

# **St. Margaret's Character Area Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance**

**Evidence Document  
Draft v.9**

**Urban Design Team  
January 2020**

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**Part A.1: Townscape Analysis**

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

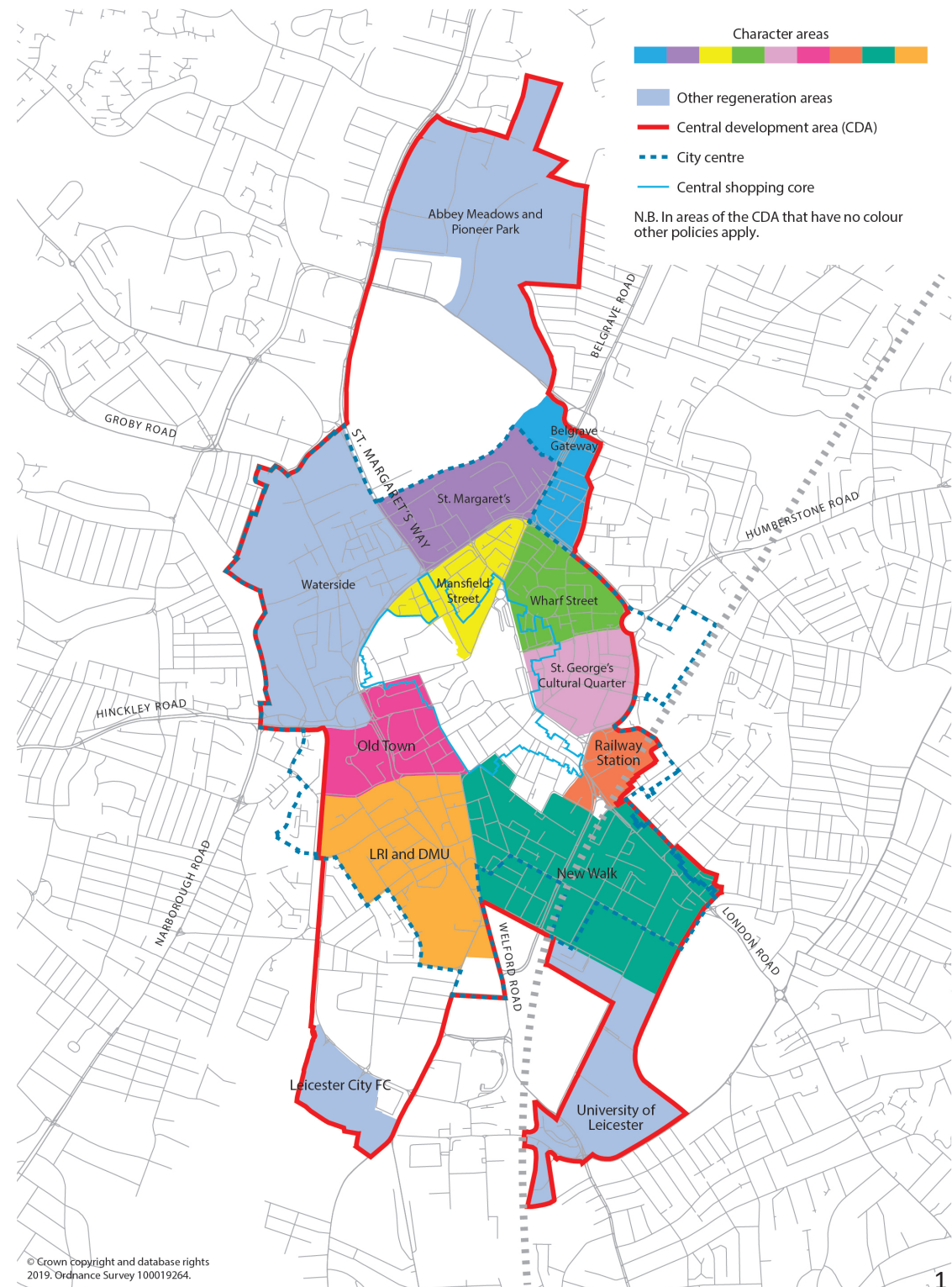
The regeneration of Leicester is a key theme of Leicester's development plan. In considering the central area of Leicester, areas have been identified which have distinctive characters and context, identity, opportunities and challenges and therefore different development objectives. These areas will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

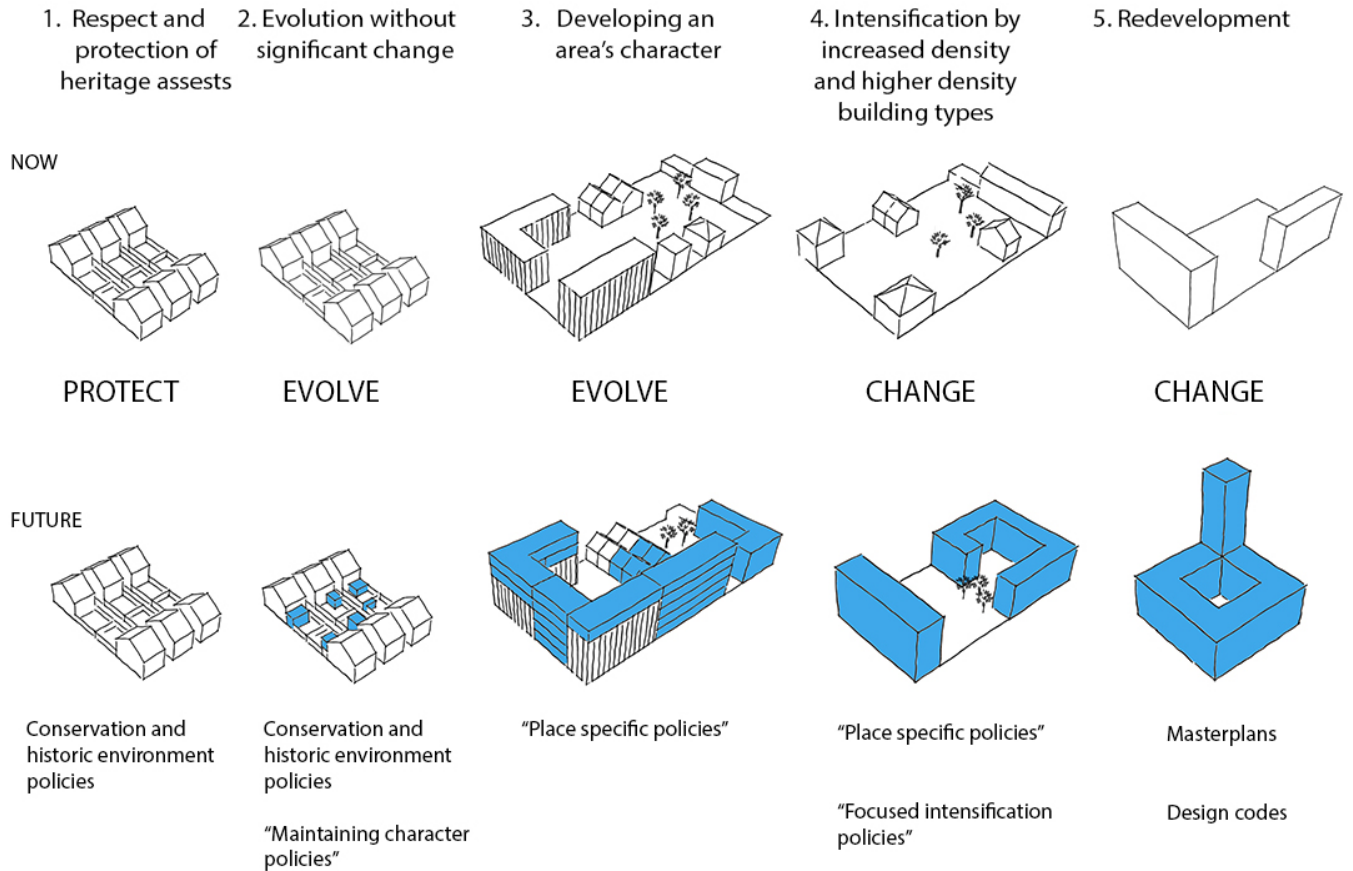
**Townscape Character Management:**

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.



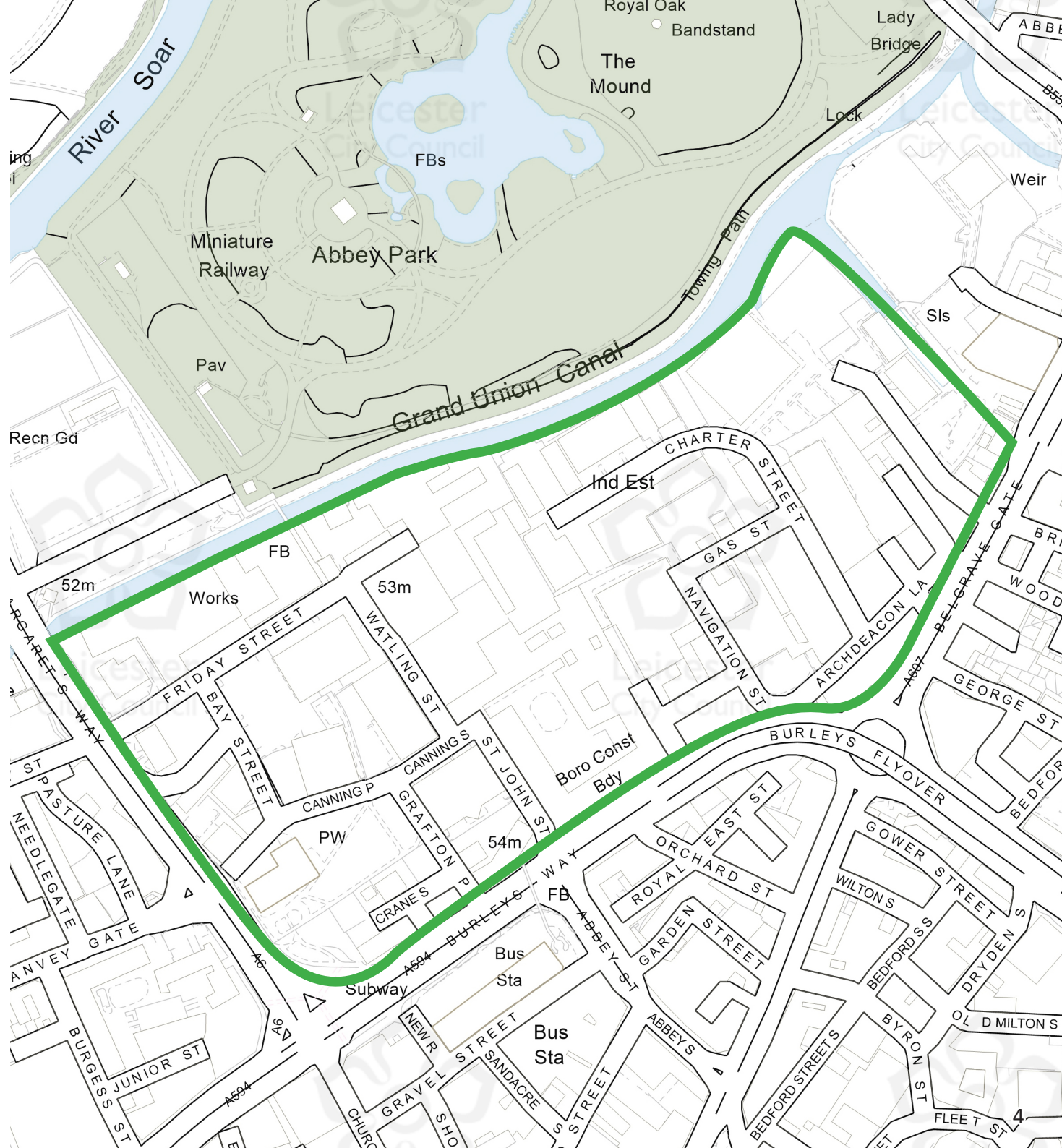
Reference: Local Plan 2018, London Borough of Croydon

## St Margaret's Character Area

St. Margaret's Character Area is located to the north of the city centre. It is defined by the location for the Grade I listed St. Margaret's Church, the Grade II\* listed St. Marks Church and its proximity to the Grade II\* listed Historic Park and Garden Abbey Park. The area comprises a number of Locally Listed industrial heritage sites, which define much of the form of the area, in particular the former Corah hosiery factory.

Today, much of the character area is used for commercial or light industrial uses with a number of modern warehouse buildings.

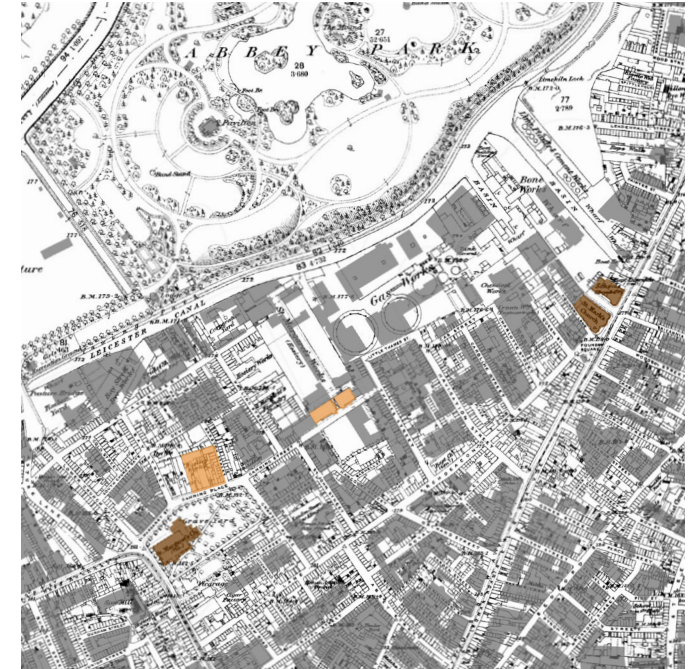
Leicester City Council recognises the opportunities and issues within the St. Margaret's Character Area. We have therefore undertaken this townscape analysis to guide a cohesive and comprehensive approach to development. There has been some new development proposed within the character area with some speculative residential development proposed. Balancing potential emerging residential with current office and employment uses is a key consideration.



