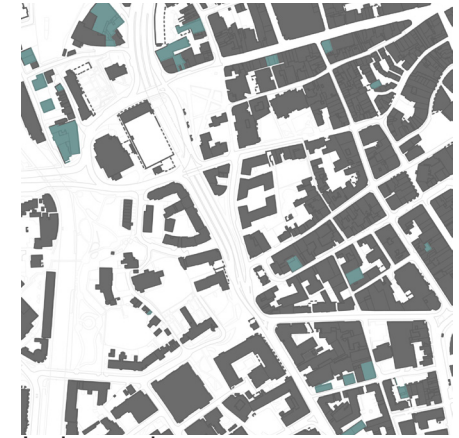
(Including above ground distribution)



Domestic



Community



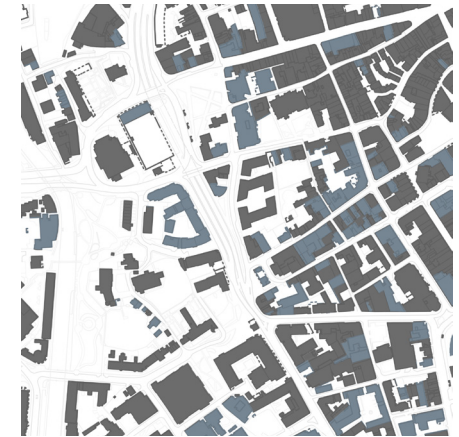
Industrial



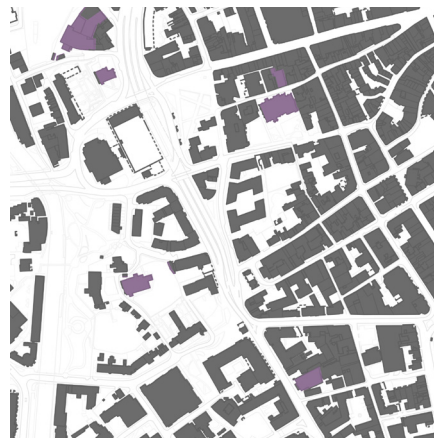
Land



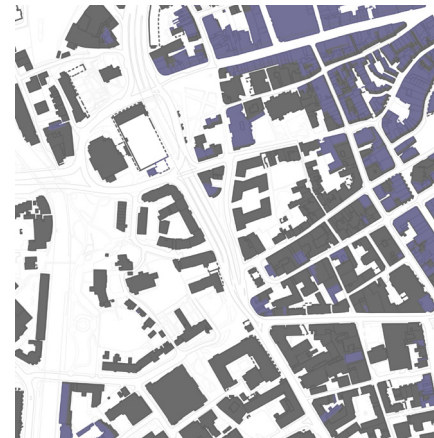
Leisure



Office



Places of Worship



Retail



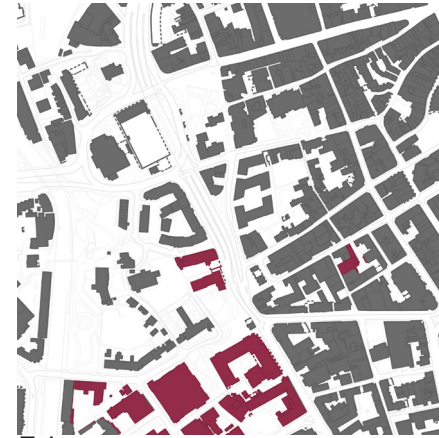
Utilities

9. Land Uses

(Including above ground distribution)



