

St. George's Character Area Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

**Evidence Document
Draft v.10**

**Urban Design Team
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Part A: Townscape Analysis

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

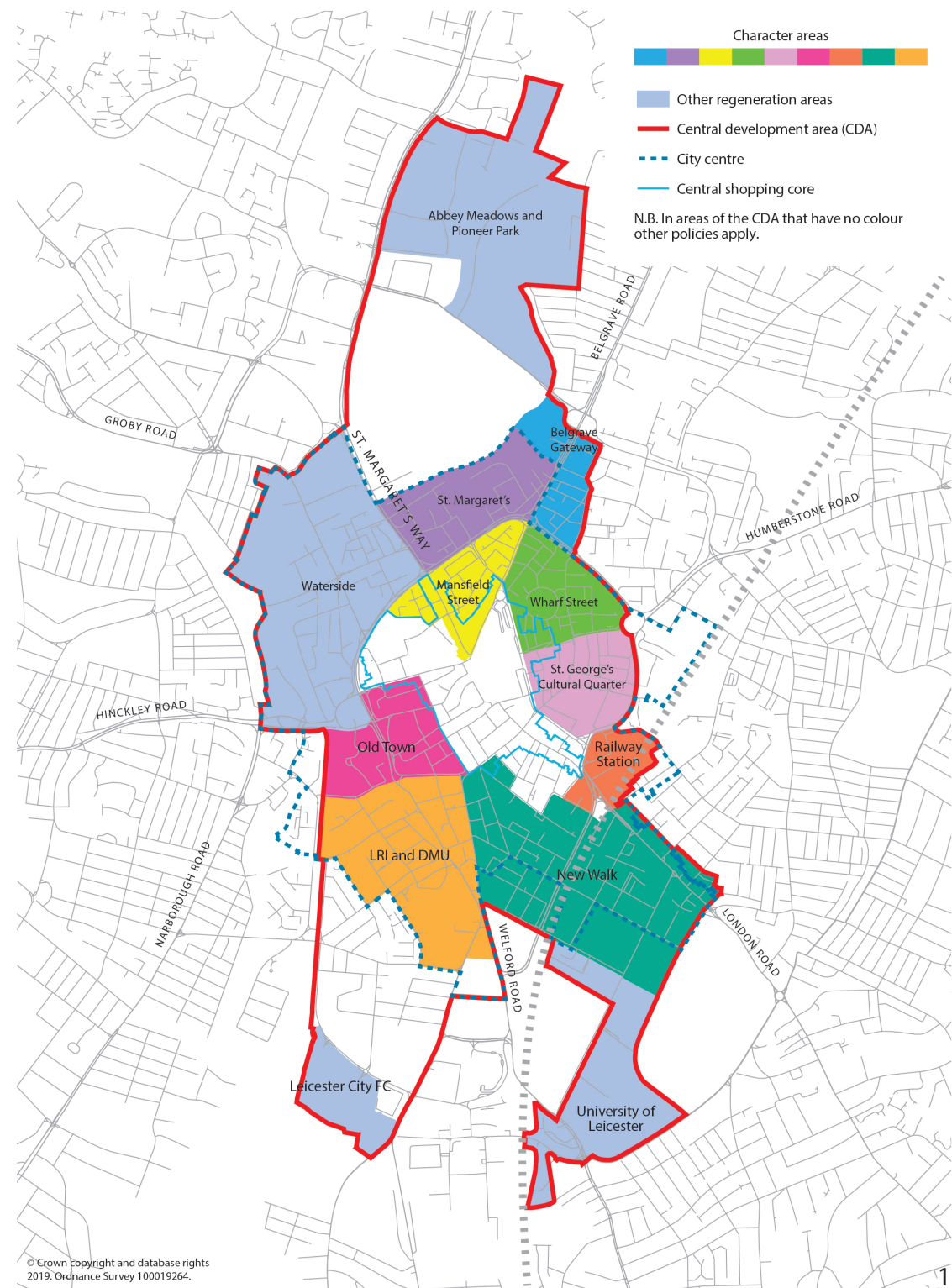
The regeneration of Leicester is a key theme of Leicester's development plan. In considering the central area of Leicester, areas have been identified which have distinctive characters and context, identity, opportunities and challenges and therefore different development objectives. These areas will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

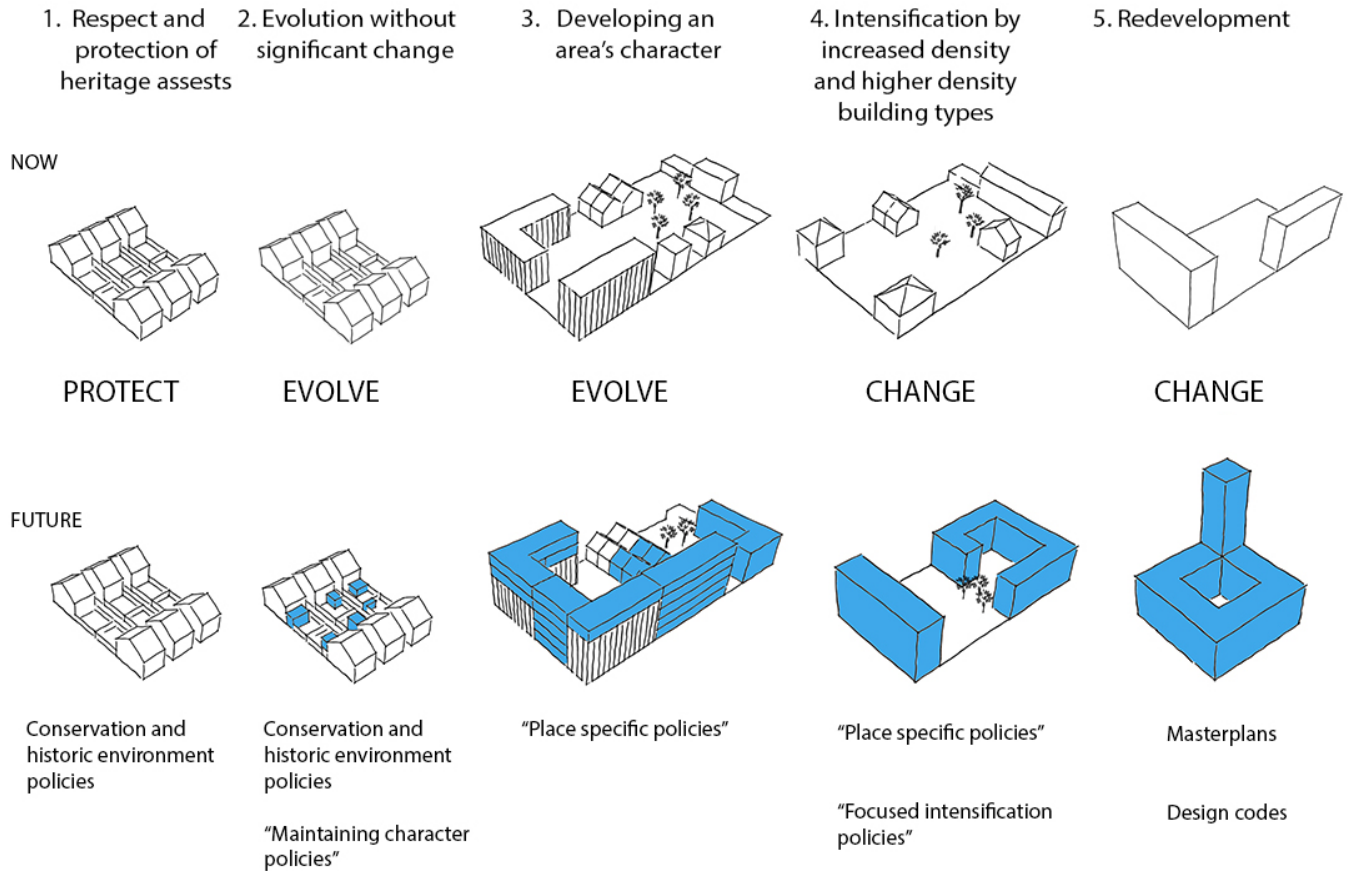
Townscape Character Management:

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 used by the London Borough of Croydon in their Local Plan 2018 outlines five options to categorise and understand this level of change and how it will be managed through planning policy.