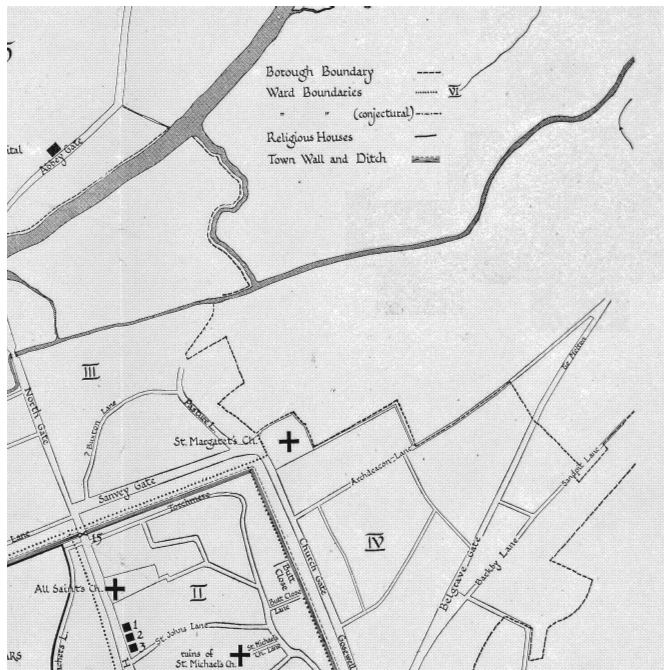
## 2. History of the area



1832



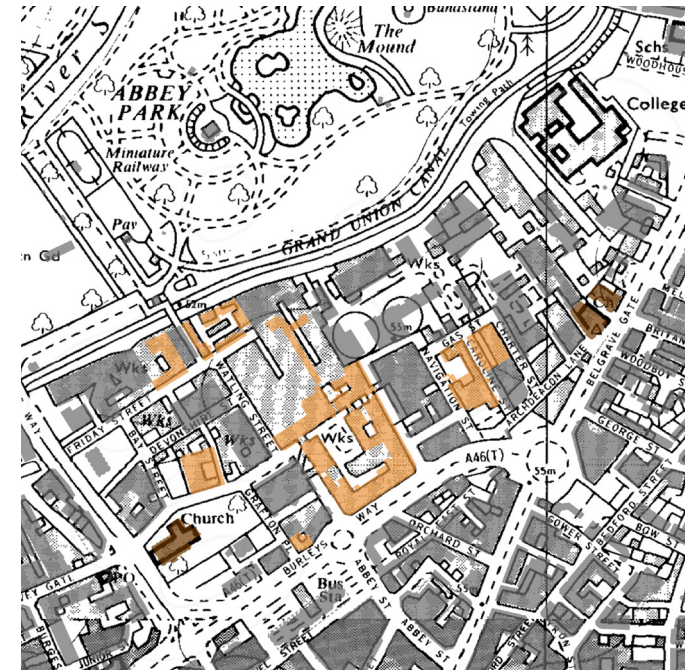
1880s



1525



1950s



1970s



## 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.

St. Margaret's has been the location of a church possibly since the Anglo-Saxon period. The transept of the current church dates back to the early 13th century.

**1525:** Of the seven parishes of Leicester that existed at the beginning of the 16th century, St. Margaret's was one of two that lay entirely outside of the town walls.

**1832:** Beyond the church there was little development of the St. Margaret's Character Area as we know it today until the 19th century. The industrial revolution saw the area develop with factories and some residential housing. The plan shows a gas works, lime kilns and a foundry (from where foundry lane gets its name).

**1880s:** The first part of the Corah hosiery factory was built in 1865. The site continued to develop throughout the 19th and into the 20th century. See the Corah site chapter for more information. St. Mark's church was completed in 1872 and represented one of the main working class parishes of Leicester.

**1930s - 70s:** Between 1932 and 1976 around 16,000 slum houses were cleared across the city. This included parts of the St. Margaret's Character Area.

**1950s:** By the 1950s much of the area was occupied by factory and industrial uses (identified in red) interspersed with some housing (identified in blue).

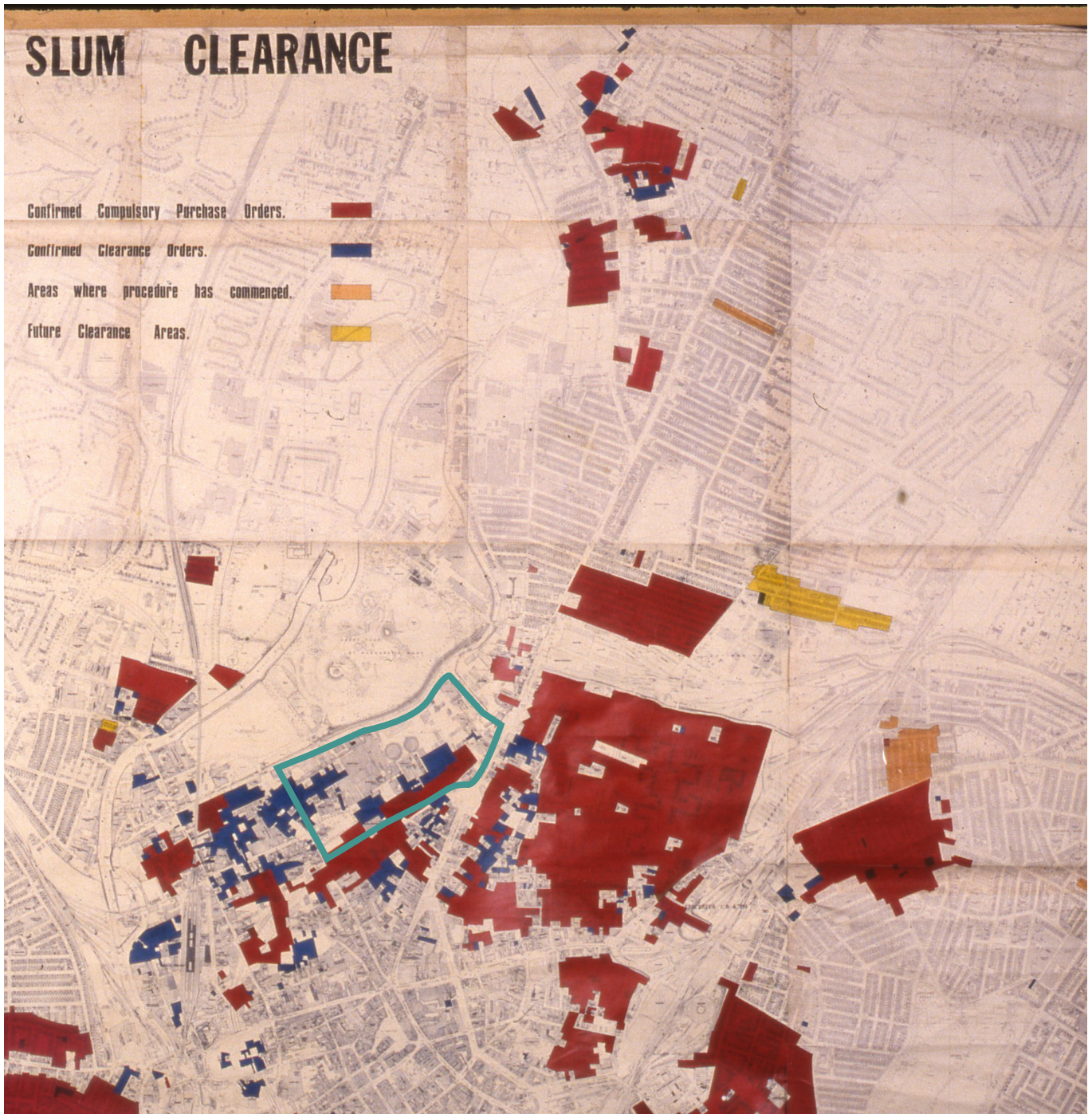
**1960s/70s:** The 60s saw the area transformed by the construction of the ring road and St. Margaret's Way. The construction of Burleys Way, which took place in the early 60s, was one stage of a larger plan to construct a ring road around the inner city of Leicester. St. Margaret's Way came shortly after broadly following the route of the former Lower Church Gate. Constructed towards the end of the 60s/early 70s this changed the character and the setting of St. Margaret's Church.



Navigation Street slum housing, 1964 (University of Leicester, special collection)



Construction of St. Margaret's Way, 1969



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

The heritage contribution of St. Margaret's is focused on some very significant heritage assets located within the area.

St. Margaret's Church (3) is one of the most highly valued heritage assets in the city as formally identified by its Grade I listed status. A church on the site possibly dates back to 679 AD, and parts of the present building dates back to c.1200. The 15th century 33m tower makes it one of the defining features of the character area. Views north along Church Gate and south along St. Margaret's Way towards the church are of city wide importance. Additionally, St. Marks Church (2) located to the east of the character area was first built in 1870. It was surrounded by large industrial buildings and became one of the main working class churches in Leicester. Views north along Belgrave Gate towards the church are of particular importance.

Just north of the Grand Union Canal is the Grade II\* listed Abbey Park, where the remains of Leicester Abbey are located. Whilst the park is not within the character area, its relationship with the character area is clear and can be viewed from the park.

In addition to these nationally listed assets there are a number of Locally Listed heritage assets. The former Corah site is of particular townscape significance in the character area. Spanning from north to south across the whole depth of the character area, it acts as a physical barrier for movement from east to west. A more in depth analysis can be found later within this document. There are a number of Locally Listed buildings adjacent to the Grand Union Canal on Friday Street.

#### Archaeological Alert Area:

Leicester has a clearly defined historic core. It 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 formally recognised as an archaeological alert area and indicates, to developers, where development is most likely to have an impact upon archaeological remains.



### 3. Heritage and Townscape Assets

The heritage assets of St. Margaret's are mostly related to the industrial growth of the area dating back to the 19th century. This creates a level of cohesion in the area interspersed with modern commercial warehouses. This in addition to the two prominent churches, and the proximity to Abbey Park defines the character and distinctiveness of the area.





St. Margaret's from above, Leicester, 1947 (Britain from above)



St. Margaret's Church, (Leicester a pictorial history, Malcolm Elliott)



Construction of St. Margaret's Way 1969 (Leicester City Council)



The Kapital building during a visit from Princess Diana in 1984 (Images of England, Central Leicester, Stephen Butt)

The Charm of Good Hosiery

IT'S quite right, Margaret, they are the best Stockings I ever bought. For wear, comfort and value I know none better. Only recently I was in Leicester and had the opportunity of seeing where **St. Margaret** Stockings are made. It is the largest and finest factory I have ever been in, and another thing which I am very keen on—it's British throughout."

Ask for "COBA," a typical example of St. Margaret value in Artificial Silk.

**St. Margaret**  
HOSIERY

HOSIERY • UNDERWEAR • JERSEYS

Corah advert, 1925 (Victorian Society Archives)



St. Marks Church, 1912 (De Montfort University)

## 4. Streets and Spaces

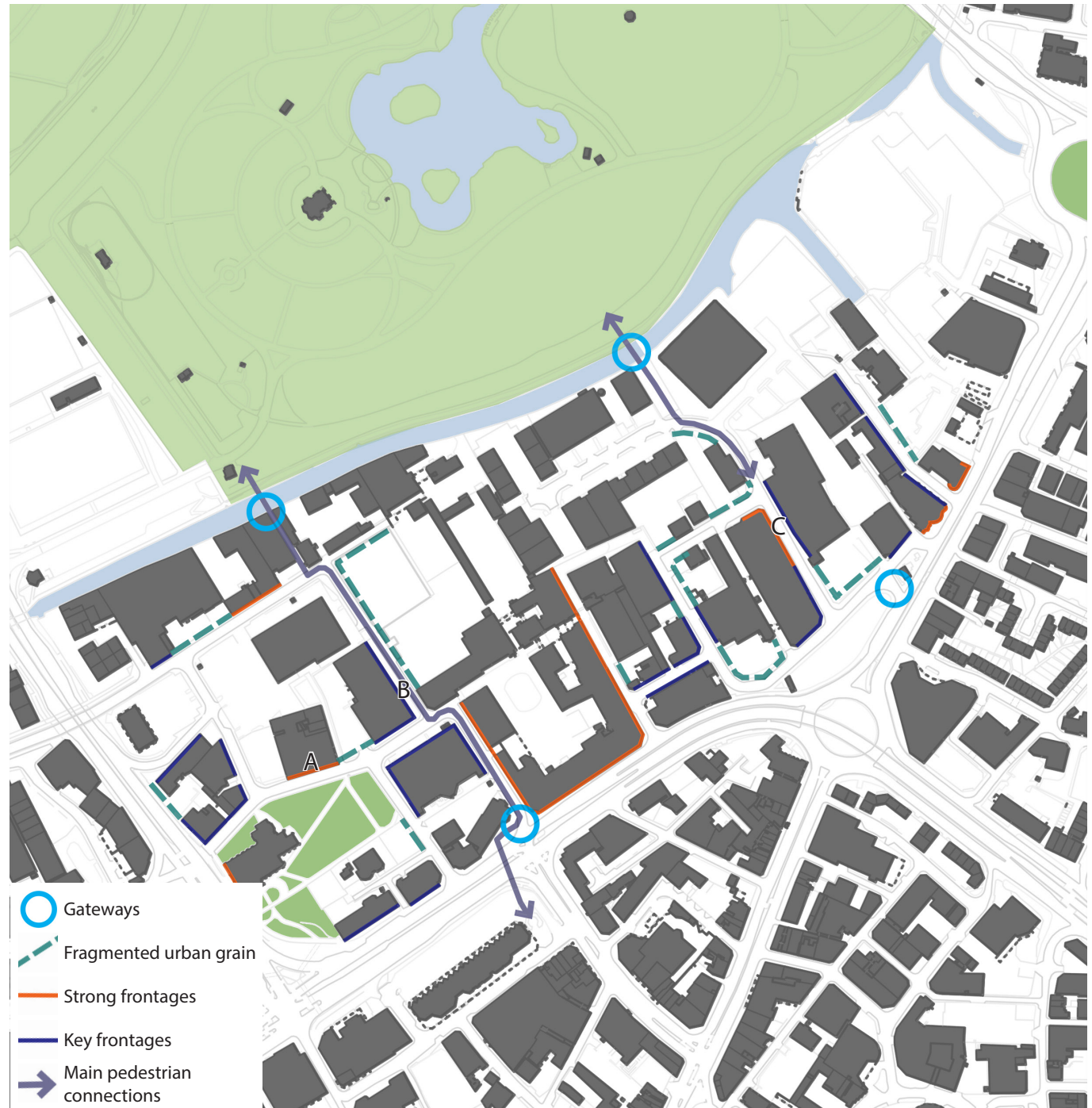
Successful places have well defined and connected streets, perimeter blocks and well designed spaces. Strong frontages, local markers, nodes, and spaces are elements of the townscape that together contribute to the familiarity of a place making it legible, but also creating a sense of belonging and ownership.

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.