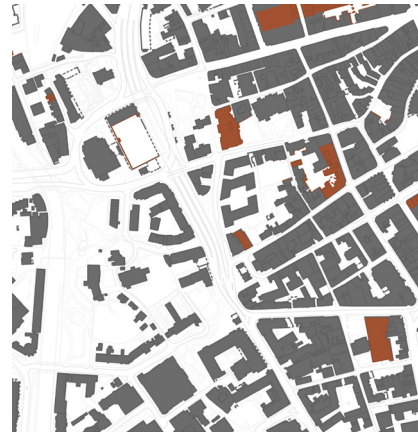
Medical



Education



Miscellaneous



Parking and Transport

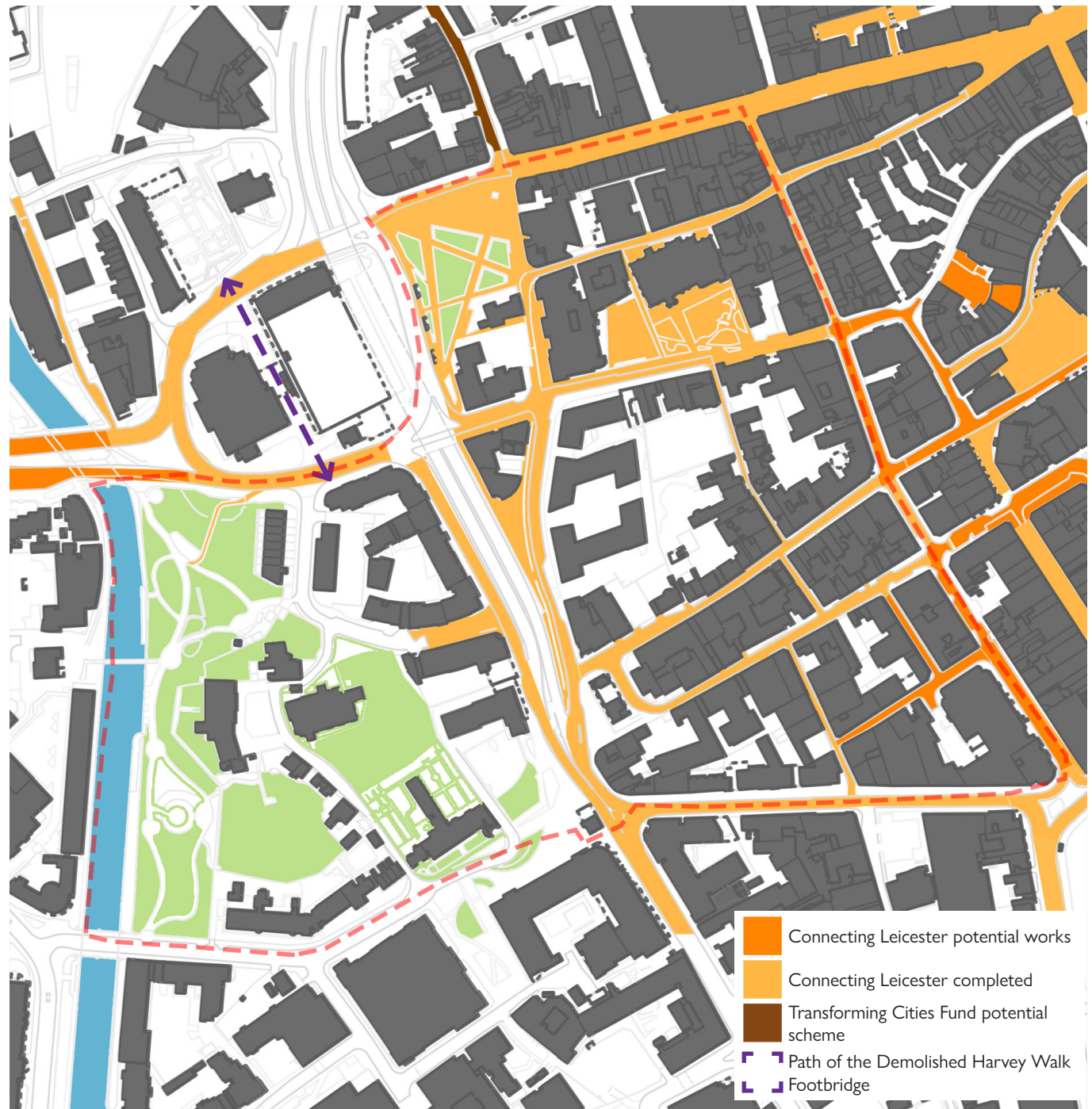
10. Connecting Leicester Improvements

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 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.