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

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



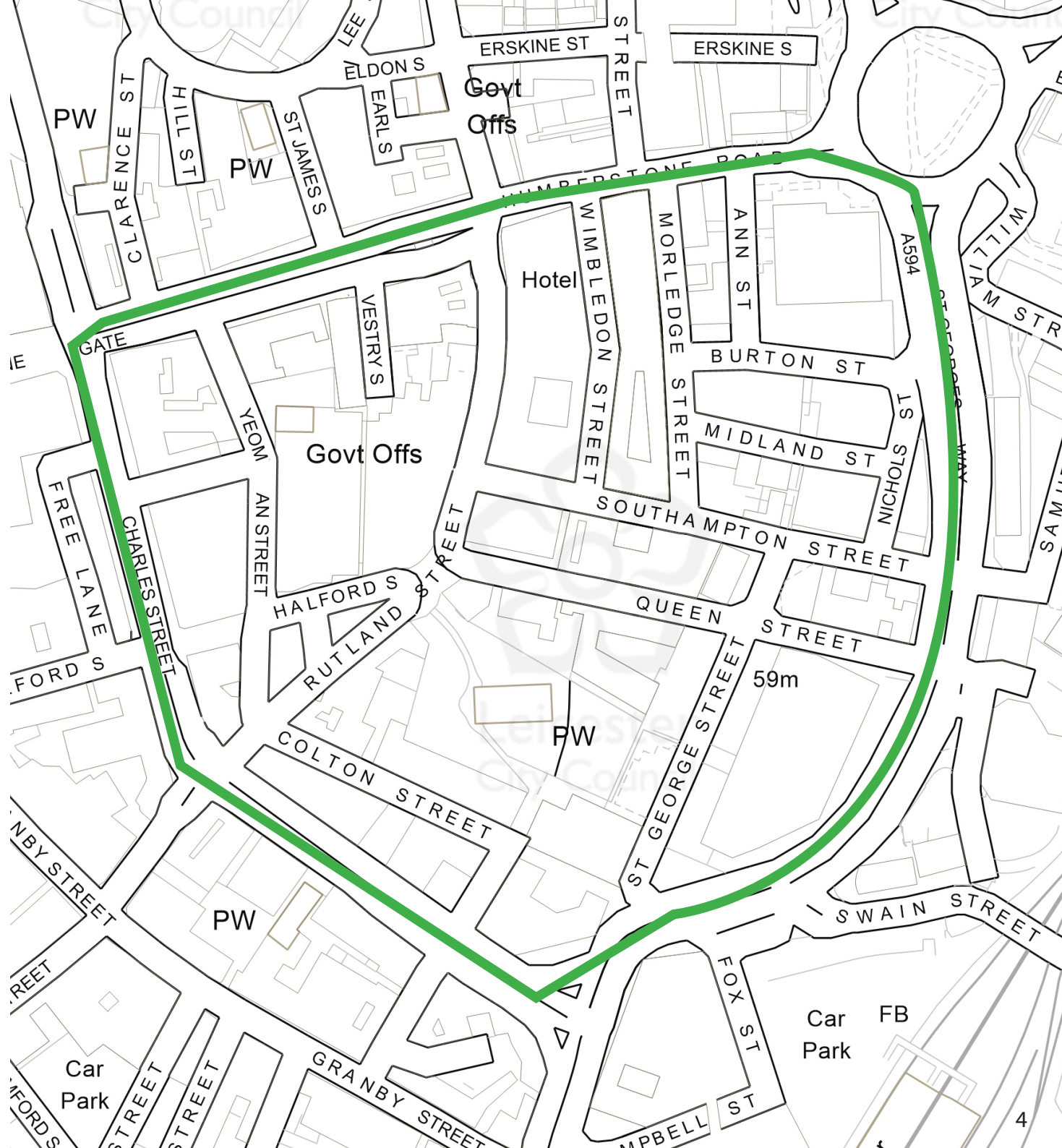
Reference: Local Plan 2018, London Borough of Croydon

St Georges Character Area

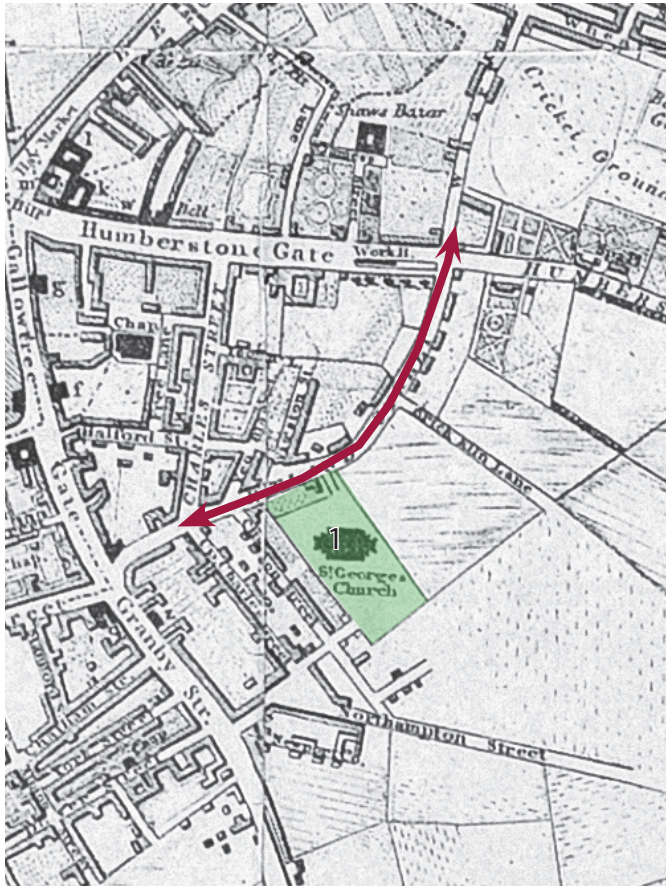
St Georges Character Area is located in the east of the city centre. Leicester City Council identified St. Georges as the location for the city's cultural quarter. Launched in 2000 and followed by the development of the LCB Depot and the Curve theatre, were completed in 2008. Much has been achieved in the development of St George's Cultural Quarter in recent years with several key projects successfully delivered. It is now home to a number of cultural and creative businesses as well as many bars, cafes, restaurants and residential accommodation. It has also seen considerable public realm improvements with the creation of Orton Square enhancing the value of both the significant number of listed buildings, as well as new ones such as the Curve.

Leicester City Council recognises the opportunities and challenges within the St. Georges Character Area. We have therefore undertaken this townscape analysis to guide a cohesive and comprehensive approach to development. There has been a mix of development proposed within the character area with many new residential schemes, increasing the residential population of the area. This offers a significant opportunity to create an attractive, successful and sustainable place with a distinctive identity.

There is a contrast between the high heritage value of the western and central parts of the character area and the more commercial low-rise nature of the eastern side adjacent to the ring road. This contrast means that a positively managed and comprehensive approach is required to ensure the positive character of the west is carried through to the east so development here doesn't become detrimental to the existing character of the area and positively reinforces it.



2. History of the area



1828



1851



1886-87



1914-16



1952

2. History of the area

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 St. Georges Character Area is enclosed by Humberstone Gate to the north, Charles Street to the south-west and the ring road to the east. Humberstone Gate is one of the earliest streets in Leicester and there is evidence of Charles Street dating back to 1802.

1828: Two of the defining features of the character area today are St. Georges Church (1), completed in 1827, and Rutland Street; both can be seen in the Ellis & Ellis map 1828.

1851: The character area is mostly recognisable as we know it today with regard to street layout, with the exception of the ring road constructed in the 60s and 70s.

1880s: Many of the blocks are built out, with a mix of uses in the area, primarily houses, small cottages and 'courts,' but with many industrial and commercial buildings. A number of existing factory buildings are identifiable at 29 Rutland Street and the two buildings flanking the southern end of Wimbledon Street (2).

1914-16: Larger commercial and industrial uses have replaced smaller factories and houses. The Faire Brothers' factory, built 1898, can be seen at the corner of Rutland and Southampton Streets (3).

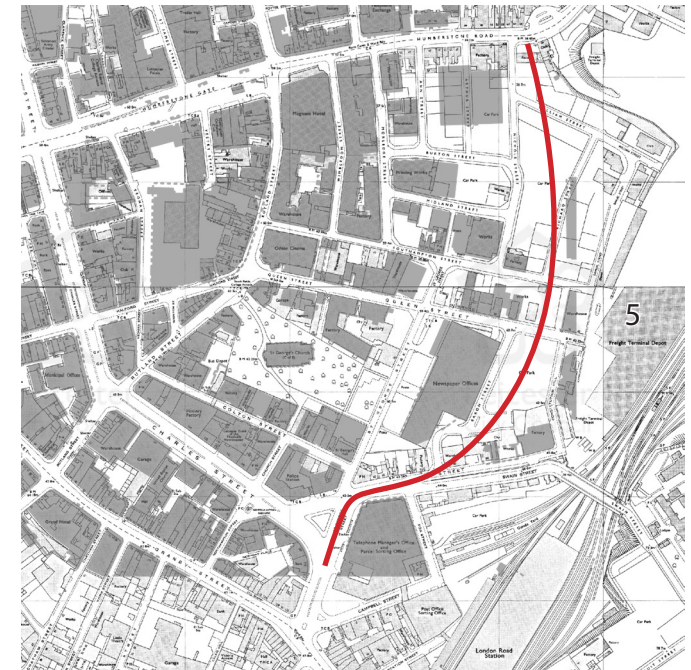
1930s - 70s: Between 1932 and 1976 around 16,000 slum houses were cleared across the city. This included parts of of the St. Georges Character Area as identified in the plan on the following page.

1952: In the 1930s Charles Street was widened, which required the demolition of housing on the south side of Colton Street. The Odeon cinema was built in 1938 (4) to replace the 19th century boot, shoe and hosiery works to the corner of Queen Street.

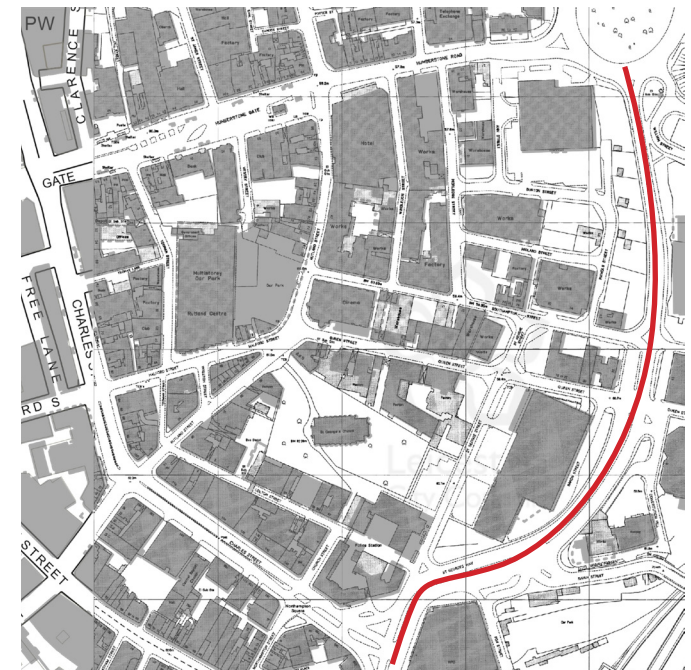
1987/88: St. Georges Way, part of the new inner ring road, was completed around 1988. This severed the character

area along the eastern side running through a number of car parks and factory buildings that existed at the time, disconnecting the area from the railway and the Freight Terminal Depot (5).