St. Margaret's is characterised by large perimeter blocks which are internally fragmented. This is a result of the industrial nature of much of the area as well as some of its current, mixed uses. For example, car show rooms not offering frontages around the entirety of the block. The Corah site represents the largest block in the character area, spanning its depth between the canal and Burleys Way. Developed in stages, over one century, it is now a mix of small-scale units and vacant space. Both its current use and built form contribute to its visually fragmented nature.

There are some strong and key frontages, mostly the former industrial heritage assets, which define the street well and positively contribute to the townscape of the area, for example Canning Place (A).

The main gateways into the area are located to the north and the south of the area, with routes through the character area between the city centre and Abbey Park representing the most active pedestrian routes. Watling Street (B) and Charter Street (C) have the most pedestrian activity, as they provide north - south thoroughfares. The legibility of the area is aided by the numerous heritage assets which support wayfinding; however, permeability is poor given the large perimeter blocks, in particular the



Corah site which prohibits connectivity between east and west.

There are many barriers to access into the character area given the major roads that form the boundary to the east, south and west, as well as the canal to the north. Access for both pedestrians and vehicles is limited. This leaves the character area relatively isolated from the city centre.

## 5. 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. Most buildings are up to 3 storeys or lower in height. Much of the height is determined by the industrial and commercial use of the area with many of these buildings being just one or two storeys in height.

There are 3 tall buildings or structures in the area; the two nationally designated churches of St. Margaret's and St. Marks, and Thames tower. Due to their historic significance, ongoing dominance and formal designation the churches should remain the dominant buildings in the area. Thames tower would be considered an anomaly and would not be approved under the current policy context.

### Planning History:

There has been some speculation for residential development in the area, but to date they have not come forward as part of a formal application. There are no recent approvals for major residential developments.





## 6. Transport Network / Movement

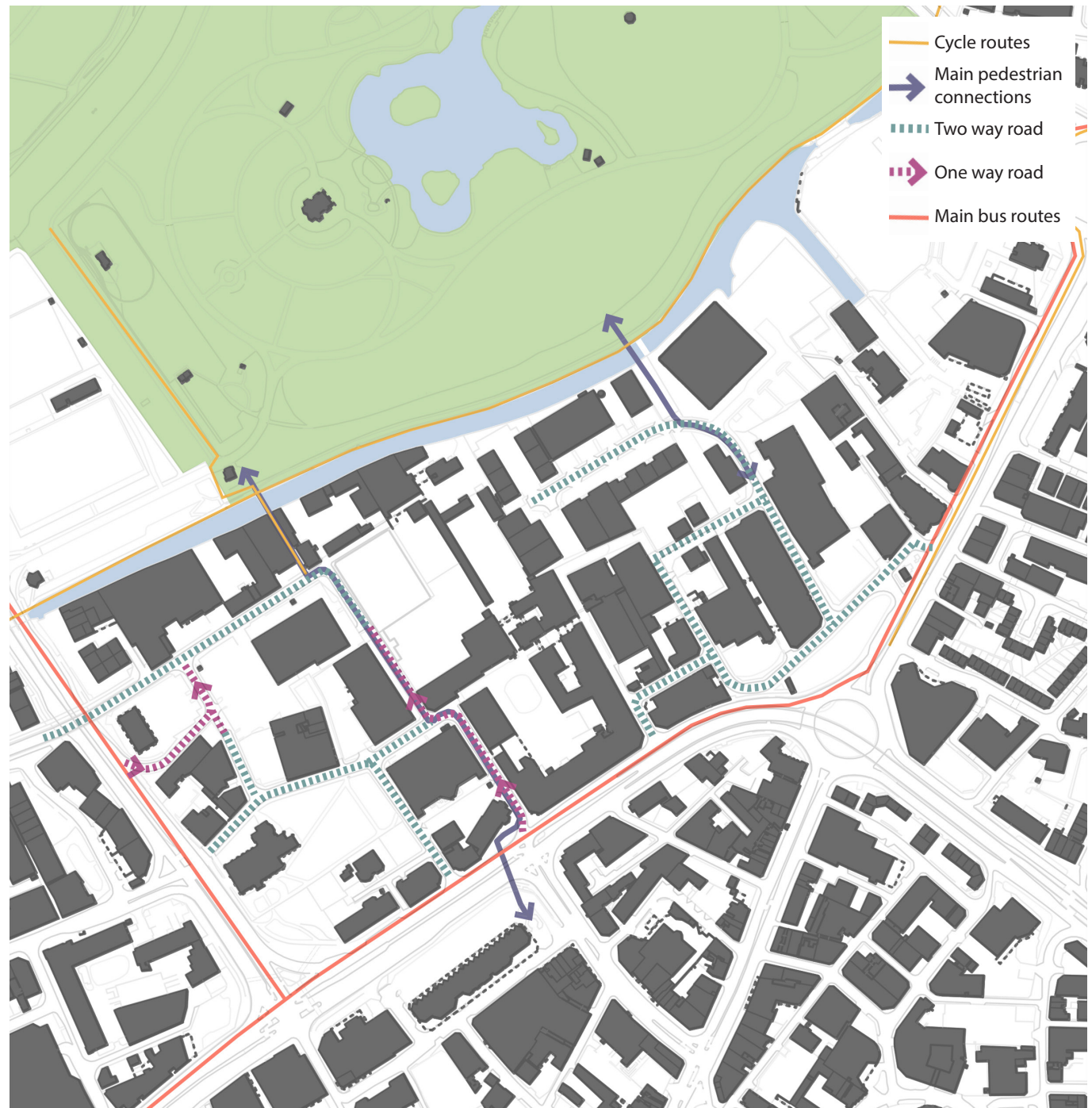
Cycling routes are taken from the Leicester Cycling Map and includes cycling infrastructure relevant to the city centre; on road cycle lanes, off road routes, bus lanes where cycling is permitted, pedestrian streets and recommended on road routes. Future cycling infrastructure guaranteed to be delivered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

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

The St. Margaret's Character Area is surrounded by a number of busy vehicle routes. To the south is Burleys Way, which forms part of the inner ring road. Burleys Way acts as the main barrier to pedestrian movement between the character area and the city centre. To the West is St. Margaret's Way, constructed in the late 60s/early70s, and whilst this broadly followed the route of lower Church Gate at the time it has since become one of the main gateways into the city from the north. These two roads also act as the main bus routes. Vehicle movements through the area prioritise the need for vehicles to access commercial and industrial units in the area, including larger HGVs.

Most pedestrians travel north and south, with access via the bridge close to St. Margaret's bus station, and the crossing slightly further east and connecting through to Abbey Park to the north. This makes Watling Street and St. John Street the main pedestrian connection through the character area, particularly given that a Leicester College building is located here.

There are a number of barriers to movement within the character area. There are no vehicle or pedestrian connections going east-west through the area. The Corah site creates a barrier for movement through the area. This means that Burleys way is the only connection from east to west for both pedestrians and vehicles. Burleys Way also acts as a barrier to pedestrian connectivity between the city centre and the character area.



## 7. Active Frontages

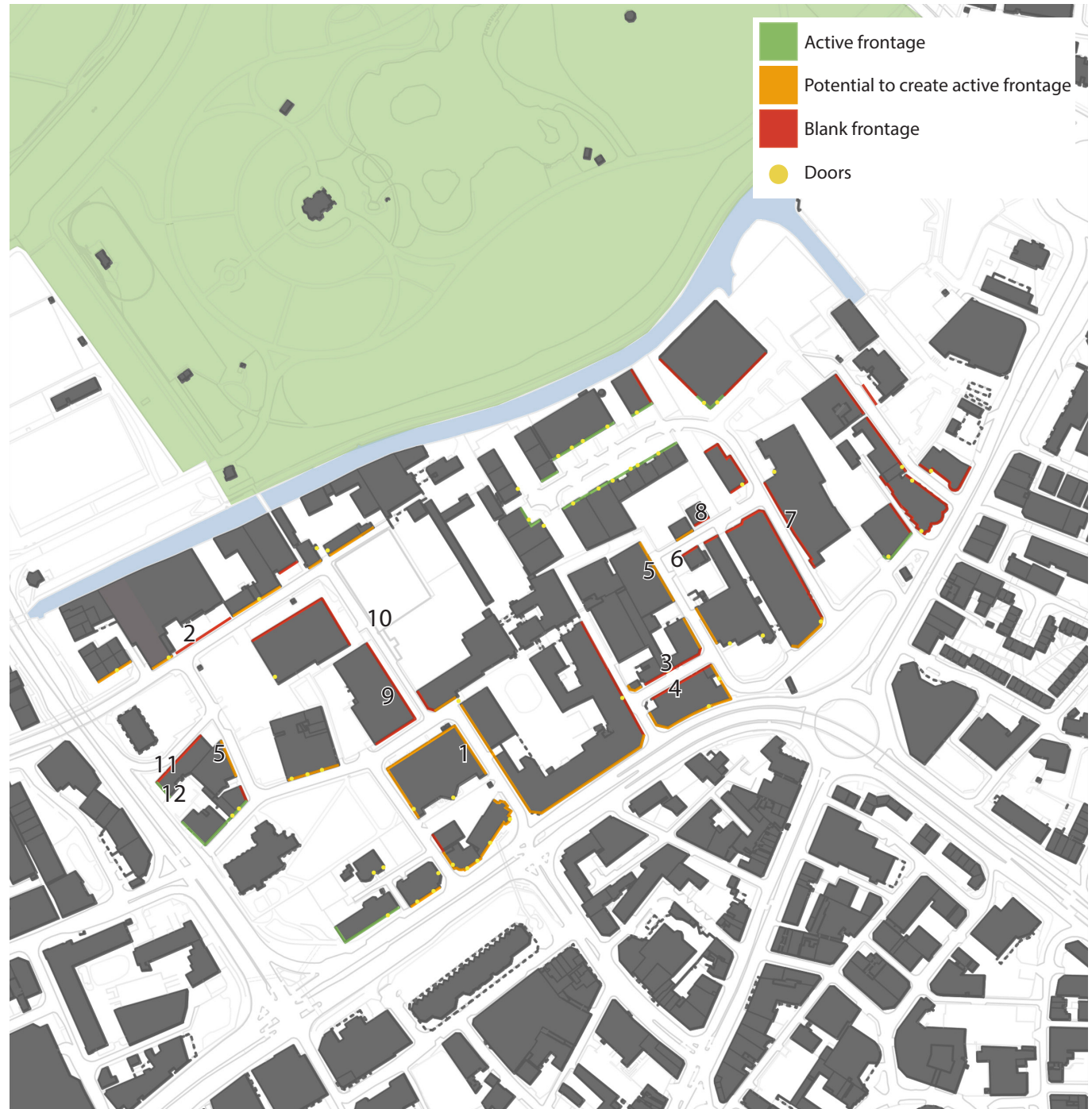
Active frontages are important in creating successful places. They are street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floor of buildings. This quality is enhanced where the front façade of buildings, including the main entrance faces and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

St. Margaret's Character Area has limited activity to the street, mainly a result of the uses in the area with predominantly warehouses and industrial premises. Many frontages have potential to become active as there are opportunities for windows to be uncovered or for ground floor spaces to be occupied and regularly used. Most of the active frontages in the area can be found on the upper end of Charter Street where a number of office/ industrial units are located. Some of the office buildings on Burleys Way and St. Margaret's Way, also offer active frontages.

Given the lack of on street activity in the area combined with the daytime industrial uses it can feel unsafe in places, especially in the evening or night-time. Of particular concern is Watling Street and Charter Street which act as key routes between Abbey Park and the city centre, these are both lacking in active frontages. Much of the Corah site is lacking active frontages, and given its scale, introducing more active frontages throughout would bring considerable activity to the area and improve the perception of safety and security in the area.

Increasing the mix of uses to include residential and leisure could improve the level of activity in the area, particularly during evenings.





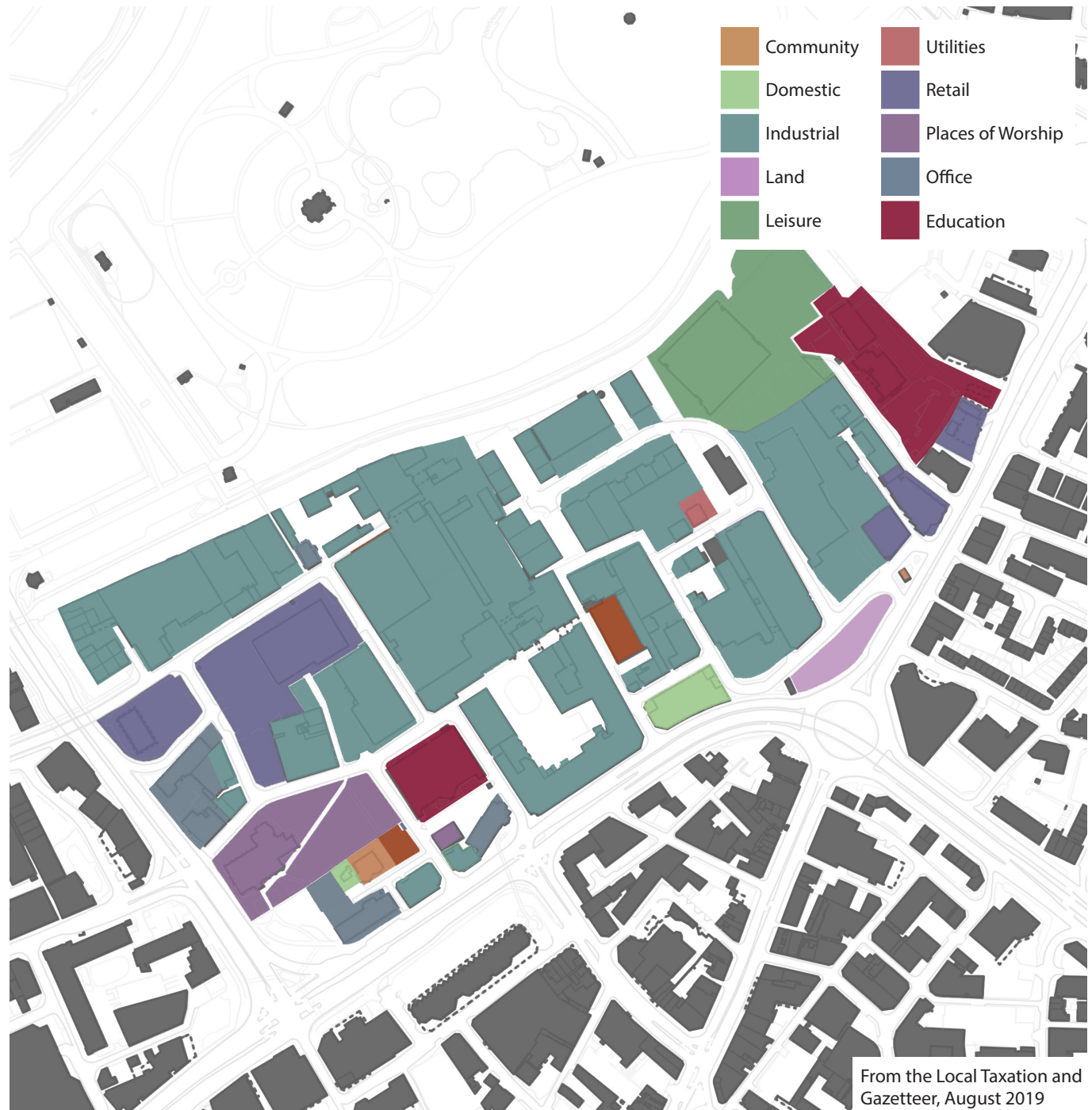
## 8. Land Uses

### Ground floor:

The predominant ground floor use in St. Margaret's is industrial, this is obvious on site where many units look to be in industrial use. This explains much of the other features such as inactive frontages, large blocks and the presence of industrial heritage, for example the Corah Site.