Within Old Town the Connecting Leicester public realm projects have been extensive. One of the main Connecting Leicester improvements that was completed in 2013 was the conversion of Jubilee Square from a surface car park, bus terminus and vehicle highway into an outdoor public space. As has been noted in this document, by the late 1960s St Nicholas Circle became a heavily car dominant junction and by having a car park on the site of Jubilee Square the site was adding to the already detrimental impact upon the townscape following the underpass' construction. Connecting Leicester improved the facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to move around St Nicholas Circle, provided a new access into Castle Gardens and removed the Harvey Walk footbridge which was deemed an eyesore and obstructed the ground level footways. The location of Jubilee Square means that it acts as a gateway to both the Character Area and the city centre as a whole.

The Connecting Leicester improvements to Southgates have resulted in wider pavements, cycle lanes running adjacent to the ring road and improved pedestrian connectivity between the east and west of Old Town, thus helping mitigate the barrier effect caused by the ring road.



10. Connecting Leicester Improvements

Peacock Lane and the adjacent grounds of St Martin's Cathedral were transformed into a garden that integrated the precincts of the Cathedral with the space adjacent to St Martin's House. Peacock Lane was transformed into a principally pedestrian space. The Cathedral Gardens now provide an open route across the space between St Martin's House, the Guildhall and the Cathedral. The gardens have allowed the Cathedral to be framed by the public space. Applegate, that links Peacock Lane to Jubilee Square, has seen a new pedestrian priority route completed. This has improved the setting and approach to the 15th century Wygston's House, whilst also helping to link the city's heritage attractions with its modern shopping areas.

Several of the streets within Old Town, the High Street, Market Street and the Greyfriars Conservation Area have undergone Connecting Leicester improvements. The improvements within Greyfriars were also a part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

Amongst the streets to have received improvements are Marble Street, Wycliffe Street, New Street, Millstone Lane and Friar Lane. These streets have seen the footpaths widened and new trees have been planted. Moreover, portions of the road surfaces have been paved as a way to passively calm traffic.

Images 1 and 2 show Jubilee Square before and after the Connecting Leicester Improvements. The site was a car park and is now replaced with a large public space. There are varying heights in the level to create seating spaces, plus addition of green spaces has broken up the predominantly asphalt surface that was prevalent in the Character Area. Likewise, image 3 shows St Martins and Peacock Lane, adjacent to St Martin's Cathedral, prior to Connecting Leicester improvements. Following the improvements (4), the space has become a shared pedestrian prioritised space. The differences in landscaping materials denotes the path for vehicles and the path for pedestrians. Images 5 and 6, respectively, show Millstone Lane before and after the Connecting Leicester and THI improvements.

As the plan on the previous page shows, potential Connecting Leicester works include Pocklington's Walk- between Welford Place and Berridge Street. Horsefair Street and Pocklington's Walk will have footways widened and segregated cycle facilities. Bus stops and taxi ranks will also be relocated. These improvements would be funded, in part, by the European Regional Development Fund.