1990: This map closely resembles the St. Georges Character Area as it exists today with the new inner ring road, the exception being some of the more recent developments, most notably the Curve Theatre.



1980s



1990



Slum Clearance Plans from Leicester City Council Planning Office archives. The Plan is dated from June 1974 and by that time most of the slum clearance illustrated in the plan had already taken place, or if it had not taken place, resisted and improvements undertaken.

3. Heritage and Townscape Assets

Additional buildings which make a positive contribution are identified. These are buildings which are not nationally listed, locally listed or within Conservation Areas, this 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.

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 significant heritage value of St. Georges Character Area is reflected by the numerous nationally designated and locally listed heritage assets that have endured in the area.

Much of the Character Area, particularly to the west, falls within the St. Georges Conservation Area, designated in 1989.

There is a clear distinction between the east and west parts of the Character Area with regard to heritage contribution. Whilst the west side has greater heritage value, carefully managing development in the east side is vital to protecting and enhancing the setting of the conservation area and nearby heritage and townscape assets. This can be achieved by extending the character of the west side east-wards.

The historic cityscape enhances the character and identity of the area. Recent public realm improvements have elevated the strength of many heritage assets as 'markers' and strong frontages, aiding in the legibility of the area. New development should further protect and enhance the setting of these valuable buildings and spaces, with the introduction of high quality architecture and design. There is now a clear centre to the character area with a number of valuable townscape assets forming a cluster around Orton Square. Maintaining the integrity of this space and grouping is particularly important.



3. Heritage and Townscape Assets

Parts of St. Georges is characterised by streets with very clear and consistent eaves lines and ambient height created by large industrial buildings which were built to the same building lines as the smaller residential typology for which it superseded. Much of the historic industrial uses have since been lost, although many of the remaining former industrial buildings have recently been converted to residential apartments and creative industries. Today St. Georges character area has been identified as the location for the city's cultural quarter with The Curve theatre, Athena theatre, LCB Depot, The Makers Yard, and The Phoenix, amongst others, forming a cluster of cultural uses.

Archaeological Alert Area:

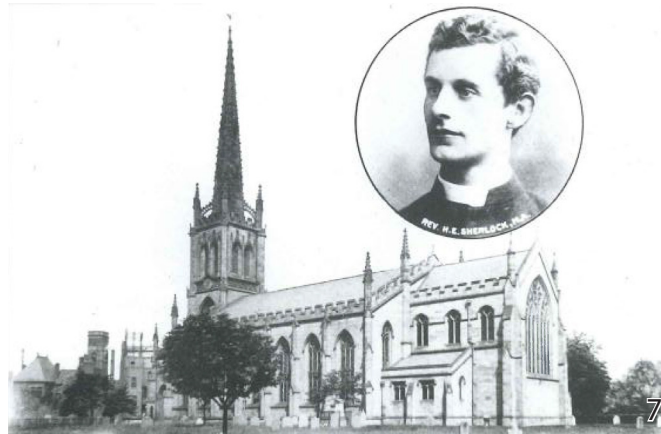
Leicester has a clearly defined historic core. The historic core formed part of the town's defences, first established in the Roman era and re-adopted in the medieval period. The historic core of the city centre is defined as an archaeological alert area and indicates, to developers, where development is most likely to have an impact upon archaeological remains.





Charles Street, St George's Church and the city, Leicester, 1937 (Britain from above)

10



St. Georges Church ND (Leicester a pictorial history, Malcolm Elliott, 1999)

7



Halford Street in 1971, showing the former Odeon cinema (Story of Leicester)

9



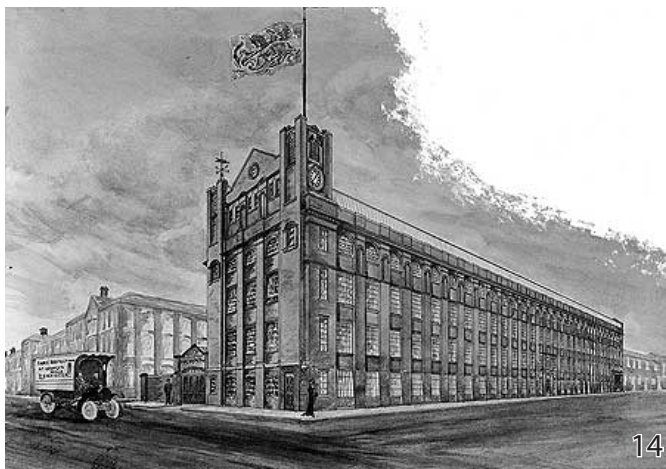
Faire Brothers and co. bootlace warehouse on the corner of Rutland Street and Southampton Street 1901. (Historic England image archive)

5

Rutland Street, 1965 (University of Leicester special collection).



13



St. Georges Mill, Wimbledon Street, 1909 (Historic England image archive).

14



One up one down houses formerly located next to St. Georges churchyard, thought to date from the 1820s (Leicester a pictorial history, Malcolm Elliott).

12

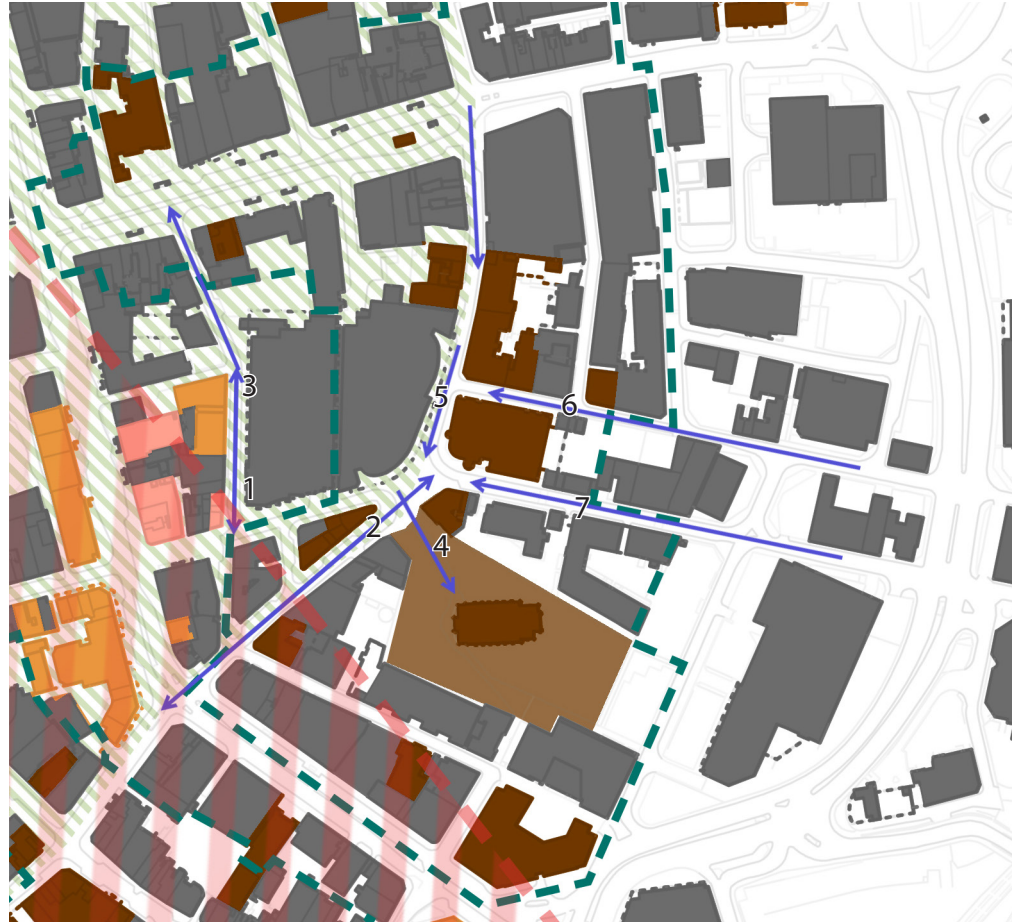


Leicester City Transport Operating Centre 1969. (Leicester Transport Heritage Trust, Rob Haywood and Keith Wood)

11

4. Key Views

The images show key views within the character area, as identified in the diagram.