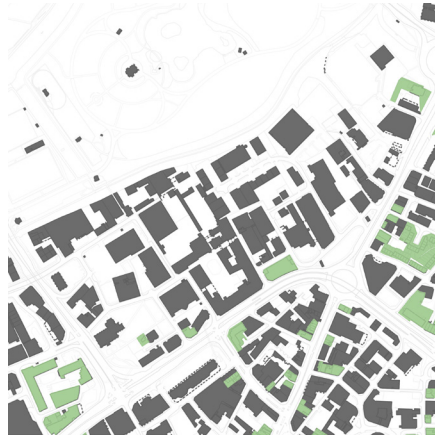
Historically much of the character area has been in industrial uses

St. Margaret's Character Area is the location for a number of Leicester College buildings bringing a number of education uses into the area.



# 8. Land Uses

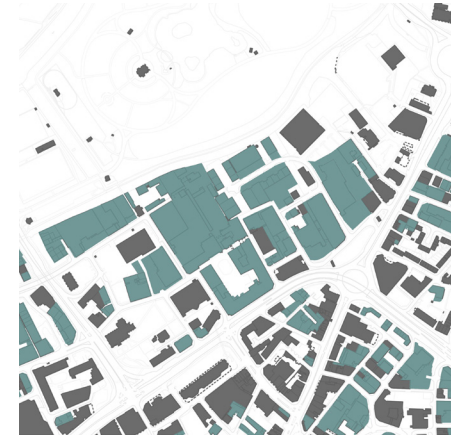
(Includes above ground distribution)



Domestic



Community



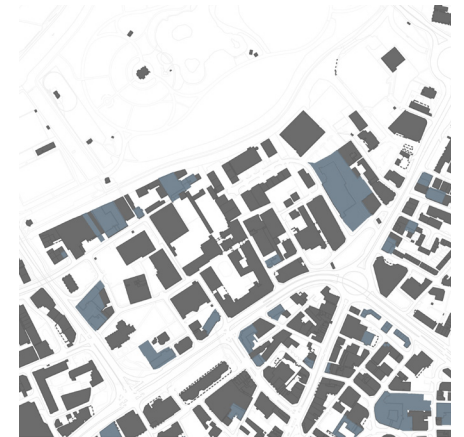
Industrial



Land



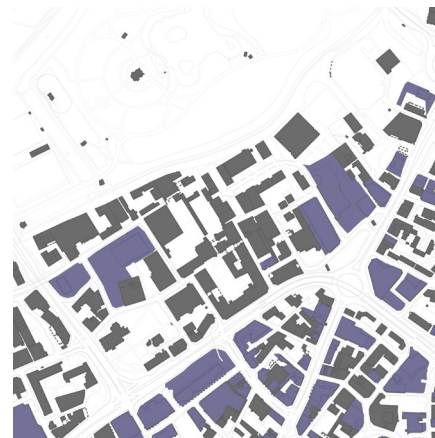
Leisure and hotels



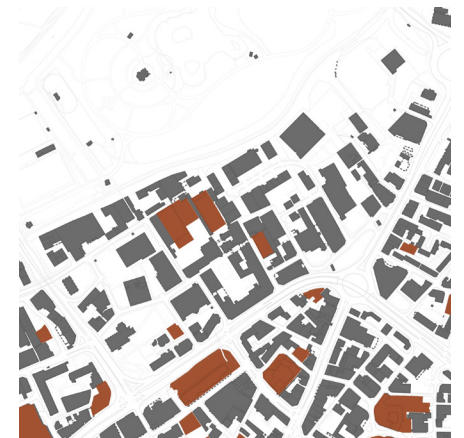
Office



Places of Worship



Retail



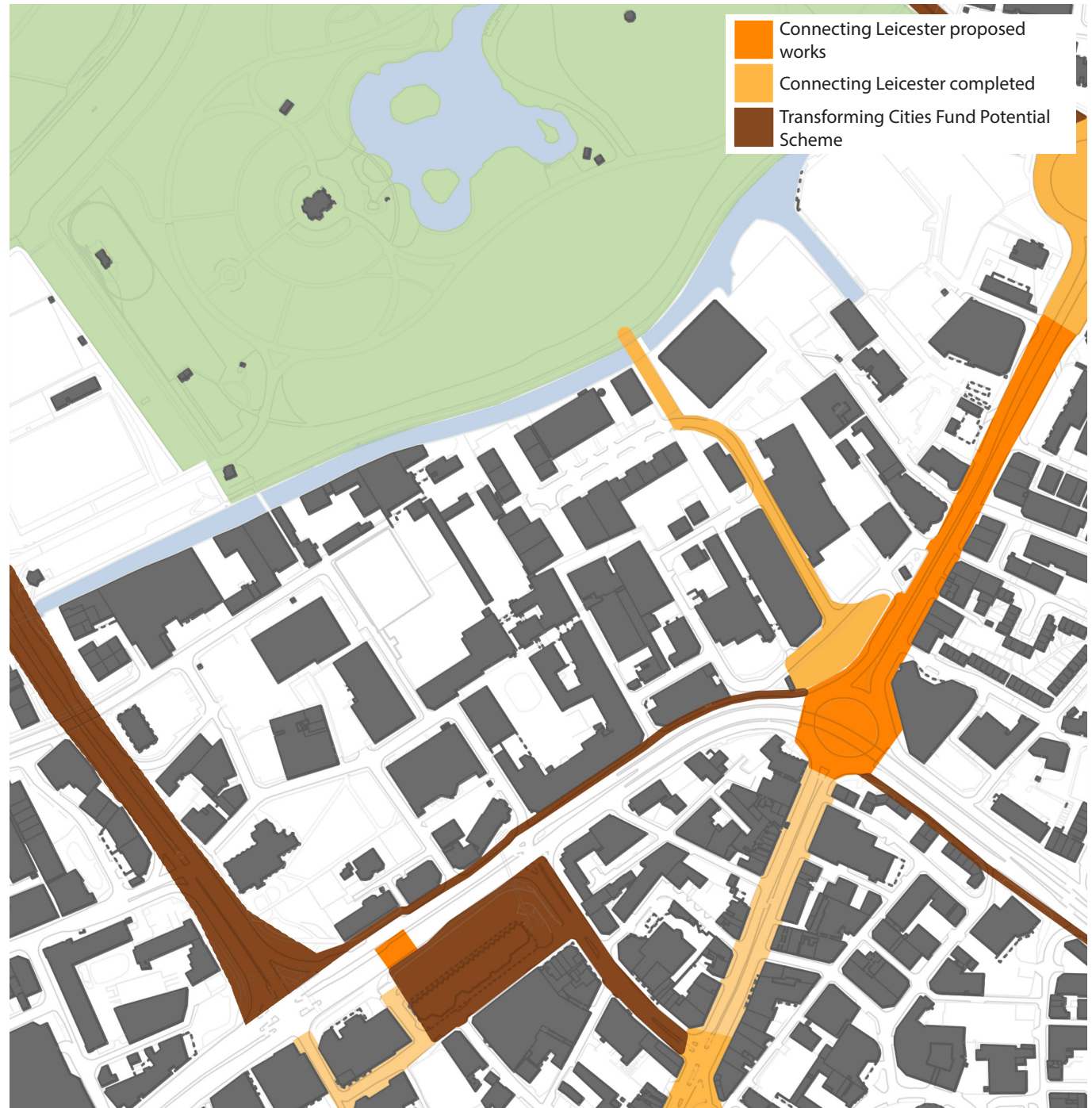
Parking

## 9. 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.

The open space adjacent to Archdeacon Lane, Charter Street and the new bridge connecting Charter Street and Abbey Park are part of a completed Connecting Leicester scheme. Improvements to Belgrave Gate and the roundabout on Burleys Way will also be proposed, with a new shared footpath and cycleway running underneath the fly-over, providing a more direct and safer route along Belgrave Gate.

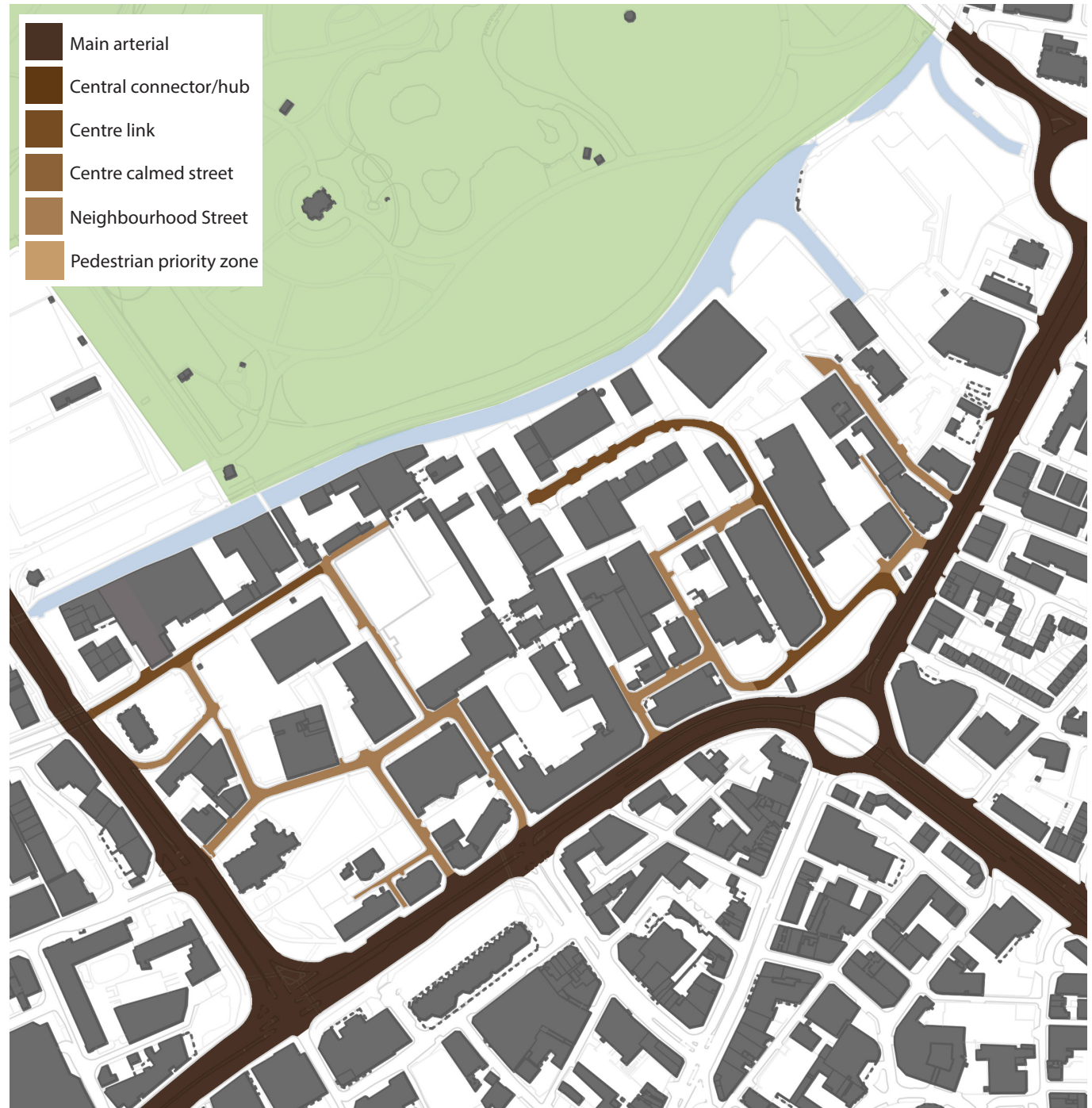


## 10. Street Hierarchy

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).

Many of the streets within the character area are of a low order, much of them being neighbourhood streets. Burleys Way and St. Margaret's Way which form the perimeter of the character area to the south and west respectively are main arterial routes, given that they form part of the inner ring road. Friday Street, Archdeacon Lane and Charter Street carry much of the vehicle traffic into the character area and are therefore considered centre links.



# Part A.2: Corah Site Analysis

## 11. Site context

The Corah site is significant to the St. Margaret's Character Area. It contributes to the distinctiveness of the area given its character, heritage value and social history. It is also a large site under one single ownership with scope for redevelopment. Therefore, a more focussed consideration of the Corah site has been undertaken.