1. Jubilee Square before Connecting Leicester improvements (BBC)



2. Jubilee Square after Connecting Leicester improvements



3. St. Martins/Peacock Lane before Connecting Leicester improvements (Leicester City Council)



4. St. Martins/Peacock Lane after Connecting Leicester improvements



5. Millstone Lane before Connecting Leicester improvements (Google Streetview)



6. Millstone Lane after Connecting Leicester improvements

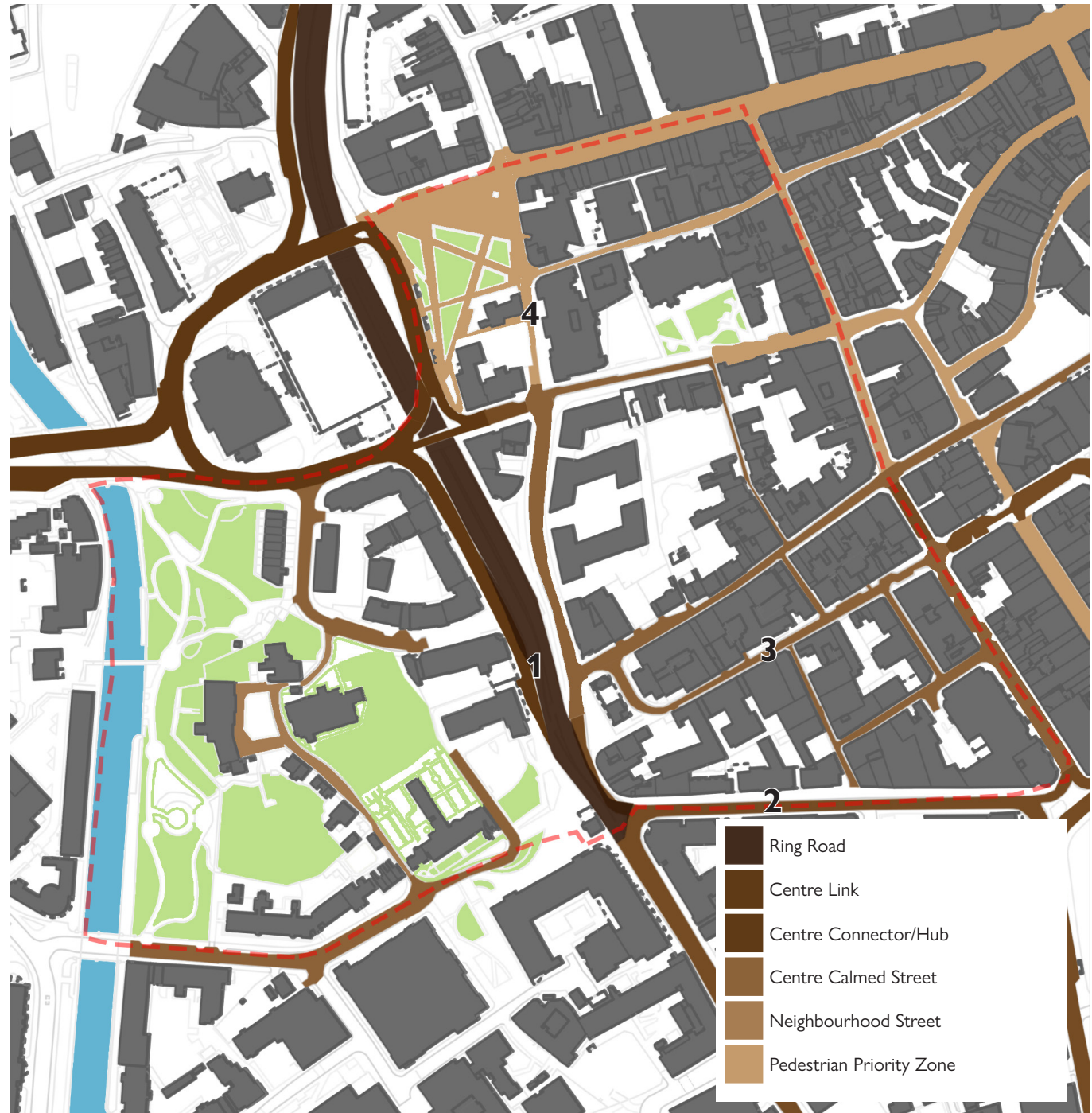
11. Street Hierarchy

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).

Given its historical significance, with the narrow width of the streets, the low building heights and pedestrianised routes, it is unsurprising that the area is made up of many streets that are of a low order. Old Town is split in two by the highest order street. As the historical maps have shown, Southgates has always been the key north to south route through the character area. Streets such as Friar Lane and Millstone Lane (3) (which are key pedestrian routes) have been designated as centre calmed streets.