5. Streets and Spaces

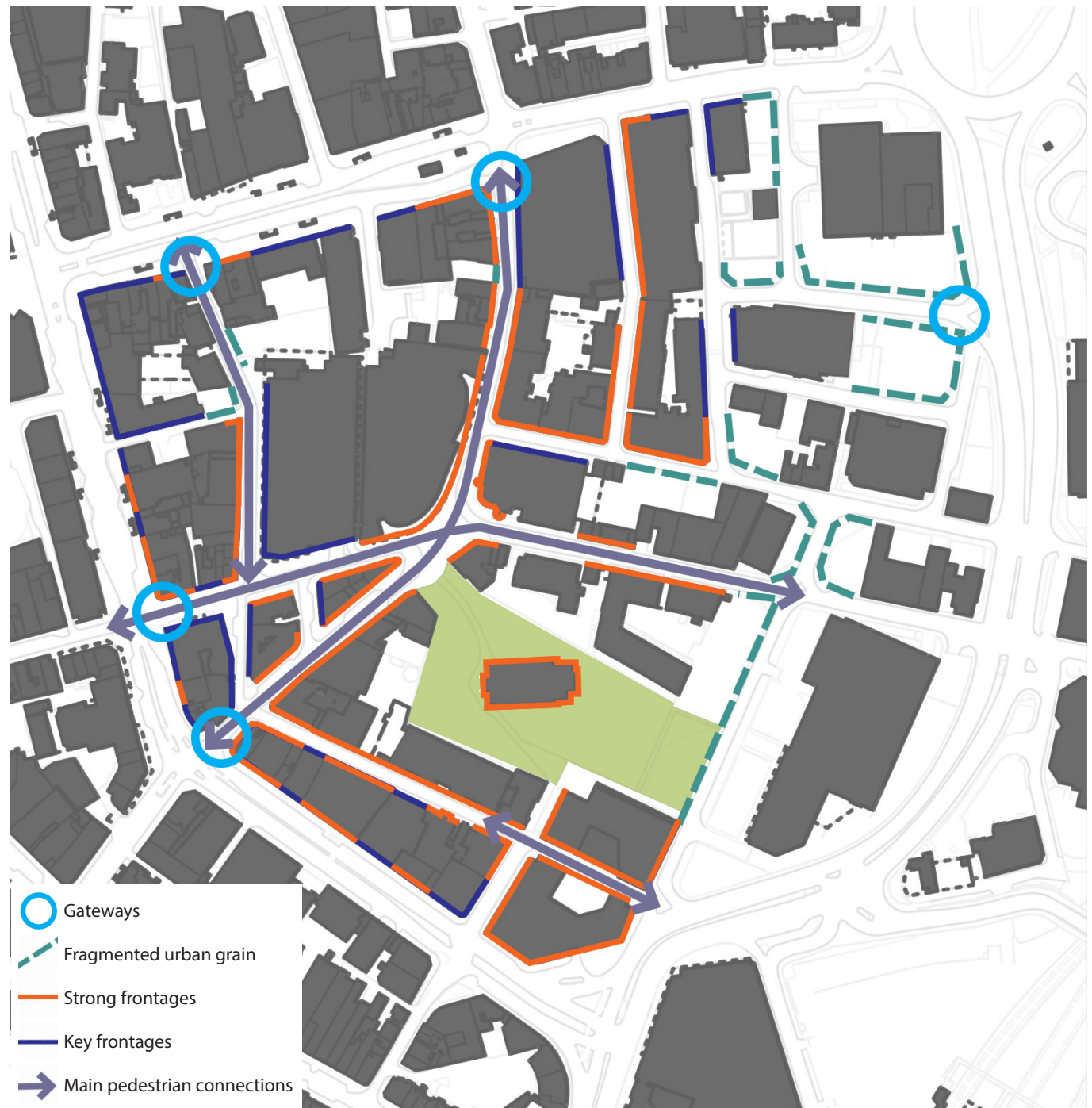
Successful places have well enclosed, active and connected streets, well defined perimeter blocks and well designed public spaces. Strong frontages, local markers, nodes, gateways and public spaces are elements of the townscape that together contribute to the familiarity of a place, making it easily 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 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 many heritage assets of the St. Georges Character Area define the streets and spaces well, offering attractive and strong frontages. This is particularly evident along Rutland Street, Halford Street and Orton Square, as can be seen in the adjacent plan.

There are a number of gateways into the character area, including where Yeoman Street meets Humberstone Gate in the north, on Burton Street where it meets St Georges Way, which is the main vehicle gateway, and Rutland Street onto Charles Street. The main pedestrian gateway is from Halford Street. This is a pedestrianised area (a product of connecting Leicester), and there is a lot of activity here from the shop frontages and pedestrian thoroughfare. There is also good legibility from this point with views leading beyond the Curve to the Athena theatre.

As with many of the other parameters there is a distinct difference between the streets and spaces of the east side and those to the west. There is considerably more fragmentation in the east side, with few buildings offering a strong or defined frontage to the street. Many of the buildings in the west side of the character area form a perimeter block, whereas many of the buildings in the east side sit within the block. This could be a result of fewer



heritage assets in the east side of the character area, as well as the difference in uses between the two locations.

With regard to legibility St. Georges Character Area appears quite legible. It has a number of landmark buildings, particularly around Orton Square, including the Athena building and The Exchange building. The road network, in the west also supports the legibility as mostly lead to Orton Square. Additionally when coming from the east, down Queen Street and Southampton Street, the Curve terminates these views and aids legibility. Whilst the character area is quite permeable, routes are less direct between the west and the north east of the area as a result of the layout of blocks to the east of Rutland Street.

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 character area building heights are quite consistent, particularly within the area covered by the conservation area. Most buildings fall between 4-7 storeys in height, with the lowest parts along Humberstone Gate and in the east of the character area near the central ring road. Much of the height is determined by the previous industrial use of the area with many former factories and warehouses being around 6/7 modern storeys in height. There are a number of townscape and heritage assets around Orton square which create a well-defined and enclosed space, all of a similar height;

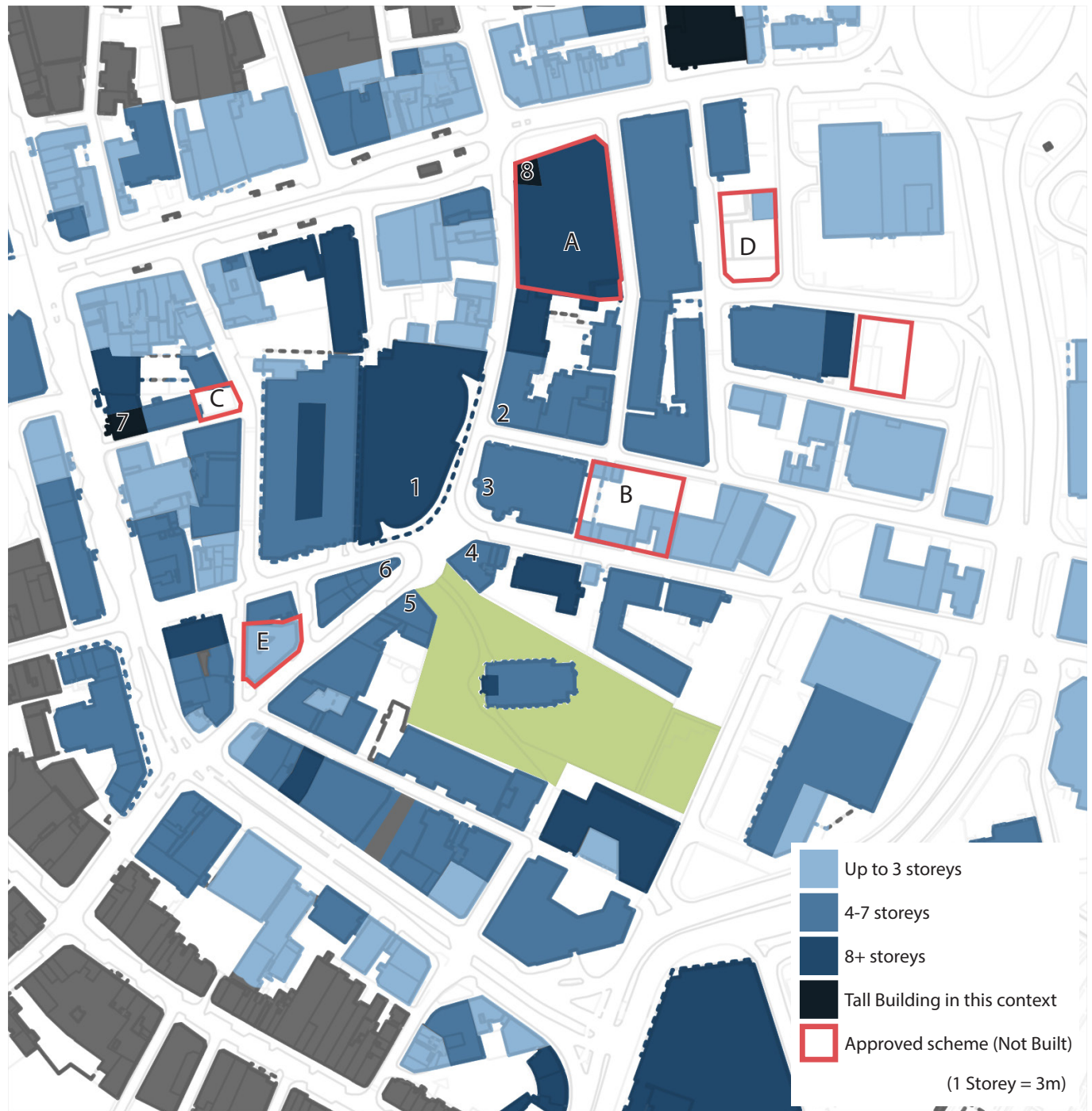
The Curve theatre (1) is 8 storeys,
 The Fair Brothers & Co. warehouse building (2) is 7 storeys,
 The Athena (3) is 7 storeys,
 No. 37-43 Rutland Street (4) is 6 storeys,
 The Exchange building (6) is 5 modern storeys, and
 35 Rutland Street (5) is also 5 modern storeys.

There are two buildings that would be considered tall in this context, Midland House (7) on Charles Street and the tower to the International Hotel (8) on Humberstone Road at 16 and 14 storeys respectively.

Planning History:

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

Below is the planning history of approved/determined applications in the area:



6. Existing Building Heights and Planning History

20110540 - Former International Hotel, change of use to student accommodation. There is a more recent refusal, 20161507, on this site for a 21, 11, 10 and 9 storey building. It was refused on unit size, layout and scale. (A)

20130177 - Queen Street, change of use of 2 storey building and construction of 5 storey building to Southampton Street. (B)

20130787 - Yeoman Street, approval for a 6 storey residential building. (C)

20150866 - 21 Morledge Street, approved 7, 8 & 11 storey predominantly residential. (D) This approval would not now be consistent with the findings of this townscape analysis. It reflects former planning objectives and should not be viewed as a model for future development of the character area.