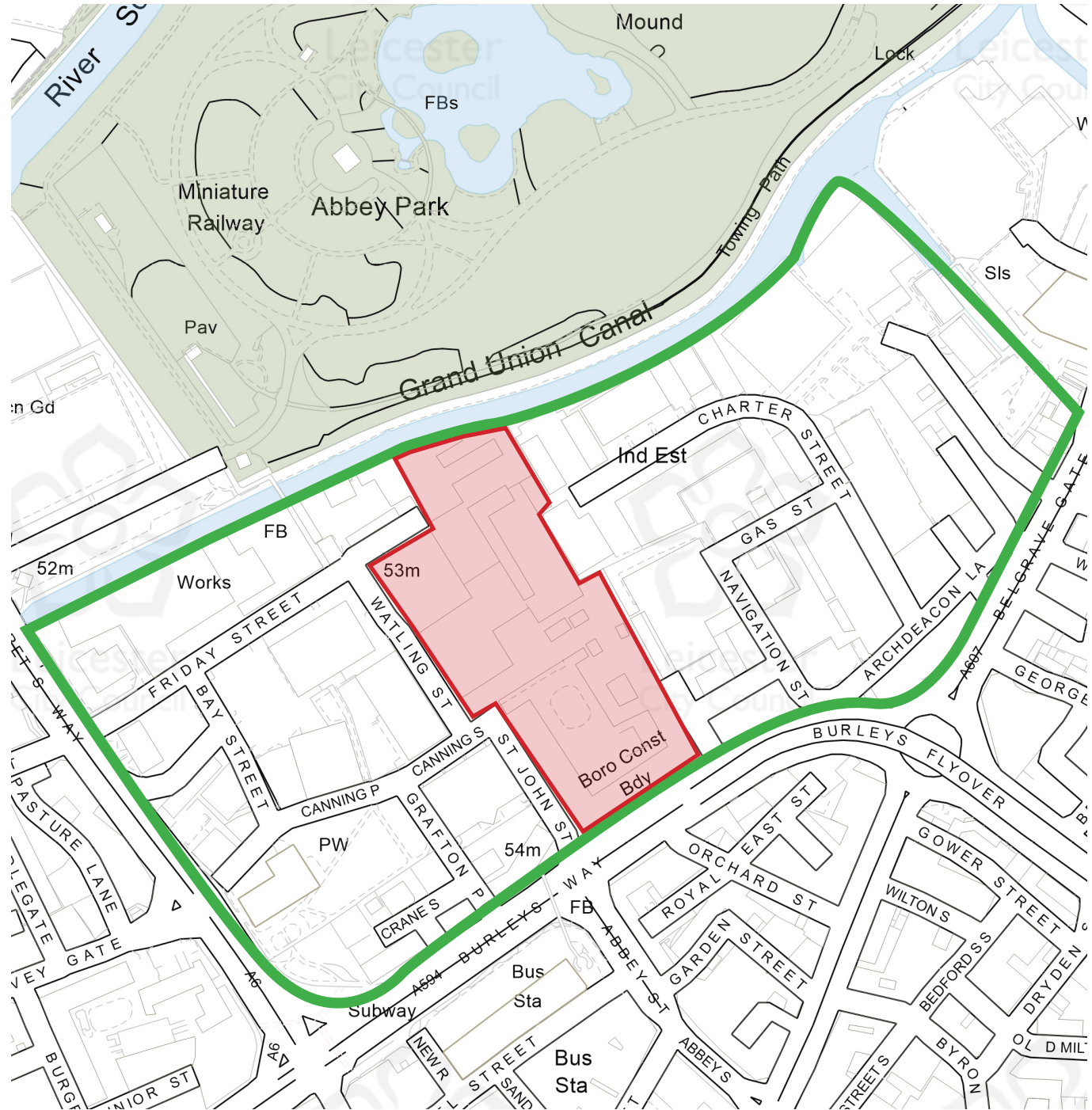
The site covers over 3 ha of land, bounded by Friday Street/Grand Union Canal to the north, Burleys Way to the south, Thames/Charter Street to the east and St John/Watling Street to the west. It is located in the Abbey Ward and immediately north of Castle Ward.

The site lacks a cohesive use and character, defined by distinct zones throughout.

The north-west edge of the site is occupied by a series of surface level car parks, while the north-east is occupied by a series of industrial structures with associated chimneys. The central zone remains largely disused and the U-shaped building complex to the south is occupied by a range of mixed use units, with a predominance of light industrial (B2) and storage / distribution (B8) range of functionality.

The main access to the south is provided through the entry at the junction of Canning Street and St John's Street, with the access to the northern part provided by a rear entry on Friday Street. Both entry points serve both motorised vehicles and pedestrians.

Historically, the site has been occupied by St Margaret's (Hosiery) Works. As a result of its historical significance the area is included in the Locally Listed Heritage Assets and covered by an Article 4 Direction. The Locally Listed status excludes the north-east corner of the site.





## 12. Heritage and context

The St. Margaret's Works are in close proximity to the Grade I listed St. Margaret's Church and the Grade II\* listed Abbey Park. The site itself is Locally Listed and much of it falls within the archaeological alert area. The site is up to four storeys, of relatively low density development, with two industrial chimneys to the north-west. Most structures are industrial in use and appearance. Red brick dominates the external material palette, with extensive glazing to the 20th century U-shaped complex to the south of the site.

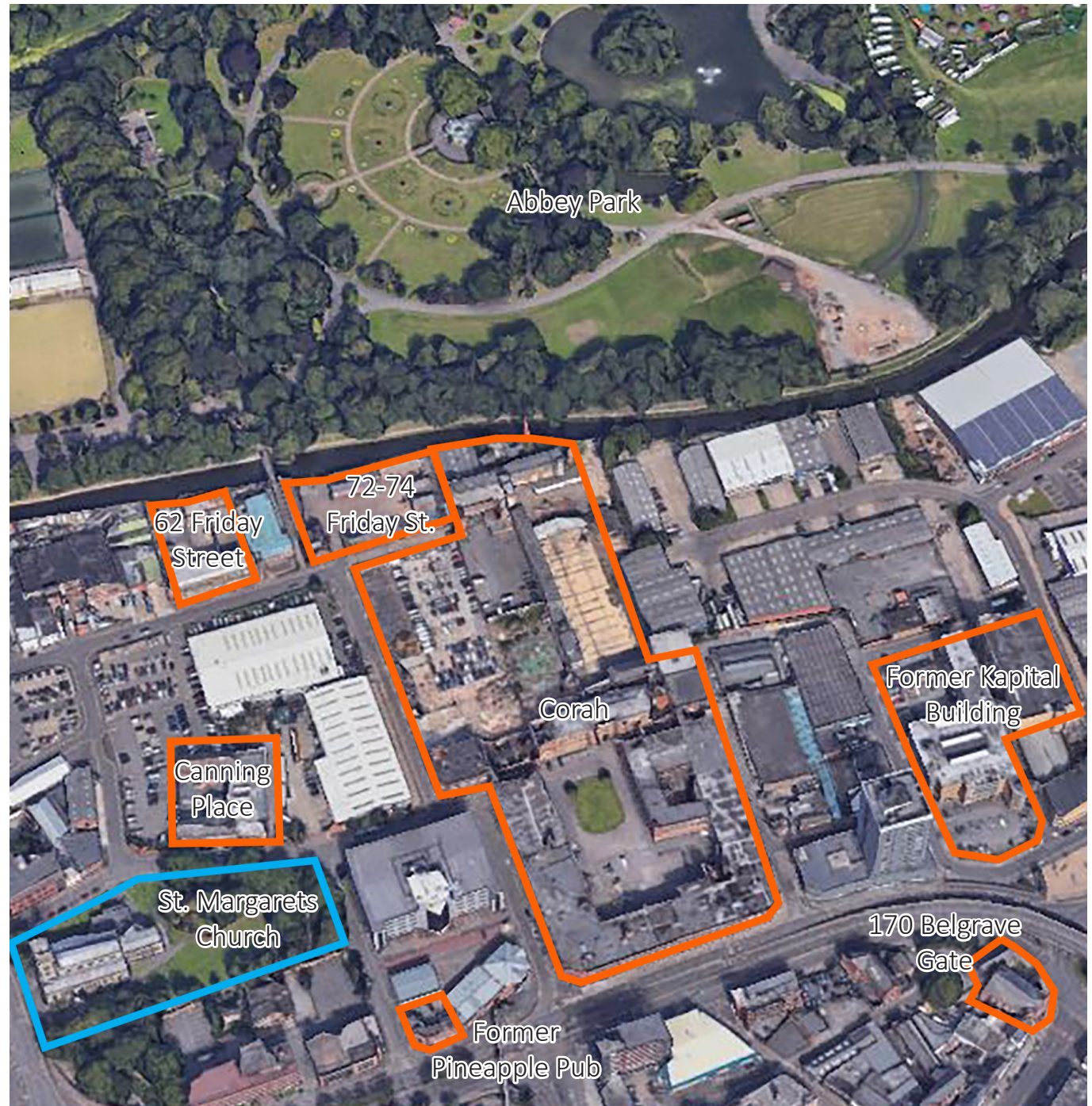
There are heritage assets in close proximity to the site; the Grade I listed St. Margaret's Church (blue) and locally listed buildings and structures (orange).

The site was designated as the new location for St Margaret's Works by Edwin Corah, the grandson of the founder of the Corah's hosiery company. It was to provide for expanded premises in comparison to the purpose-built factory on Granby Street in the city centre. The exact location was considered appropriate due to its close proximity to the Great Railway Station and the River Soar.

On 13th July 1865 the foundation stone for the main building was laid by Mr Edwin Corah. It was designed by William Jackson of Loseby Lane, and was the largest contemporary factory of its kind in the city. It dominated the ample site, and was associated with a vast range of workshops to north, extending up to the River Soar. The late 1880s saw an unprecedented growth of production, followed by large-scale extension constructed in the late 19th century, with more extensions following in the 1910s.

Due to the unprecedented scale of production and national importance, the site hosted a range of visitors throughout its lifetime. Both King George V and Queen Mary visited in 1919, followed by Queen Elizabeth II in 1958.

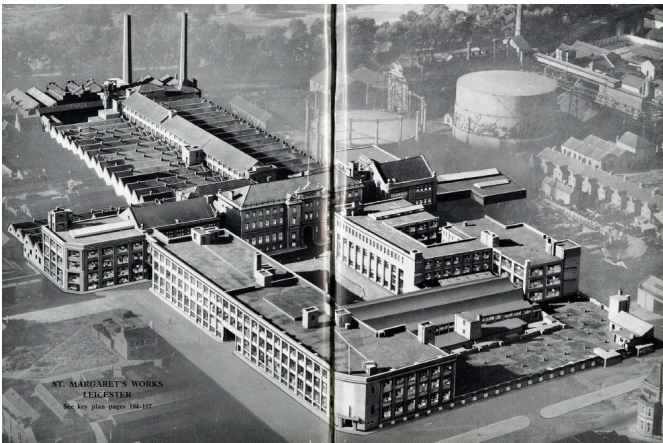
Despite major setbacks in production in the 1920s and 1930s, the company emerged stronger than ever, partly due to a secured long-term contract with Marks and Spencer. New extensions continued to be constructed on site, with the south side comprehensively redeveloped



between 1934 and 1941.

In 1968, at the height of its production, the company employed over 6,500 people. Despite the success, in the late 1980s the company was sold off, closing its doors as a hosiery factory soon after.

Since the closure of the St Margaret's Works in the 1990s, no comprehensive use has been implemented for the whole site. A proposal for a comprehensive development was approved in 2008, but not implemented.



### Plan showing progression of development

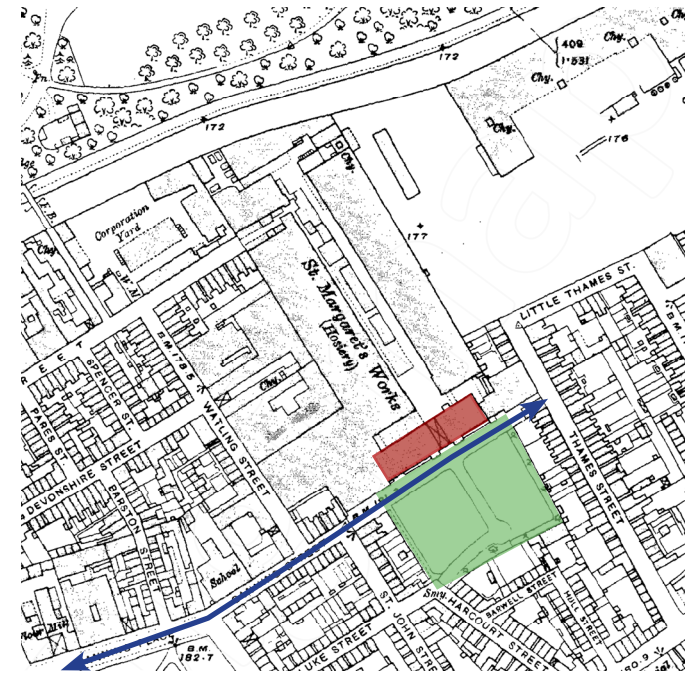


# 13. History of the site

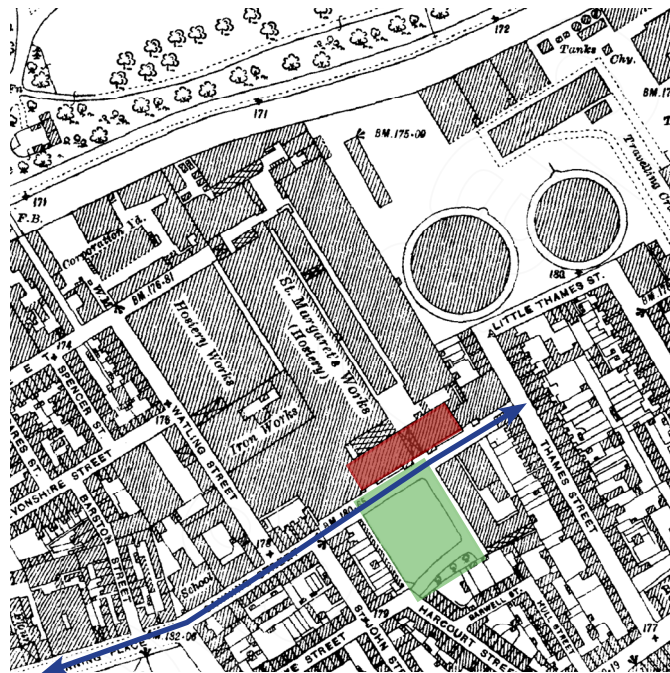
The Corah site has dominated its context since it began in the 1860s. The progression of the site development has been defined throughout its existence by the first building on the site (identified in red) and its relationship to the open space to the south of it (in green). The first evidence of a connection through the site between Canning Street and Thames Street can be seen from the early 20th century. This is important as this connection has since been blocked off, and the Corah site now acts as a significant barrier to permeability across the St. Margaret's Character Area.



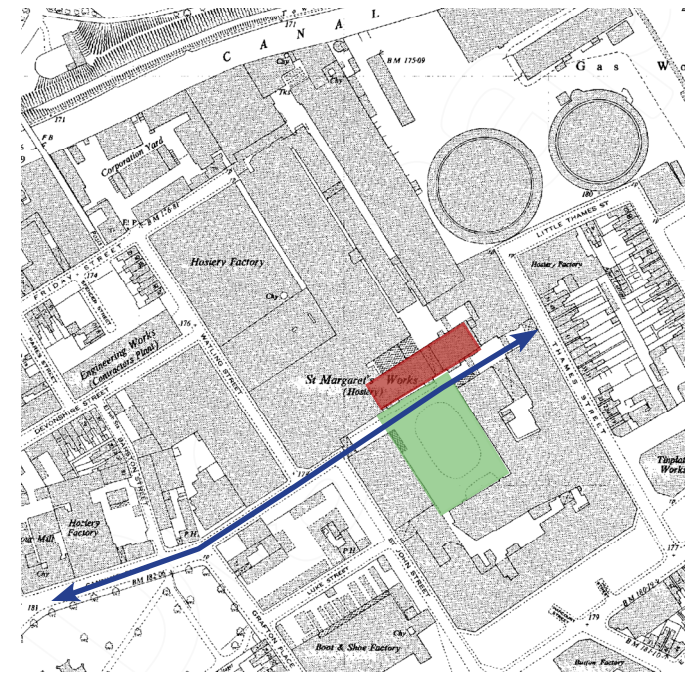
1880s



1910s



1930s



1950s



## 14. Assessment of heritage significance

The 1860s building remains a priority for regeneration and preservation. Its significance is partly defined by its relationship with later development on the site and the inner courtyard to the immediate south. Whilst in isolation the inter-war U-shaped complex to the south may be defined as having more modest heritage significance than older parts of the building complex, it does help define the historic and social value of the site in its totality.