Pocklington's Walk to Berridge Street to Grey Friars sees a transition of hierarchy from a centre calmed street to a pedestrian priority zone (PPZ). Where ground floor units are predominately retail (such as Loseby Lane and High Street), PPZ is the prevalent street hierarchy in the Character Area. The pedestrian priority zone extends west from High Street into Jubilee Square. St Nicholas Place, on the north side of Jubilee Square is a shared space.



11. Street Hierarchy

There is a low amount of vehicle use around the Castle on Castle Street. Furthermore, traffic is restricted along Castle View resulting in centre calmed streets and a PPZ in the Castle grounds.

Overall, with many of the streets in Old Town being of a lower hierarchy and with limited car use, the Character Area conveys streets and places that are more friendly for pedestrian use.

Through Connecting Leicester the commitment to prioritise safe and pedestrian friendly connections is very evident in the Old Town Area. The townscape benefit of the extensive public realm interventions are significant.



1. Ring Road, Southgates Underpass



2. Centre Link, The Newarke



3. Centre Calmed Street, Millstone Lane



4. Pedestrian priority zone, Applegate



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).

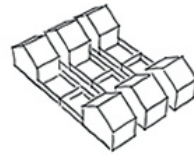
Development guidance includes;

- 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 Old Town 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 the unique historic environment.

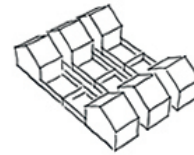
1. Respect and protection of heritage assets