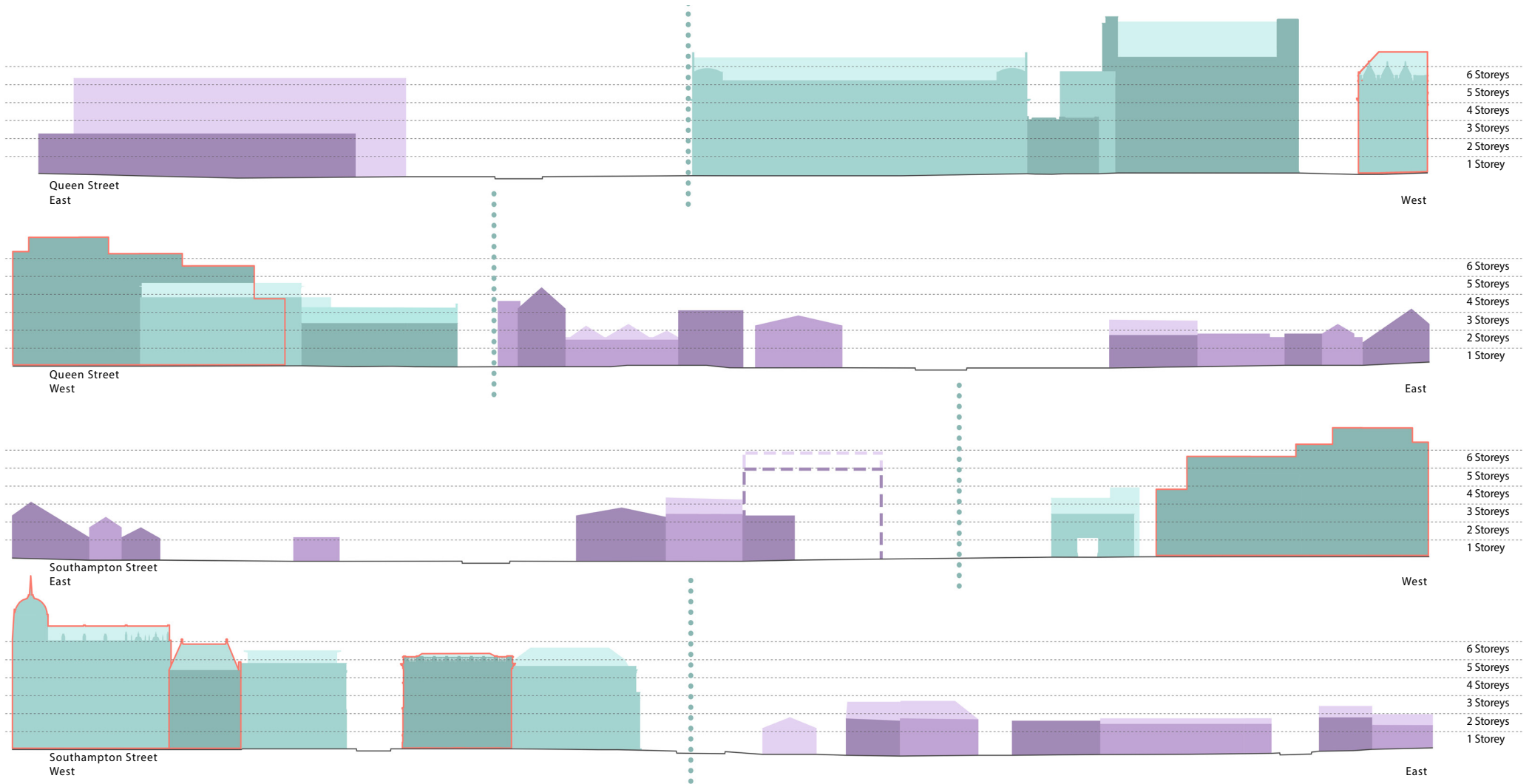
20161032 - 24 Rutland Street, recently approved at 4 storeys. (E)

Recommendations for proposed heights is covered in section 13.

6. Existing Building Heights and Planning History

The diagrams show the storey heights of buildings on Queen Street and Southampton Street with the green buildings showing buildings within the conservation area, and listed buildings identified with a red outline. The western ends of each street show an ambient height of around 5 storeys determined by heritage assets.

- Listed building within the conservation area
- Building within the conservation area
- Building outside the conservation area
- Approved scheme (not built)



7. Transport Network / Movement

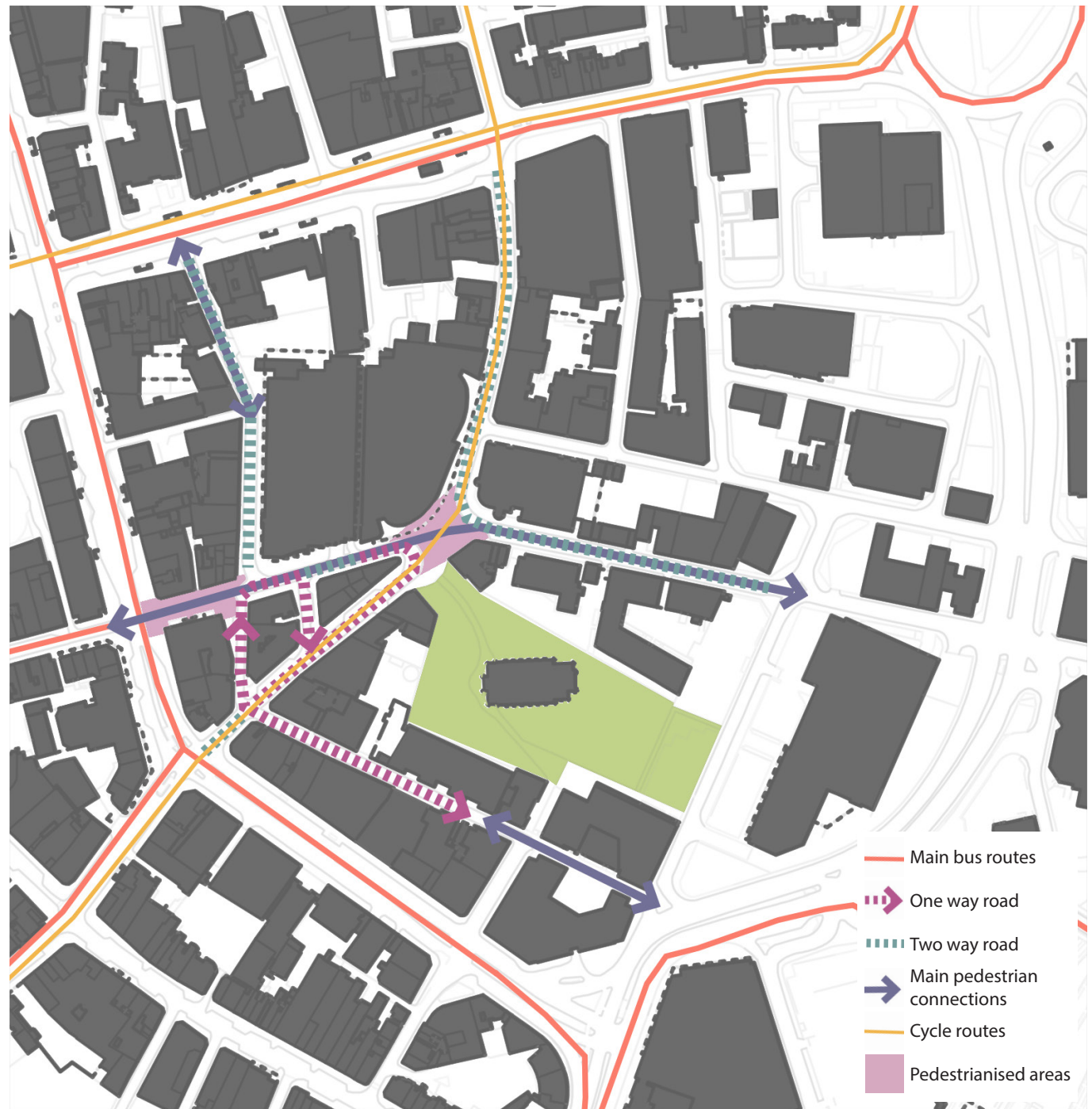
Cycling routes are taken from the Leicester Cycling Map and includes cycling infrastructure relevant to the city centre; on road cycle lanes, off road routes, bus lanes where cycling is permitted, pedestrian streets and recommended on road routes. Future cycling infrastructure guaranteed to be delivered 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 the past Rutland Street would have been the main vehicle connection through the character area. Since the pedestrianisation of Orton Square, it's predominant use is as a pedestrian and cycle connection through St. Georges. The pedestrianisation of Orton Square and part of Halford Street has limited any east to west vehicle routes to the periphery of the character area. This has made the area, for the most part, particularly pedestrian and cycle friendly. Whilst many of the roads in St. Georges allow for cars, given the lack of connections through the area there is a very light flow of traffic.

The implementation of the central ring road severed a number of connections into and out of the character area and creates a barrier around its eastern part. Therefore, most footfall enters and leaves out of the western side of the area; this is also because this is the side closest to the city centre. This also creates issues regarding pedestrian connectivity between the character area and the station.

The main bus routes in the area are to the periphery, mostly along Humberstone Gate and Charles Street, connecting to the Haymarket bus station.



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 important to creating activity and vitality within 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 of existing buildings could have 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.

St. Georges character area has mixed levels of activity to the street. The parts of the character area that provide the most activity to the street are along Charles Street, Halford Street and the southern part of Rutland Street leading from the city centre to Orton Square. The retail units on the ground floor of The Exchange building (image 11 on the following page) have large windows and cafés spill onto the street providing some of the most active frontages in the character area. Similarly the entire ground floor of the Curve is glazed (12) and given its often late opening hours it also provides an active frontage to Orton Square.

There is less activity in the east side of the character area. This is a result of fewer retail uses and a more fragmented urban grain. Some of the tertiary streets have particularly low levels of activity, some a result of the raised ground floor levels of some of the former industrial buildings. There are interesting interventions where windows have been lowered to provide better activity at the ground floor as can be seen in image 5. There are also a number of newer developments which provide no activity to the street at the ground floor. There are some parts of the façades of existing buildings which could be opened up through



very simple interventions.

Many streets in St. Georges have relatively high pedestrian movement. Others such as Wimbledon Street don't have much and are also very narrow and enclosed, which makes it feel unsafe and could be alleviated by creating more active frontages.