The courtyard composition should be retained, with particular value in the direct views onto the 19th century structure that visually dominates the site. The older structure has consistently been a local landmark and the later extension to the south enhances its setting and adds to its historic significance. The other surviving Victorian building, immediately to the north of the principal 1860s block, has a strong relationship with the older structure and good heritage value.

Much of the built form on the northern part of the site has been lost and a significant proportion of remaining structures are of low heritage significance. However, the dominant industrial chimney stacks to the north-east should be retained, based on their illustrative quality, with notable views from the Grade II\* Listed Abbey Park. Due to the notable history of the site and the architectural quality of much of the building stock that remains, the site has largely good to excellent heritage value and needs to be sensitively redeveloped.



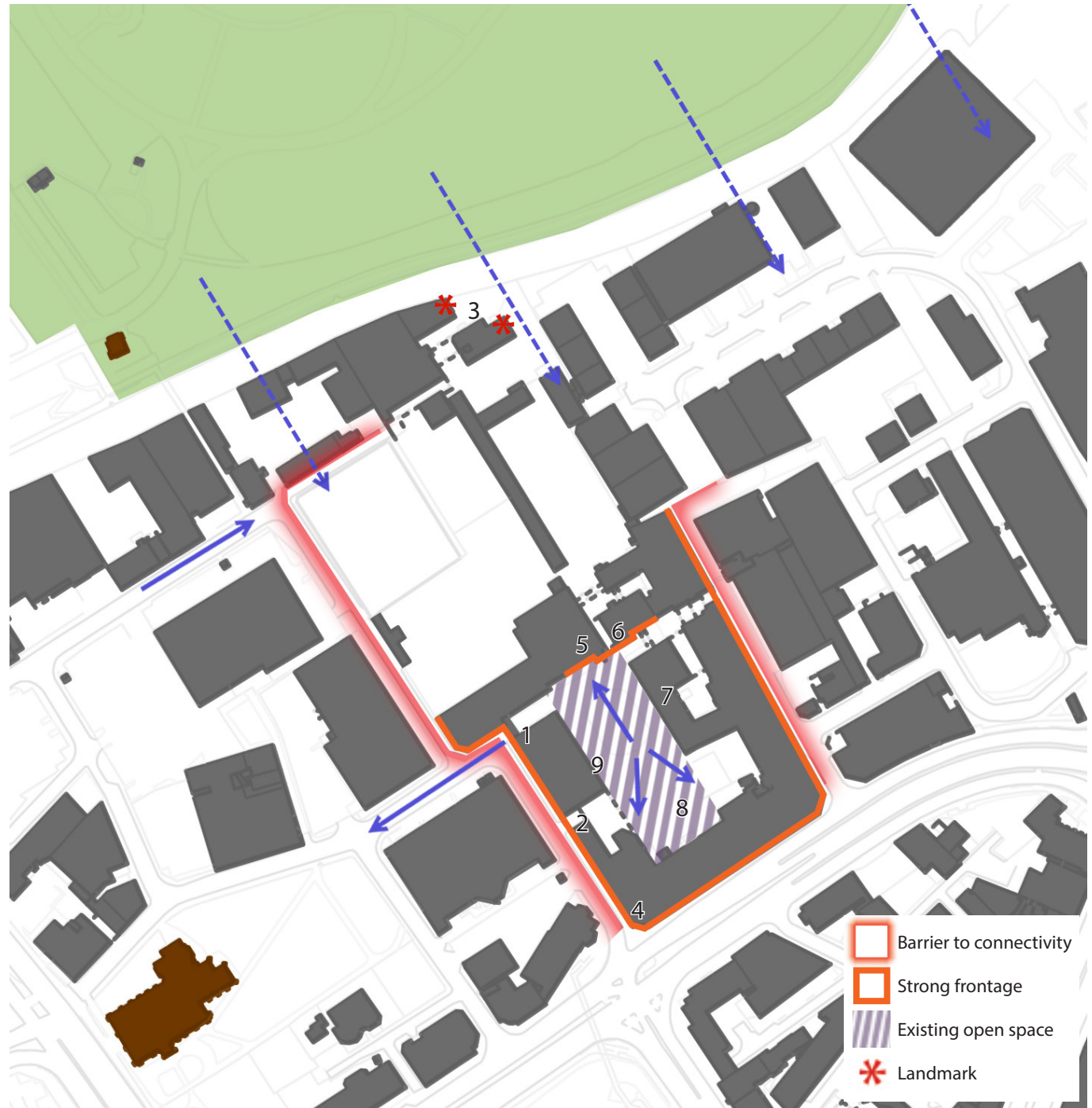
## 15. Townscape and views

The Corah site is defined by strong frontages, particularly in the south of the site. It has a consistent building height of around 4 storeys, with the exception of the two brick chimneys in the north of the site. The site's strong perimeter and size acts as a barrier to permeability not only within the site, but across the entirety of St. Margaret's. Despite the above, it forms an important and dominant feature of the character area.

The low-lying nature of much of the site opens up views to the Grade I Listed St. Margaret's Church, and supports the churches position as a dominant local asset and landmark.

The site's close visual and physical relationship with other Locally Listed assets along Friday Street, of comparable origin and character, should be retained or enhanced, with regard given to the locality's accumulated group value.

The Grade I Listed St Margaret's Church dominates the views looking from Canning Street to the immediate west, which provides an open vista, and Friday Street at the north of the site, with the tower piercing through the industrial roofscape. These views highlight the historically close-knit relationship between the site and this ecclesiastical building. From both Watling and Friday Street the relationship between the former Corah Factory and the Locally Listed former Corporation Depot is visually retained.



# 15. Townscape and views

There is also a relative visual association with the Locally Listed structure at No.62 Friday Street, dominant along Friday Street due to its elevated position.

The proximity to Abbey Park will have a significant influence on the future development of the site. The views from the park south towards the city centre are considered to be of city wide significance and will need to be considered to avoid causing harm.





## 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).

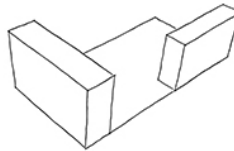
Development guidance includes;

- 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

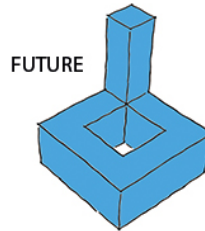
St. Margaret's Character Area is now 5. Redevelop (masterplan) of the Townscape Management Options. The areas redevelopment will require a comprehensive approach, requiring a masterplan, to set out a deliverable, cohesive vision.

## 5. Redevelopment

NOW



CHANGE



FUTURE



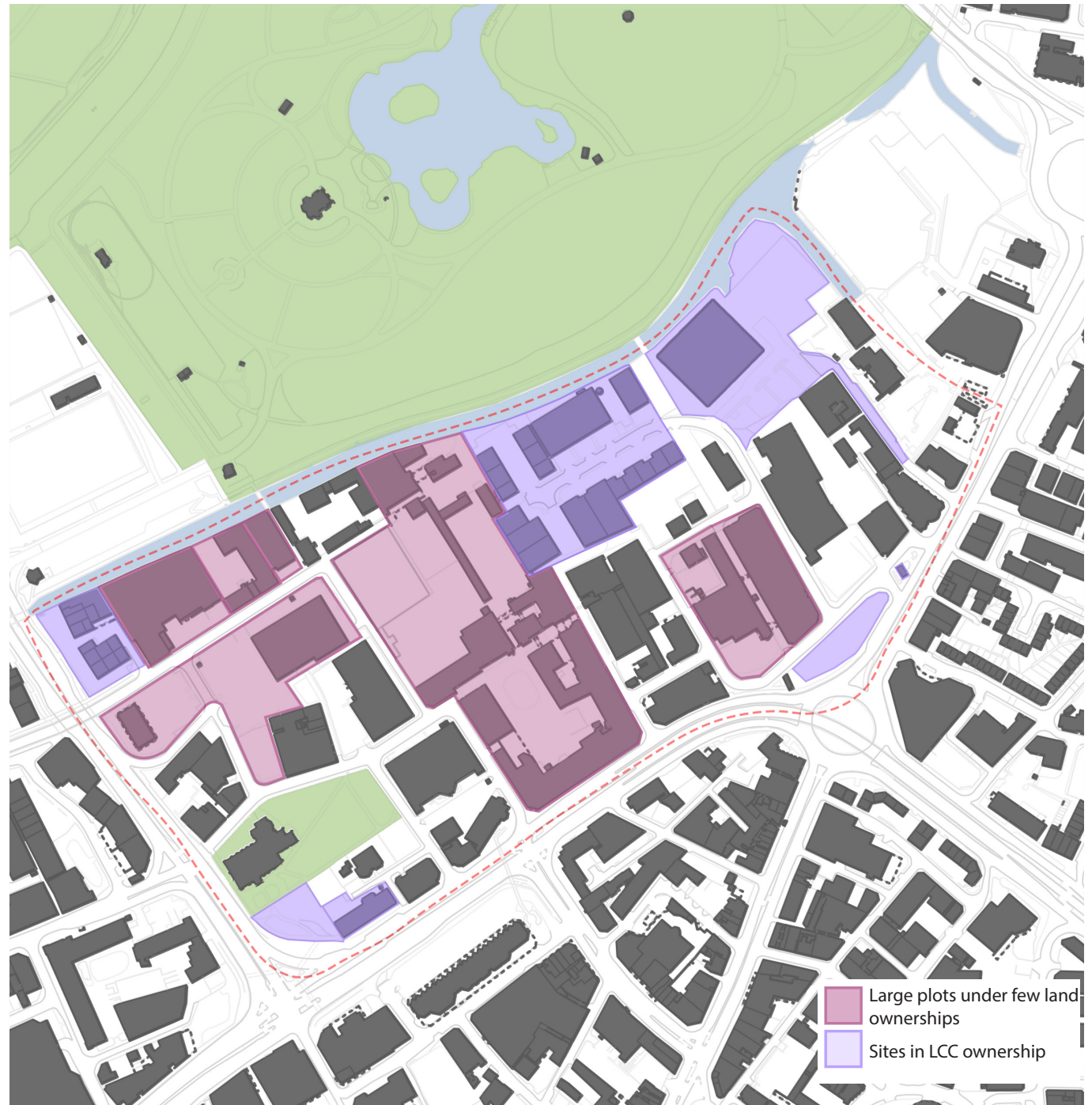


## 16. Growth and Development Potential

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.

Large plots are predominantly in the east. The importance of the Corah site to the area is clear.

Whilst there have been no planning approvals in the area, there has been interest in residential development. Concerns regarding isolated residential schemes could be addressed with the production of a comprehensive masterplan allowing developments to come forward aligned to a vision for the area.



## 17. Corah Site Future Development

Given the stronger heritage and townscape value of the southern half of the site many of the buildings here should be retained. Most of the structures to the north of the site have either already been demolished or are of less heritage or townscape value and therefore offer an opportunity for sympathetic development. This is with the exception of the dominant industrial chimney stacks to the north-east that should be retained as such, based on their quality and townscape contribution, especially when viewed from the Grade II\* Listed Abbey Park.

Development on site should constitute a sympathetic intervention that protects and enhances the existing assets and streetscene, including its immediate setting, with particular regard to Abbey Park, adjacent to the north of the site. It should also be sympathetic to its setting and all relevant heritage assets.

There are key views into and out of the site, as identified in part (14) 'Townscape and views', and any development on the Corah site will need to consider these views to avoid harm.

This evidence document principally outlines townscape and heritage considerations, however the Council recognises that these priorities may need to be balanced with bringing forward development on this significant site.

The Corah site is currently well defined, however, in order to achieve a comprehensive development the adjacent sites should be considered in any development proposals. In particular, to ensure good connections with strong frontages through the area, east to west and to Abbey Park and to ensure integration with the existing development and the wider objectives of the St. Margaret's Character Area.



## 17. Corah Site Future Development

The plan illustrates one option for how the Corah site could be developed outlining some key principles. There will be other options. At present the Corah site acts as a barrier to permeability within the St. Margaret's Character Area. There is an opportunity to provide a new pedestrian connection through the north of the site, parallel to the canal. This could connect Friday Street through to Charter Street and would increase the connectivity through the character area, particularly given that Charter Street is a primary connector both into the city centre and to Abbey Park. In addition, the connection through the southern part of the site, immediately in front of the 1860s building, should be reinstated (as previously identified in the 'history of the site' section) to improve connectivity.