NOW



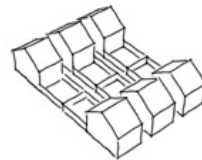
PROTECT

FUTURE



2. Evolution without significant change

NOW



EVOLVE

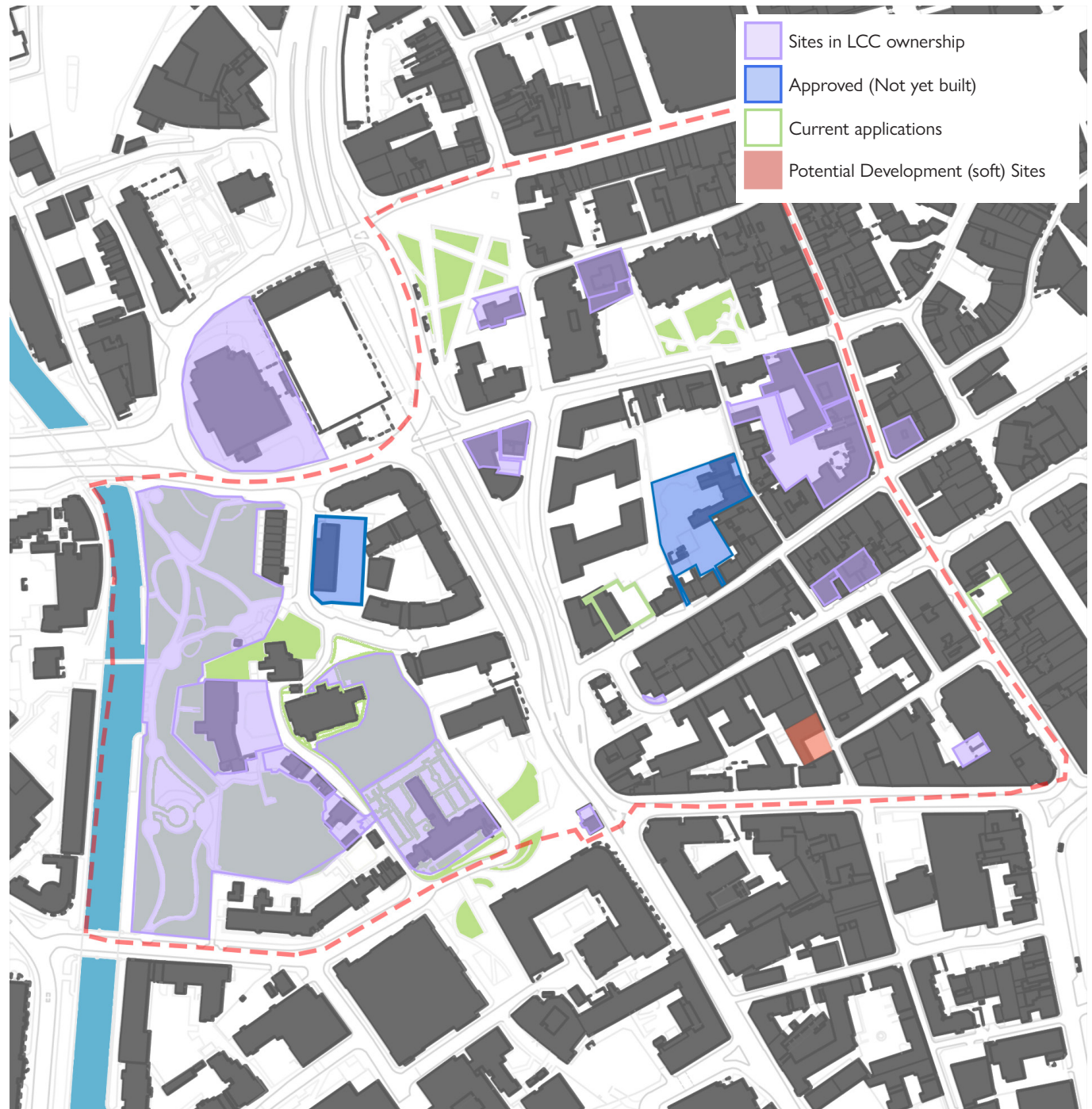
FUTURE



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.

As would be expected, there are limited development opportunities within Old Town and planning activity is low. Planning approvals have recently been given for residential development on two of the larger sites.