Many of the buildings in St. Georges have ground floor windows that are raised higher than standard ground floor windows. In these cases it is considered ground floor windows raised above head height offer a blank ground floor frontage to the street.



9. Land Uses

Ground floor:

There are three dominant uses within St. Georges Character Area, retail being the predominant ground floor use to the west of the area, with the addition of residential and leisure uses further east. There are more industrial and office uses to the very eastern side towards the ring road. The predominant above ground use is domestic/residential, showing that St. Georges is a growing residential community.

Having been identified as the city's cultural quarter, a significant and important use in the area is the arts and cultural units and venues which are located here. There are a considerable number of arts venues including a theatre, music venue, the creative enterprise start-up incubator and artist workshops and galleries. These form an important part of the identity of the area.

There are also a number of places of worship, including the Christ Embassy located on Yeoman Street and the Shirdi Sai Baba Temple Leicester located on Colton Street, St. Georges Church being the most dominant in townscape terms.



From the Local Taxation and Gazetteer, August 2019

9. Land Uses

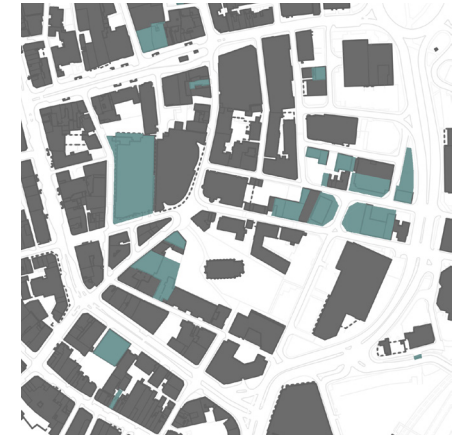
(Includes above ground distribution)



Domestic



Community



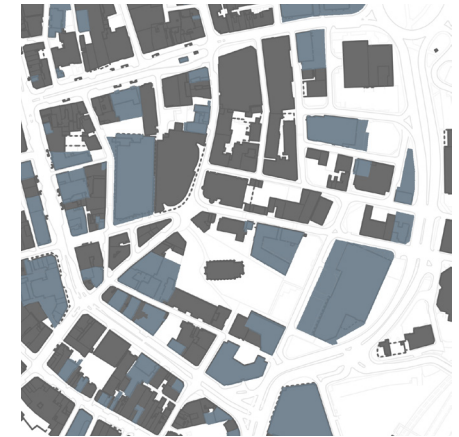
Industrial and commercial



Land



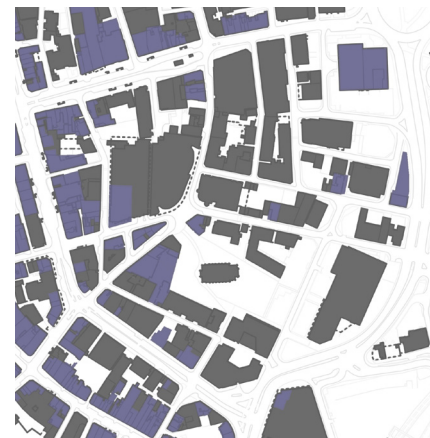
Leisure and hotels



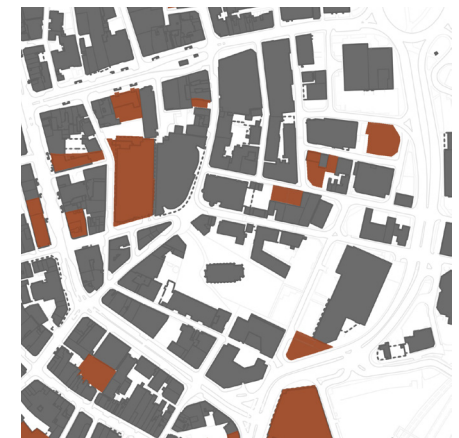
Office



Places of Worship



Retail, pubs and cafes



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.

Completed Connecting Leicester projects within the character area are located on Humberstone Gate, Orton Square and the area around Rutland Street and Halford Street. There are proposed works to St. George's churchyard which will aim to improve connections to Orton Square, in particular from the railway station.

Connecting Leicester improvements have been very influential to the character of Orton Square and connections into the character area from the city centre. It has made significant public realm improvements which support its function as the cultural quarter for Leicester. Orton square now hosts a number of cultural events, for example St Georges Festival. It has also enhanced the prominence and significance of a number of heritage and townscape assets surrounding the square by improving their setting.



10. Connecting Leicester Improvements

Image 1 shows the area outside the Athena cinema in 2005 before the Connecting Leicester works. It is highway dominated with poor public realm.

Image 2 shows a plan of Rutland Street and Halford Street before the Connecting Leicester improvements; the highway dominates the area.

Images 3, 4 & 5 show the improvements as they can be seen today. A thriving pedestrian environment that enhances the setting of the nearby heritage and townscape assets.



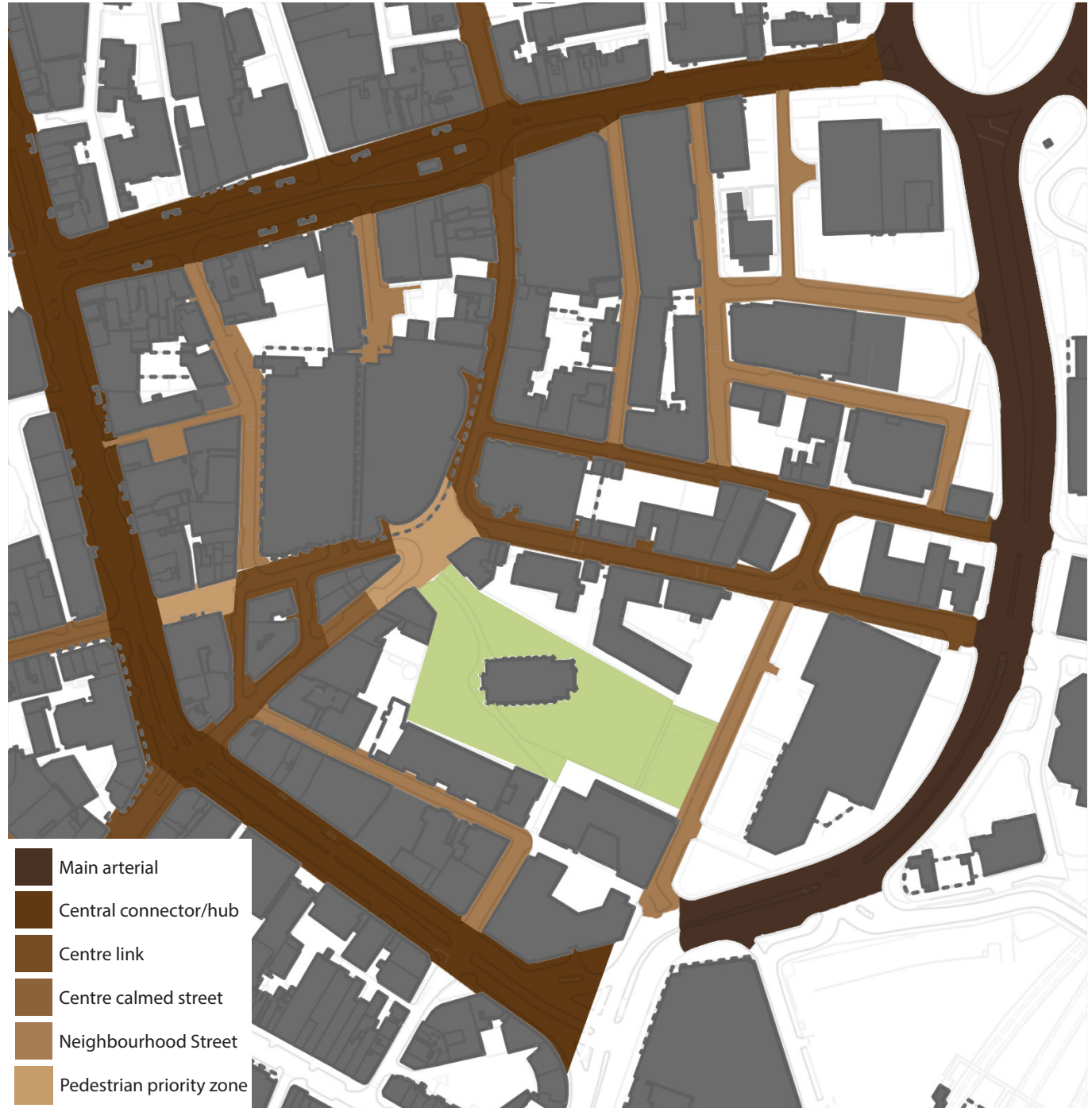
11. Street Hierarchy

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 (DoT 2007) 'streets make up the greatest part of the public realm. Better designed streets therefore contribute significantly to the quality of the built environment and play a key role in the creation of sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities.

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

The ring road to the east of the character area has the highest traffic volume. Charles Street and Humberstone Gate to the west and north, respectively, are both central connectors. All pedestrian and vehicle access into St. George's is via these three streets.

The streets that provide vehicle connections through the character area are the north and west sections of Rutland Street, Queen Street, Southampton Street, Wigston Street and parts of Yeoman Street and Halford Street. All other streets with vehicle access have very little vehicle flow and are mostly centre calmed-streets. Within the character area there are relatively low levels of vehicle movement and the pedestrianisation of Orton Square and the most westerly part of Halford Street have limited vehicle movement and created a better pedestrian environment. Many of the streets in St. Georges have more emphasis on place than movement.