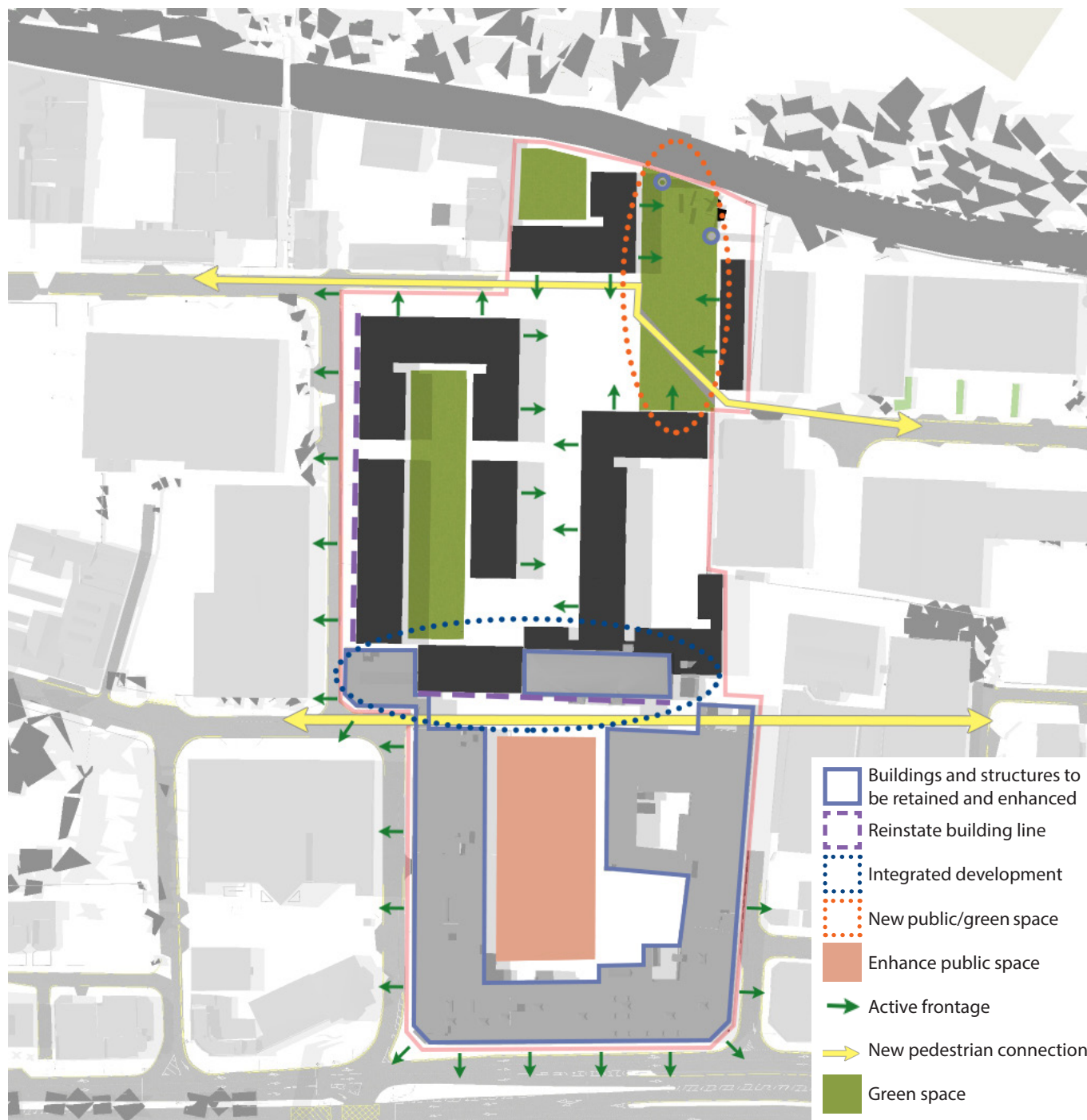
As many of the heritage and townscape assets on the site offer a strong frontage to the street, it is important that development on the site takes opportunities to maintain and reinstate this.

There is a historic precedence of green space to the centre of the southern section and, its reinstatement would improve the setting of the heritage assets on site, particularly the 1860s building to the north of the space.

New development on the site should be integrated with the retained historic buildings on site, reinstating building lines and enhancing the setting of heritage assets.

New and existing buildings on the site should offer a good relationship to all streets, with active frontages provided. Priority for active frontages should be given to Watling Street and St. John Street given they form the primary pedestrian connections between Abbey Park and the city centre. Development should also offer an active frontage to new space and connections.

Amenity space should be provided for any new residential development, this could take the form of green space that has a relationship with the canal, improves the setting of the existing chimneys in the north of the site and forms part of the pedestrian connection between Friday Street and Charter Street.



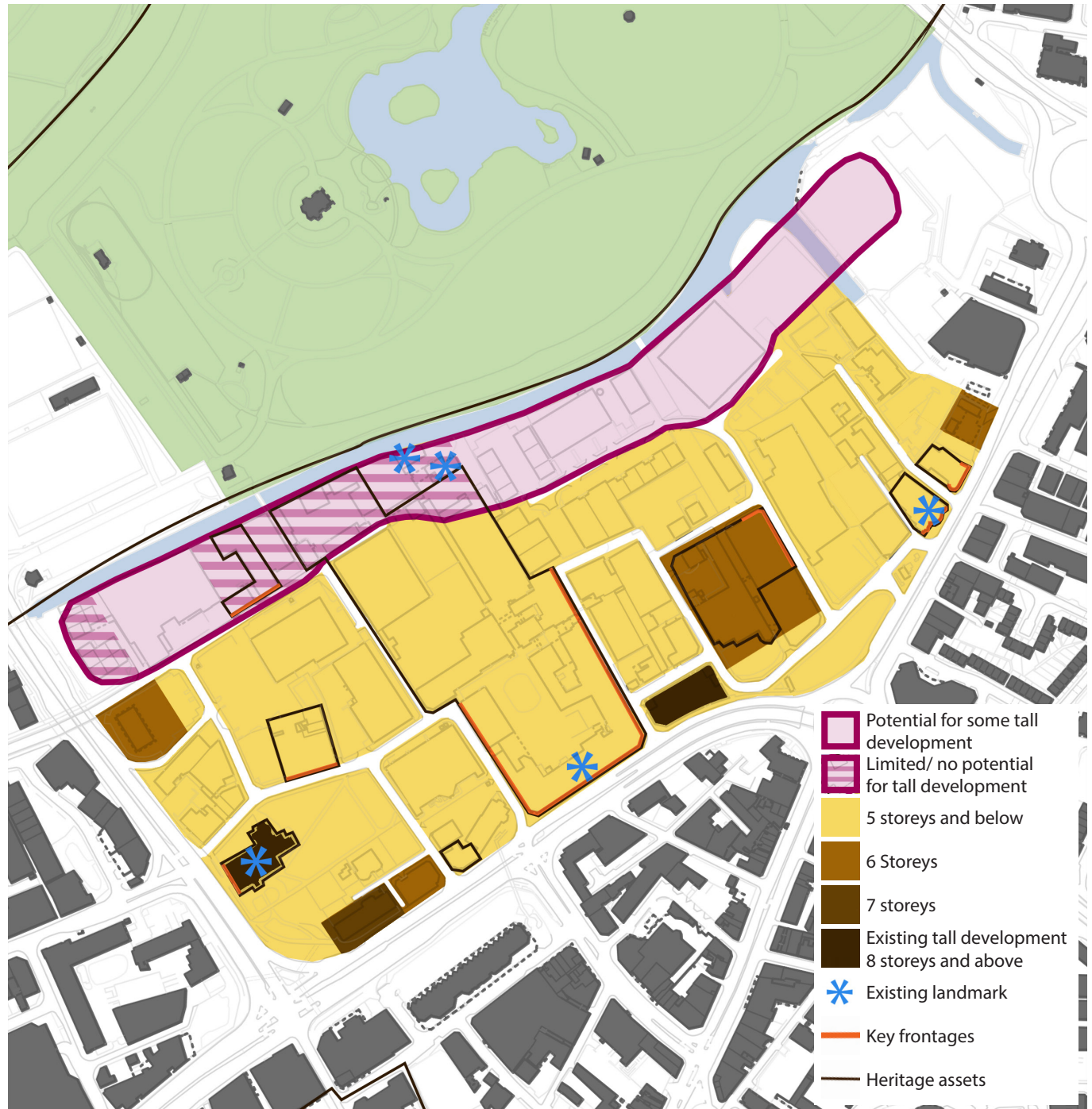
## 18. Proposed Building Heights

The maximum proposed building heights are based on the 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. 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.

Many buildings, given the commercial and industrial nature of the area, are very low-scale with many no more than 2-3 storeys in height. This scale provides relatively unobstructed long-views out of Abbey Park toward the city centre. There are a number of heritage assets in the area of some height, particularly the Grade I listed St. Margaret's church, that act as landmarks and should therefore remain the most dominant buildings in the character area. Whilst there are a number of developable sites in St. Margaret's, new development on these sites should not cause harm to any of the heritage assets and their setting, in particular the Grade II\* Registered Abbey Park. Thames Tower is considered a townscape anomaly and should not act as a precedent for new developments with regard to height or massing.



Although many developable sites are adjacent to the ring road, this is not considered an appropriate justification for height. Height and massing should therefore be informed by the proximity to Abbey Park and nearby heritage assets.

## 19. Guidance for Tall Development

The proposed building heights are based on the evidence in Part A and the guidance outlined in this section. The areas identified for some tall development within St. Margaret's Character Area are in a particularly sensitive area because of its proximity to Abbey Park, St. Margaret's Church, St. Marks Church and Locally Listed heritage assets, additional guidance identifying the considerations for tall development here are therefore necessary to avoid harm.

The following pages go into greater detail regarding key views, heritage assets, connections and landmarks.

Tall development is defined as 8 storeys (24m) and above.



The adjacent plan shows the location of key views within the character area as identified in the following pages.

## 19.1 Description and Analysis of Key Views

A simple massing model of 5, 6 and 8 storeys has been used to understand the impact on key views.

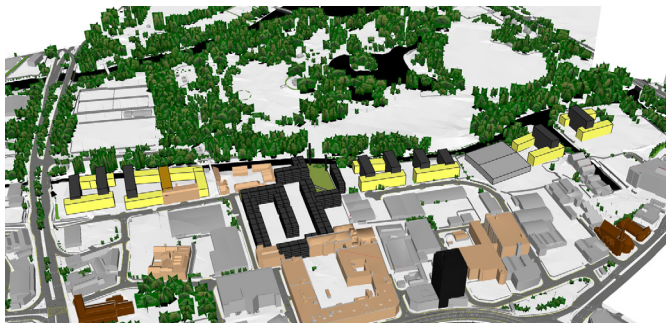
### ① Abbey Park from path to new bridge

The Corah chimneys have heritage significance and act as a landmark from within the park and the character area. They are very visible from this view and remain the dominant feature in comparison to the modelled development. The modelled development is partially screened by existing trees, but is still visible from the park. Importantly the chimneys remain the dominant feature.

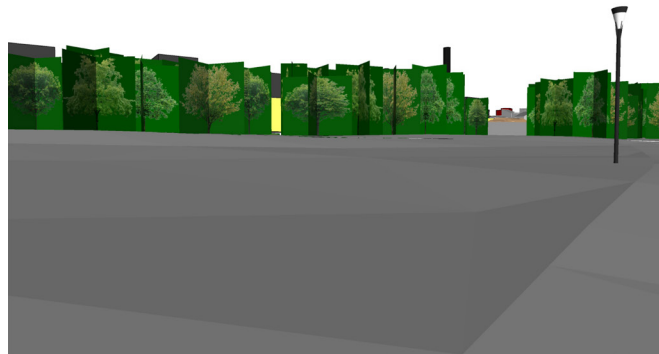


### ② Abbey Park looking towards the new bridge

Looking towards Morningside Arena out of the park would previously had more tree coverage, consistent with the rest of the park boundary with the canal. This was removed to install a new footbridge between the park and the city. This has since created views of St. Marks Church from with the park, this however is not a significant view. There is some heritage significance. Modelled tall development here has been kept below the height of the tree coverage.

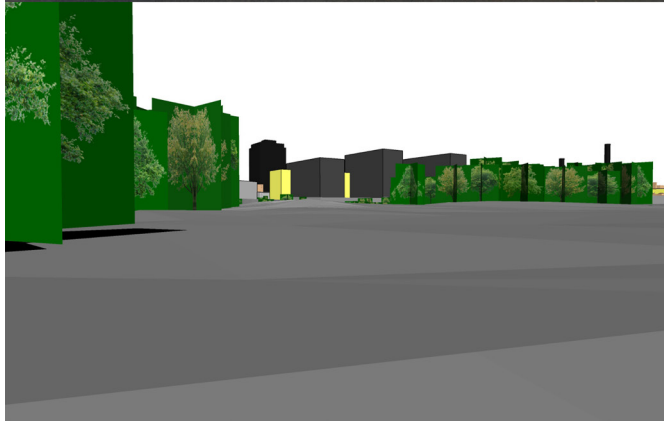


St. Margaret's massing model



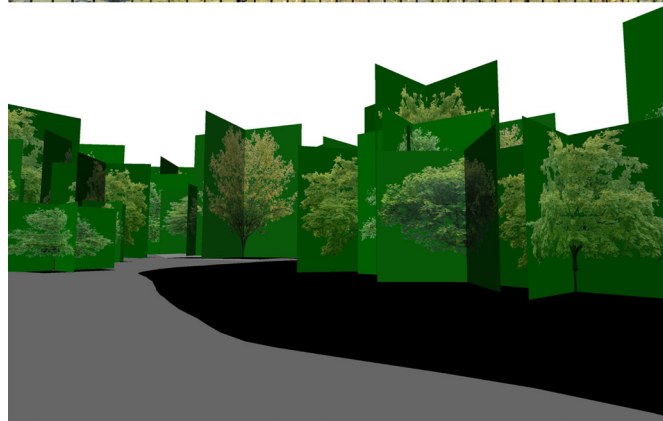
③ Abbey Park from path to new bridge

Taken from another location on the footpath to the south of Abbey Park. Thames Tower is visible here and there is some heritage significance. The chimneys of the Corah site remain visible, and modelled development is visible due to the removal of trees but still subservient to the chimneys.



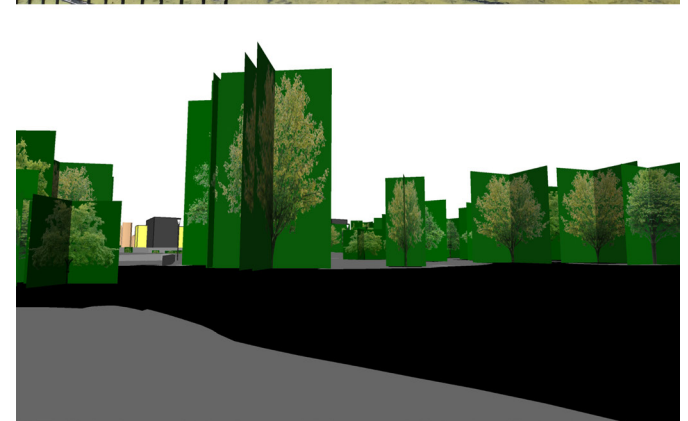
④ Abbey Park from boating lake

Views from the boating lake located in Abbey Park, with some heritage significance. All modelled development is screened by significant tree coverage.



⑤ Abbey Park from boating lake

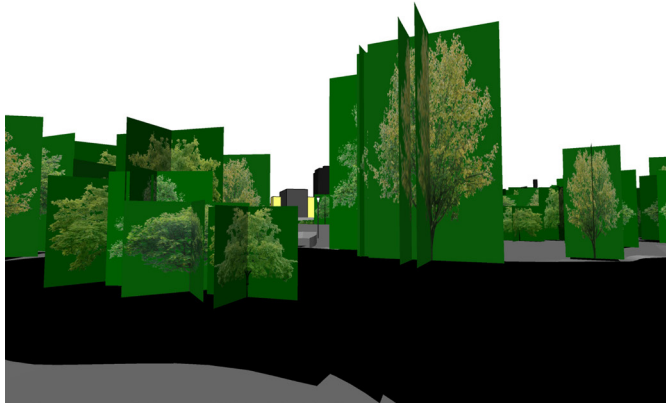
Views from the boating lake located in Abbey Park, with some heritage significance. Some modelled development is visible.