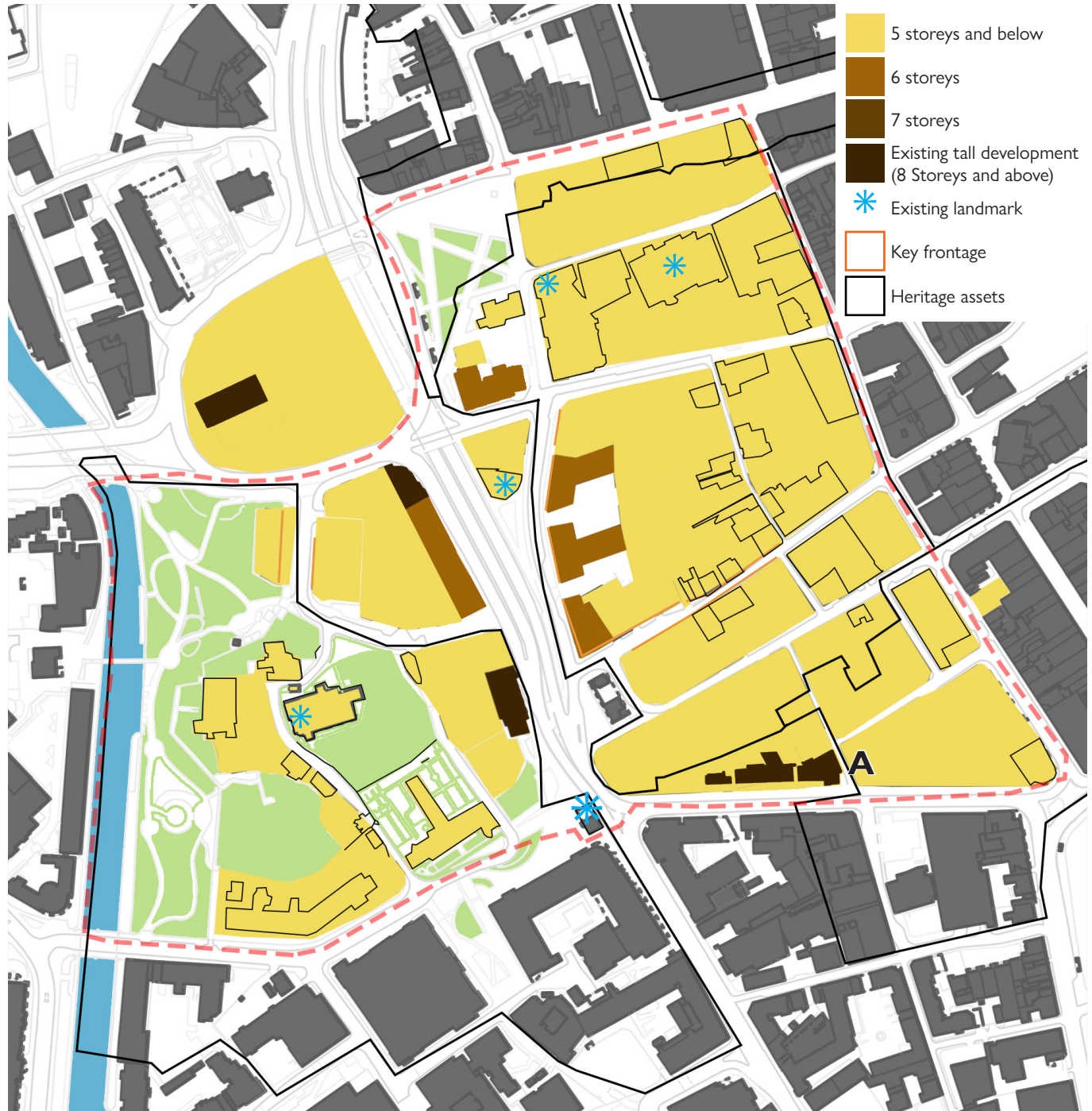
13. Proposed Building Heights

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 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.

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.

The existing tall development located on the corner of Newark Street and Marble Street (A) is significantly taller than the eaves heights of both streets. Moreover, with the narrowness of the Marble Street, the height of the development has a significantly detrimental impact upon Marble Street.



Images 1 and 2 show the impact the development has on the Marble Street.

Proposals must have a mass, scale and form that are appropriate and respect the general scale of the area. If development was to come forward along Southgates then the maximum acceptable height would be 6 storeys. It is also important that the eaves height is consistent.

Additional guidance will be provided from the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal.



1. View taken from Newark Street looking north towards Marble Street.



2. View taken from within Marble Street looking south towards Newark Street.

14. Future Planning

The Old Town Character Area is the City's historical core and contains unique heritage including the Castle Motte, Cathedral, and the grave & Visitor Centre for King Richard III. It has the City's highest concentration of important heritage and architectural and archaeological assets, built up over several centuries, which it is intended to conserve and enhance. This area is also historically the city's Legal Quarter which means it has a commercial attraction for small offices.