Part B: Guiding Future Development

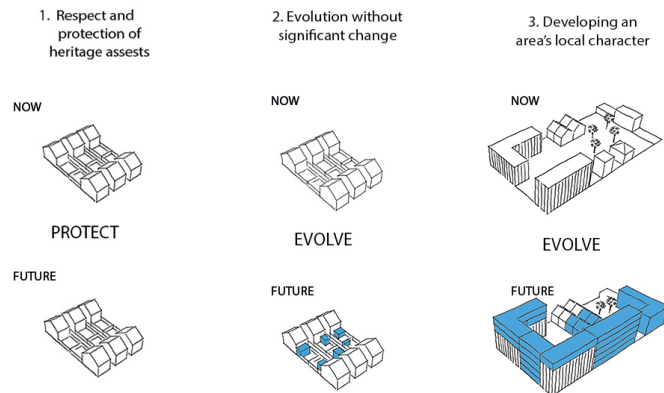
Part A Townscape Analysis outlines the comprehensive townscape assessment undertaken for each of the 9 character areas. Part B Guiding Future Development, is based on the findings of this assessment and identifies criteria to guide and manage development across the whole character area to provide a comprehensive 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

St. Georges Character Area is the Cultural Quarter of the city, as well as being home to a growing residential population. This guidance looks to support mixed used regeneration of the area, enhancing the residential, cultural and employment opportunities, whilst protecting the numerous heritage assets.

The western side of St. Georges Character Area categorised as 1/2 respect and protect/evolution without significant change of the Townscape Management Options. The east is categorised as 3. developing an areas character.

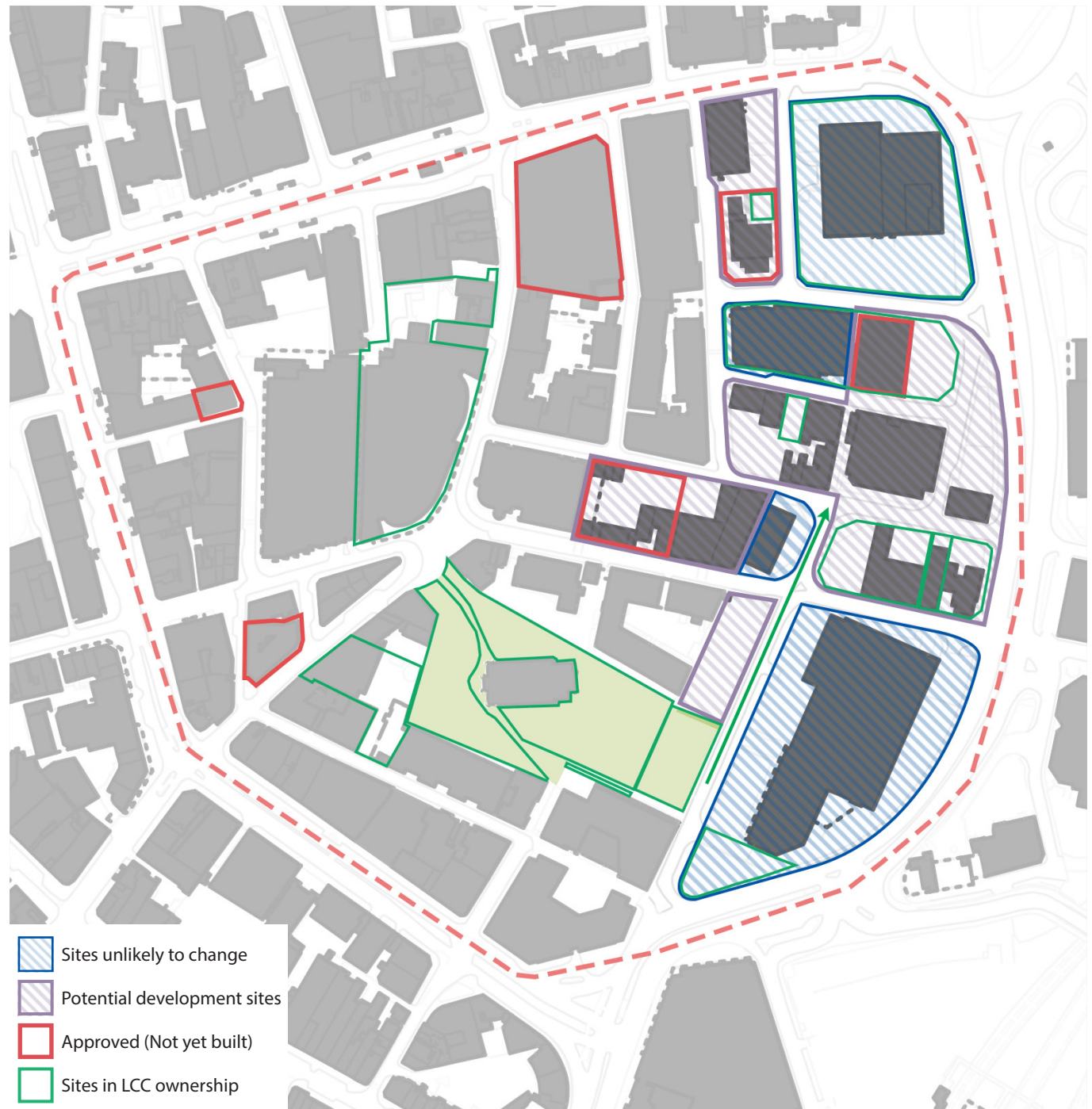


12. Growth and Development Potential

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

A cluster of potential development sites in St. Georges Character Area are found in the east of the area. They include LCC owned sites which may provide an opportunity for a comprehensive development scheme.

There are recently developed and well established sites that are unlikely to change in the near future; the Print workshop, the Lidl site, the Phoenix site and the Mercury Place office building.



13. Proposed Building Heights

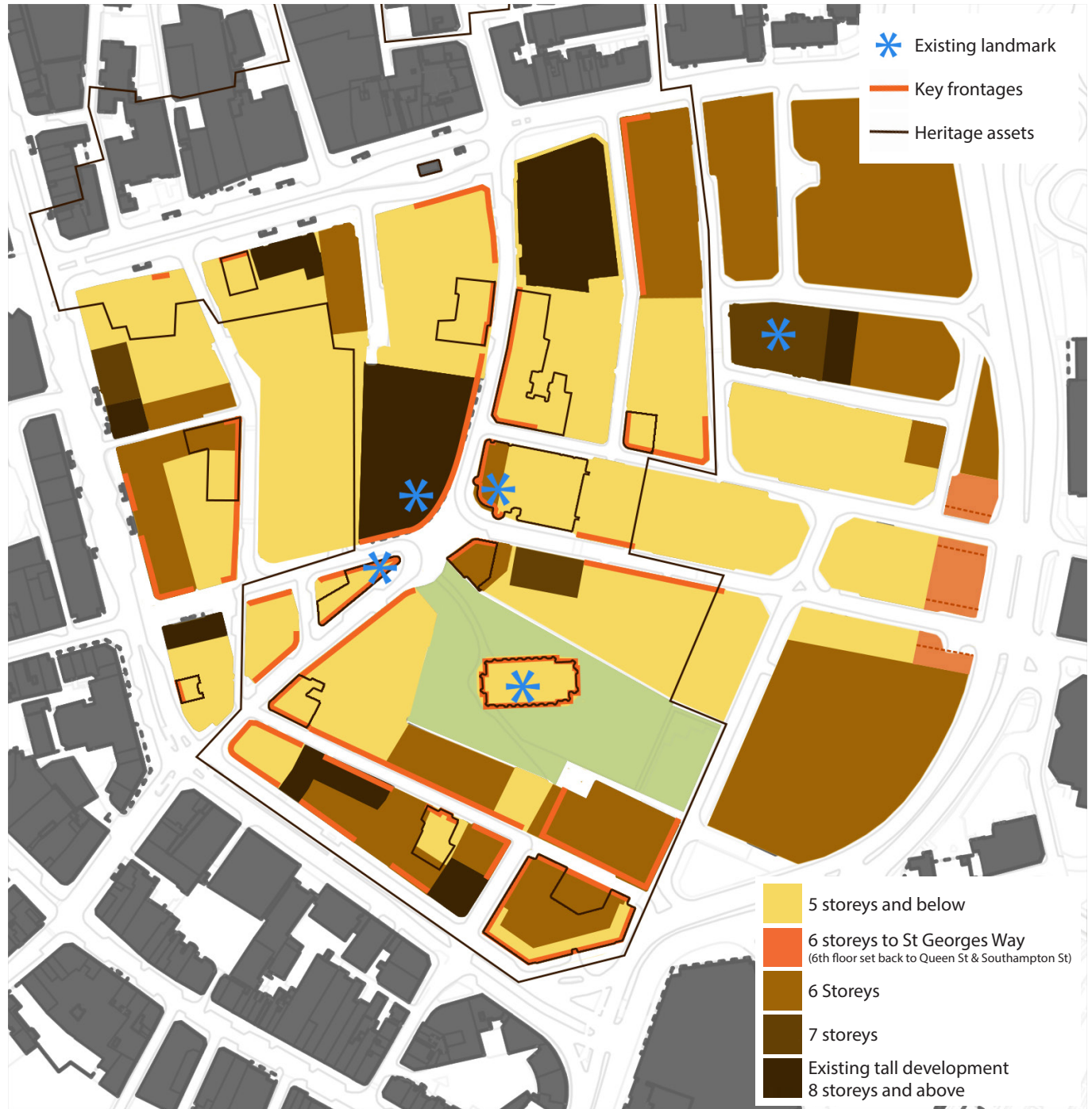
The maximum proposed building heights are based on the townscape analysis undertaken in Part A and where required following more de-tailed site testing, for example, with the city 3D model. The heights shown are based on 1 storey at 3m, as stated in Part A. Therefore the parameter to be used should be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

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 existing heights of the St. Georges Character Area are very consistent and streets have uniformity in height and eaves line. Heritage assets in the area inform the proposed heights here. Queen Street and Southampton Street form the only connections between the west and the east sides of the character area. They therefore set a precedence for appropriate heights for any potential development sites in the east. Given the consistent height of the area, the heritage and townscape value of existing buildings, and the necessity to protect and extend the existing character of the area, there are no opportunities for tall development identified.