⑥ Abbey Park from boating lake

Views from the boating lake located in Abbey Park, with some heritage significance. Thames Tower is visible from here, with some modelled development also visible.



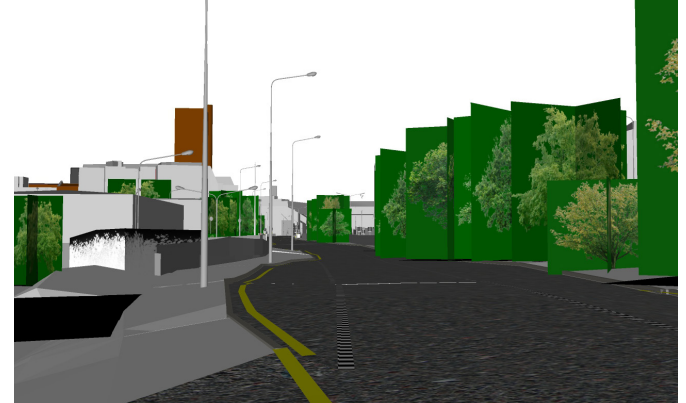
⑦ Abbey Park from bandstand

Views from the band stand in the park have some heritage significance. Thames Tower is partially visible. Modelled tall development here has been kept below the height of the tree coverage.



⑧ Along St. Margaret's Way looking south

This is a view of city wide significance along St. Margaret's Way towards the city centre. St. Margaret's Church is a Grade II Listed heritage asset, the setting of the church should therefore be protected from harm. All modelled development is set back from this viewing corridor so as not to cause detriment to the view or the setting of the church.



⑨ From Friday Street towards St. Margaret's Church

This is the view of St. Margaret's Church taken from the area south of Abbey Park with potential for tall development. Consideration for modelling here took into consideration the setting of the church and views out of the development.



⑩ St. Margaret's from Churchgate

This view is taken from Church Gate, which is located within the Church Gate conservation area, towards St. Margaret's Church. This is important as a historic view and is of city wide significance. Modelled development here is not visible within the setting of the church which remains the dominant building within this view.



⑪ St. Mark's from Belgrave Gate

This view is taken Belgrave Road, starting close to the Clock Tower, looking towards St. Marks Church. St. Marks Church is Grade II\* Listed, this view therefore has significant heritage value and is of city wide significance. The Modelled development doesn't fall within the close setting of the church.



## 19.2 Locally Listed Buildings

There are a number of Locally Listed buildings within the character area. All development, including tall development, should give consideration to and be sympathetic towards Locally Listed buildings, including the restoration and re-use of these buildings.

### Corah Site

Constructed between 1865 and 1941 the Corah site is the largest Locally Listed building within the St. Margaret's Character Area. Located to the south of the canal it falls partially within the area identified for potential tall development. Please see the Corah sections of Part A and Part B for further guidance.



### No. 62 Friday Street

Constructed in the 1930s its original use was as a Dyeing Works. It is currently occupied and in a fair condition. It is an example of early-20th century Art-Deco, with Vitrolite glass detailing. It also acts as a symbol of Leicesters hosiery industry as one of three key industries in the city in 19th & 20th century.



### No. 72-74, Former Corporation Depot Friday Street

Constructed in 1898 its original use was as a Council Depot. It is now part occupied and in a fair condition. It was designed by Leicester-based architect T.W. Pettifor. This is one of only a few Corporation depots to remain and is considered the best, due to the intactness of the building.



## 19.3 Townscape Guidance

In considering the potential for tall development a number of important parameters and constraints have been identified.

Heritage assets that fall within this area have been identified. These should be integrated into any new development and directly adjacent development should be sympathetic to the townscape and heritage value of these assets. For example maintaining the building line and eaves height, allowing valuable features to remain dominant in the streetscape, and taking cues to reflect in a contemporary design.

There are a number of existing landmarks in the area based on both their heritage and townscape value. These include, as identified in the plan, the Corah site chimneys, Grade I listed St. Margaret's Church, and Grade II listed St. Marks Church. Development should therefore be subservient in height to these landmarks.

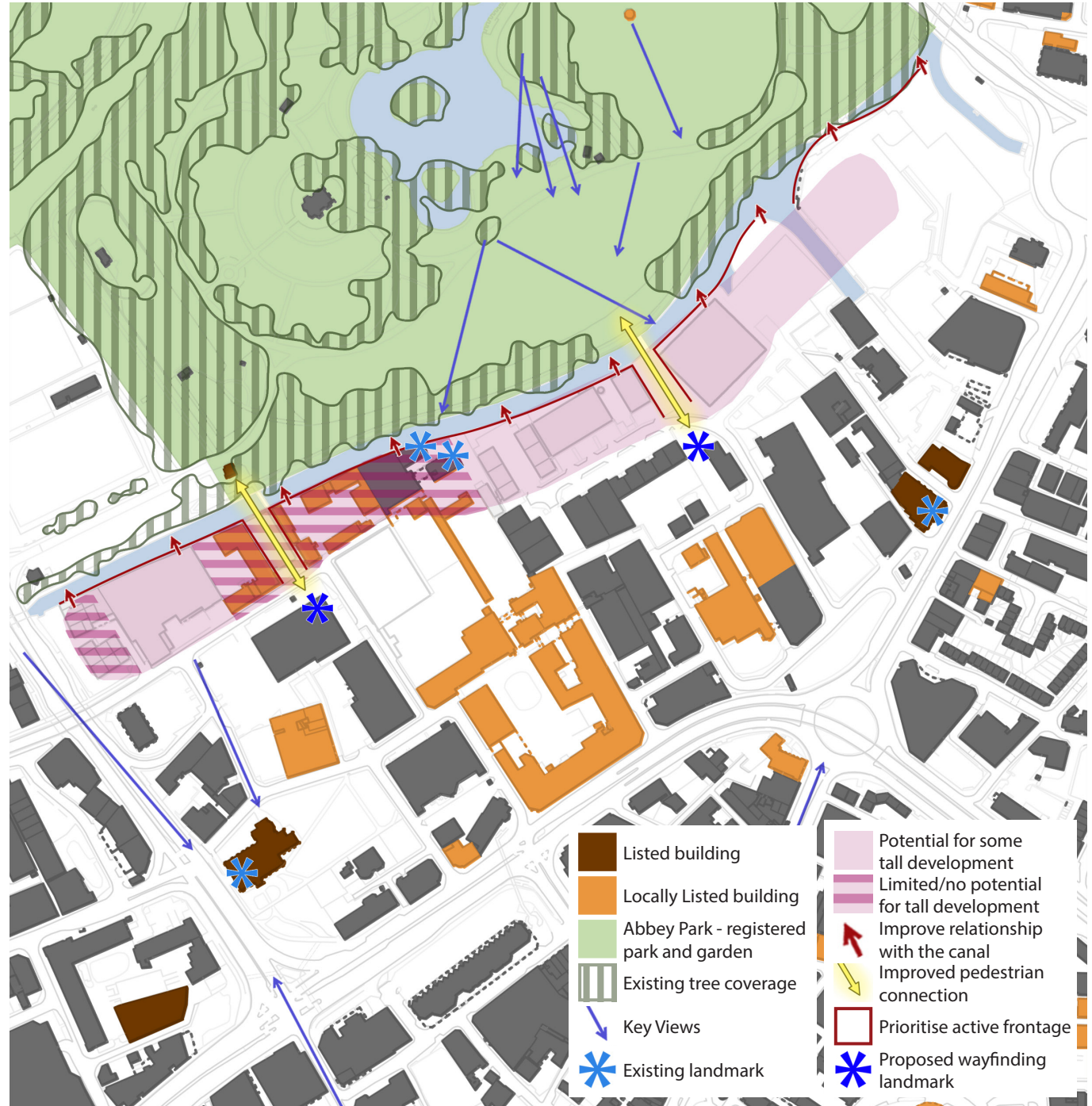
New development should not be visually dominant above the tree coverage located along the Grand Union Canal from within Abbey Park to allow the Corah chimneys to remain the dominant feature when looking south out of the park, and also to avoid the potential for new development to be overly dominant in the context of the park.

Key views, as identified, should be assessed for any proposals. The views consider the setting of heritage assets from important vantage points.

New development should have a positive relationship to the canal, offering an active frontage to increase surveillance and improve the perception of safety. Pedestrian connections into Abbey Park need to be considered as part of new development and active frontages provided to all streets and connections.

All new development, particularly tall development will have to be of excellent quality and be designed so as to not cause detriment to the setting of all heritage assets, in particular, Abbey Park, St. Marks Church and St. Margaret's Church.

Area with limited or no potential for tall development have been identified.

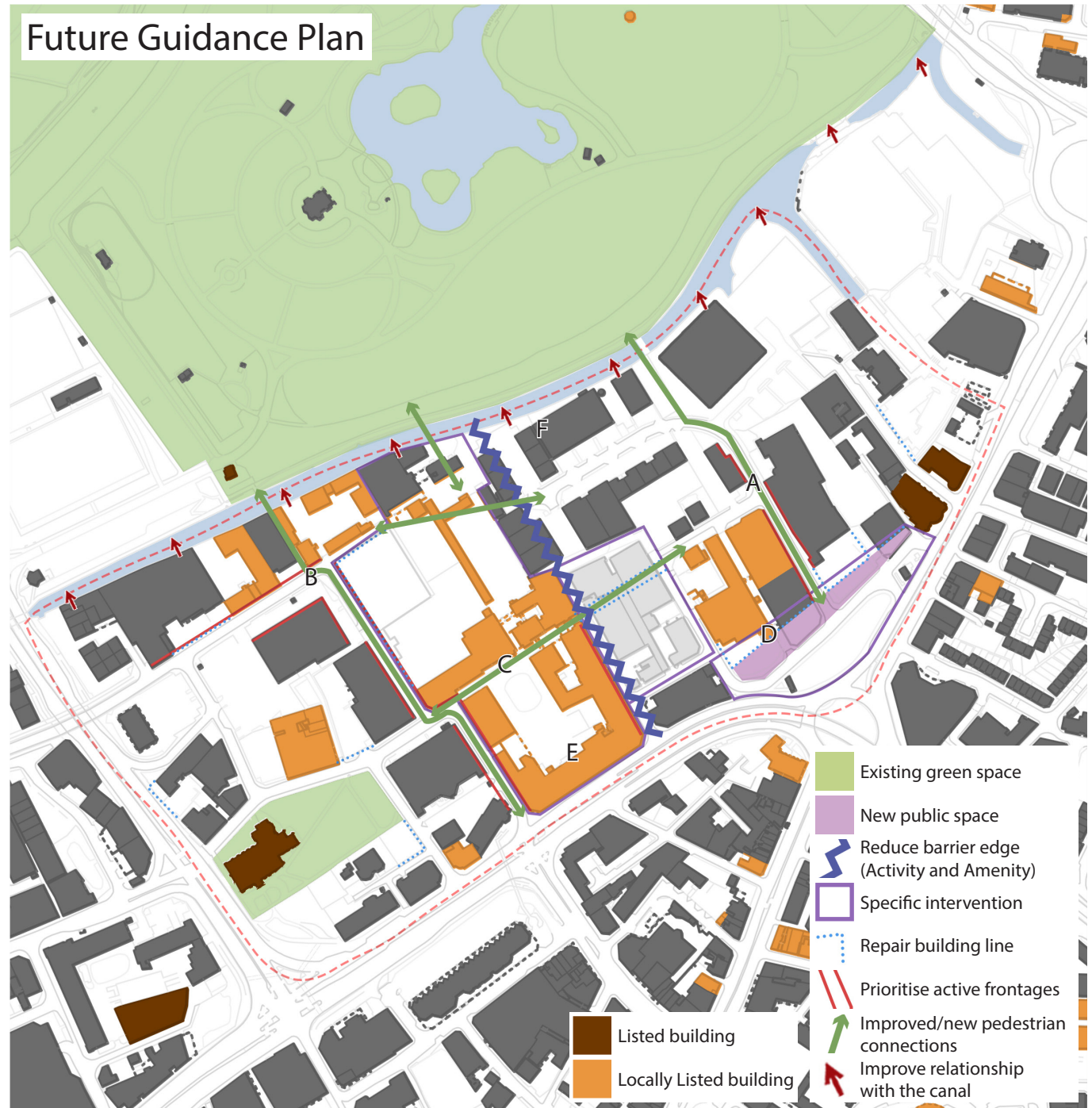


## 20. Future Planning

St. Margaret's Character Area has high potential for new residential development within the city. Given the numerous heritage constraints and the extent of potential development sites a masterplan will be required to ensure comprehensive and high quality development. A comprehensive masterplan will also consider opportunities to enhance Abbey Park, in particular, improving connections between the park and the city.

Key interventions in the St. Margaret's Character Area will look to improve pedestrian connectivity, legibility, the public realm and activity, as well as specific interventions, particularly for the Corah site.

The Corah site is one of the most significant features in the area, both historically and physically. In its current state it is detrimental to the character of the wider St. Margaret's area. A comprehensive redevelopment of the site that protects the significant value of the heritage assets will create activity and uplift the buildings on the site, alleviating the harm it currently causes.



## 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 & B routes between Abbey Park and 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

In particular pedestrian connections between Abbey Park and the city centre:

Watling Street

St John Street

Charter Street

### **Improving the Character and Appearance of the Character Area**

Opportunities for improving the appearance and

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

### **Buildings and Structures Making a Positive Contribution to the Townscape**

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

### **Designed to Repair Street Frontages**

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

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

### **Supporting the existing and future mix of uses**

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

### **Creating a place that is easy to find your way around**

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

### **Green Infrastructure**

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

Areas of focus: tbc

## Recommended Interventions:

Identified in the Future Guidance Plan.

### **C Create new connection**

Create new connections between the east and west of the character area, through the Corah site.

### **D Archdeacon Street building line**

Push back the building line on Archdeacon street to open views towards St. Mark's church improving it's setting.

### **E Comprehensive intervention in the Corah site**

The Corah site would benefit from an intervention that protects and enhances the heritage assets on the site and integrates them into a comprehensive scheme. Opportunities to improve the relationship of the site with the broader character area, by creating connections through the site and offering active frontages to the street will be encouraged.

### **F Comprehensive masterplan adjacent to the canal**

Land adjacent to the canal, including areas with potential tall development, should come forward as part of a comprehensive masterplan. And take consideration of the extensive townscape and heritage constraints of the area.