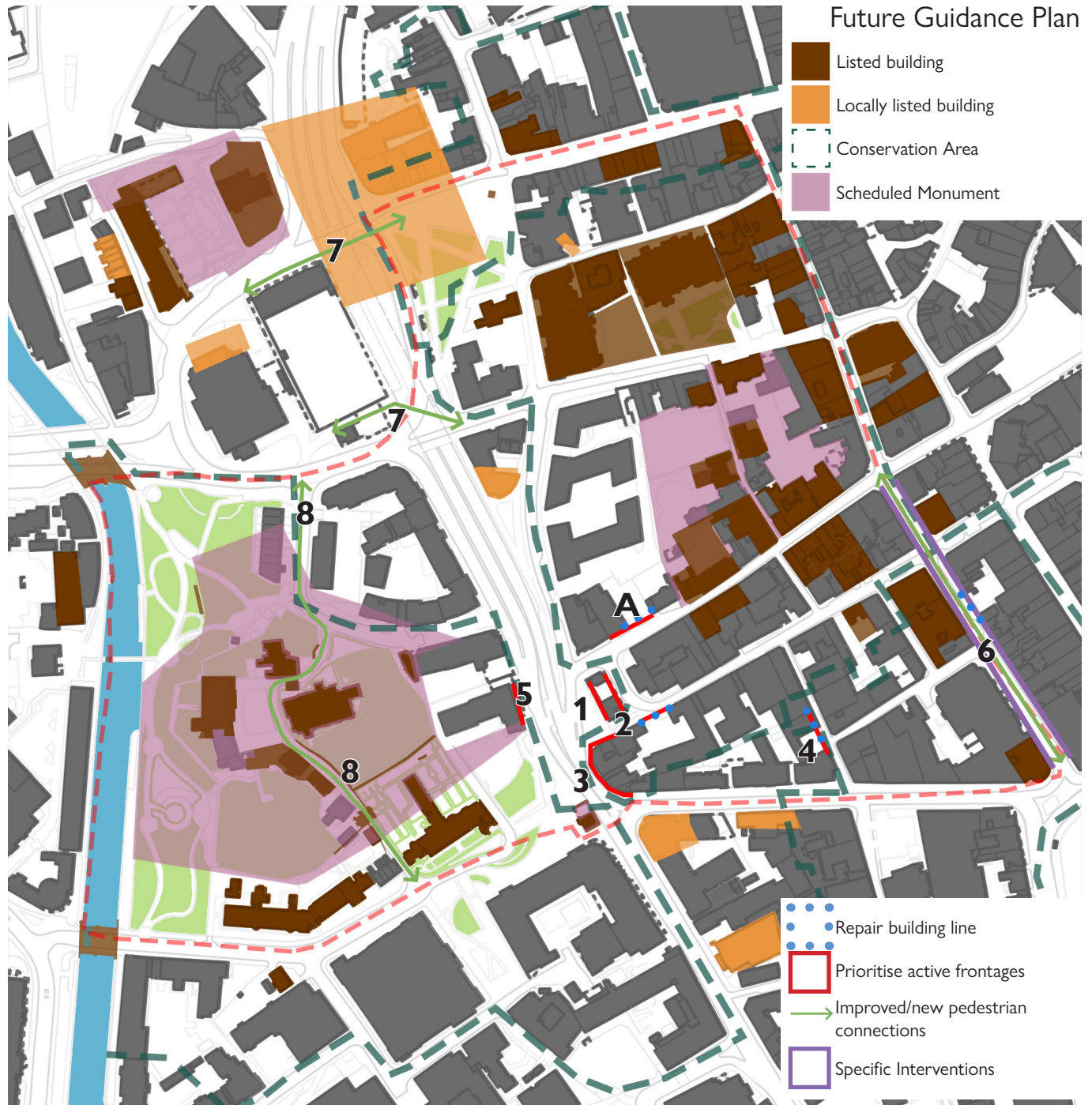
The vision for Old Town is based around the protection of the existing heritage assets whilst allowing conservation-lead development where appropriate. This will be achieved by allowing only high-quality residential development, by maintaining and developing high quality small offices Class B1(a) offices, between 100 and 1,000 sqm and enabling further tourism and economic growth, with due consideration of the significance of this part of the city.

As this document has previously stated, the Old Town 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.

Any development that does come forward should respect the prevailing character and ambient height within the area. This document recommends:

- The urban grain should be respected. Therefore there should be a continuation of street building lines with frontages. Plot widths should also be considered.
- Active frontages should be prioritised.
- A traditional materials palette but with a contemporary architectural style that continues the principles from the wider existing context.
- Each individual site will need to be considered in relation to its context.

The one specific council intervention is the proposed Connecting Leicester improvements from Pocklington's Walk to Berridge Street.



Criteria to Guide New Development:

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.

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.

Repairing the streets

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

Identified on the future guidance plan.

The focus in Old Town would be at gap sites such as those located on Friar Lane (A).

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.

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

1. Southgates House,
2. The west of Millstone Lane
3. The west of Newarke Street.
4. Marble Street

If Bosworth House (4) was to be redeveloped comprehensively then the ground floor should prioritise an active frontage.

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

- Pocklington's Walk to Berridge Street (6)
- St Nicholas' Circle (7) Improve links into and within St. Nicholas Circle for pedestrian access to car park and hotel
- Castle Street(8) through a TRO

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.

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

1. Connecting Leicester Improvements to along Pocklington's Walk to Berridge Street (6).