The diagram on the following page shows the storey heights of buildings on Queen Street and Southampton Street as also identified on page (16). The western ends of

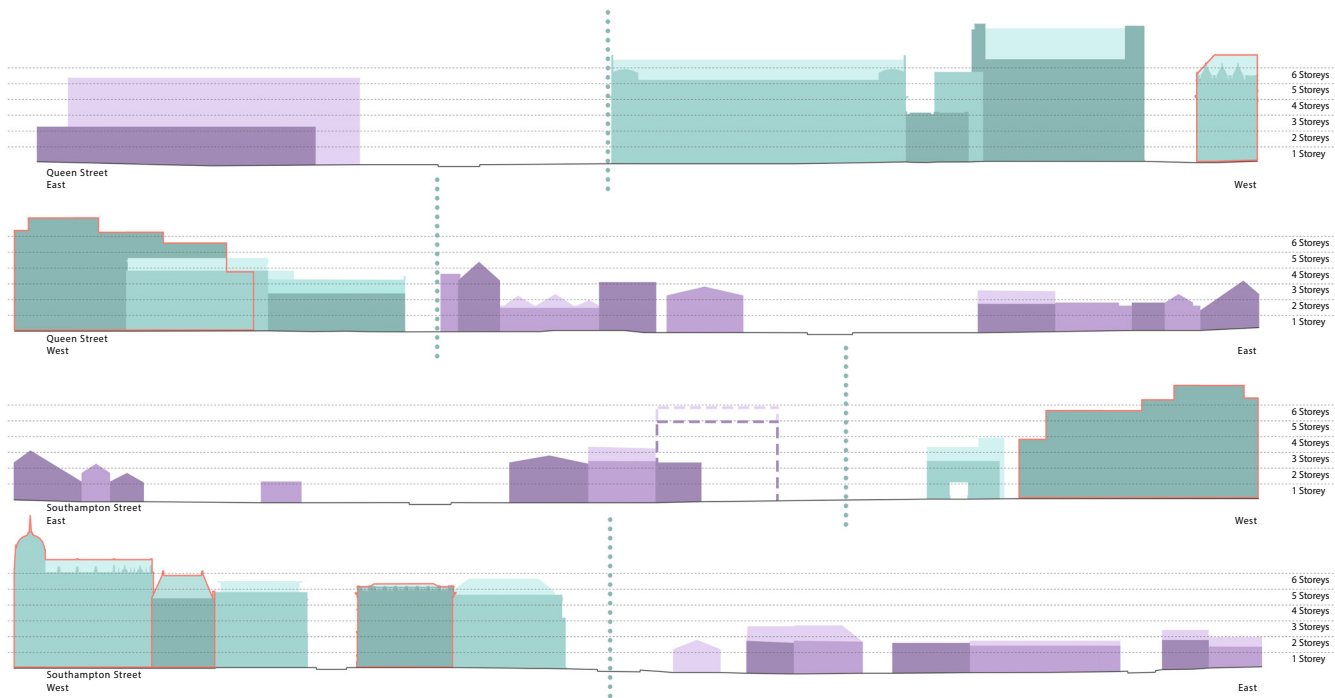


each street show an ambient height of around 5 storeys determined by heritage assets. This should therefore be continued east should developable sites come forward, to maintain the ambient and consistent height of the area and to avoid any harm to these high heritage value streets.

The main area for future development is adjacent to the ring road; however, this is not considered an appropriate justification for increased height. As previously mentioned many of the sites are located to the eastern ends of Queen Street and Southampton Street. The western end should therefore inform the heights of these areas.

Within the conservation area many of the building heights are informed by the existing buildings and heritage assets here. Therefore, any sites that come forward, for which there will be few, heights will be determined by the sites relationship to townscape and heritage assets in order to enhance the setting of the conservation area.

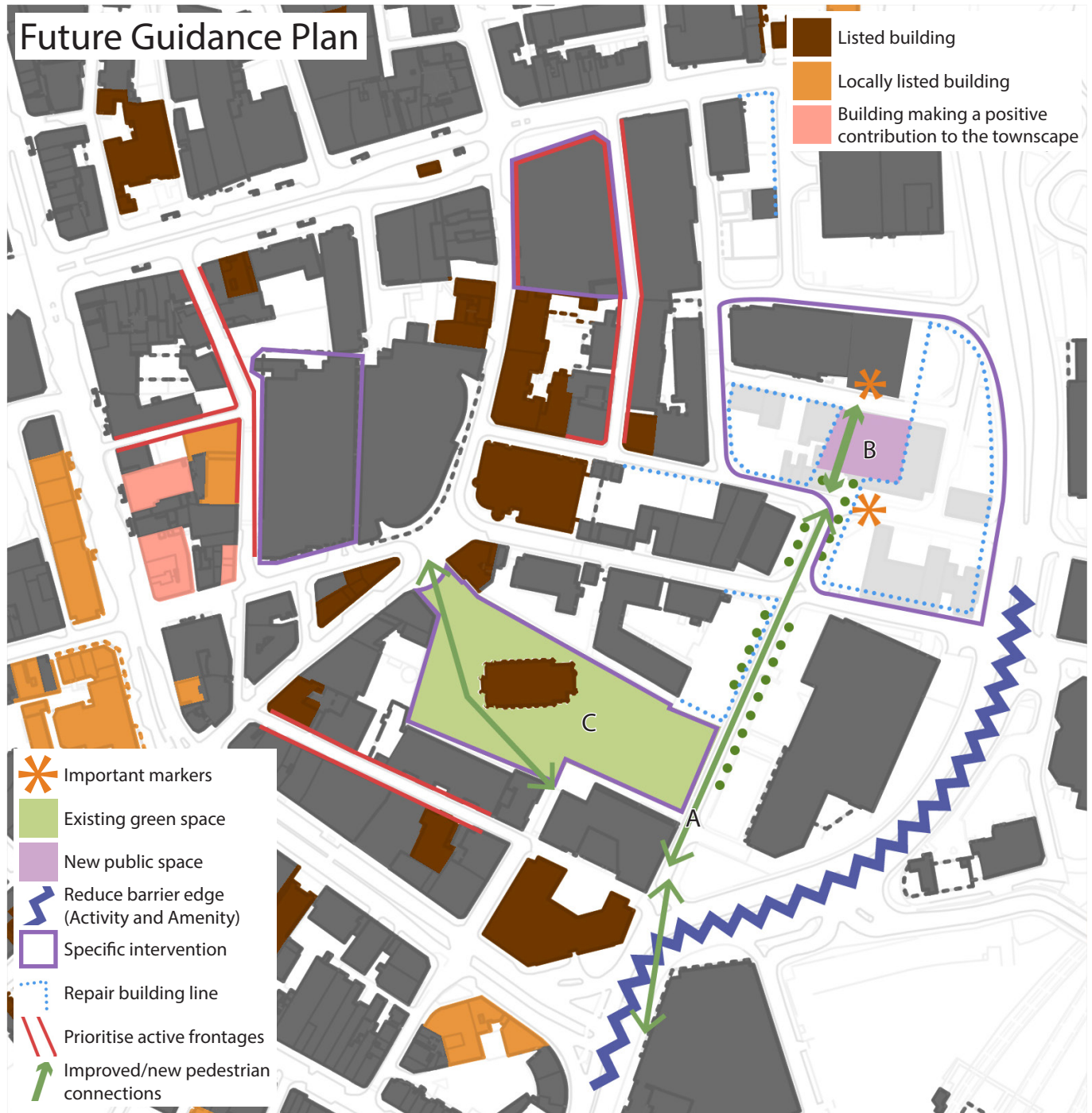
To the west and along Charles Street, proposed heights here have been determined by the areas relationship with the conversation area, heritage assets, existing taller development and the consistency of building heights on the opposite side of Charles Street. There are no opportunities for tall development here.



14. Future Planning

The St. George's Character Area has a strong identity as the city's 'Cultural Quarter'. The aim of this guidance is to strengthen and grow the area's cultural identity, as well as creating a vibrant community for its growing residential population. It will provide additional office and workspace for the city. It will be a regeneration area with a distinct heritage value, which will be preserved whilst ensuring a mix of uses.

Public space is of particular value to the character of the area and this guidance recommends enhancing existing spaces and provide opportunities for new public space.



Criteria to Guide New Development:

Building Heights:

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

Heritage Led Development

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

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
In particular:

A Improve connections between the character area and the railway station

Creation of Active Frontages and the Design of Ground Floors

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

Areas of focus: see Future Guidance Plan - red line

Improving the Character and Appearance of the Character Area

Opportunities for improving the appearance and setting of specific existing buildings and spaces will be encouraged and actively promoted by the Council. The Council will work positively with landowners of identified buildings and spaces.

Areas of focus:

The Rutland Centre NCP car park
The former International Hotel

Buildings and Structures Making a Positive Contribution to the Townscape

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

Designed to Repair Street Frontages

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

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

Supporting the cultural and creative uses in the area

Development should allow for the retention and ongoing development of a mix of uses in the area, allowing them to co-exist. Particularly with regard to the creative and cultural uses which form a large part of the character of the area as the Cultural Quarter of the city. This is an essential part of its character and contribution to the city centre.

Creating a place that is easy to find your way around

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

Areas of focus: see Future Guidance Plan - orange asterisk

Green Infrastructure

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

Areas of focus: tbc

Continue the character of the west into the east

Height and massing for new developments should reflect

and maintain the character of the high value townscape and heritage assets located in the west of the character area. This will ensure that the strong townscape and heritage based character of the west is continued into the east of the character area.

Recommended Interventions:

Identified in the Future Guidance Plan.

B – Office Led Mixed Use Development

Provide additional office space, residential, public space, and car parking and improved pedestrian and cycle connections.

C – St. George's Churchyard

Improve connections through the church yard to Orton Square.