

# Gloucester City Centre Conservation Area

**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**



**Cathedral Quarter**

# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 What is a Conservation Area?	3
1.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and its purpose	3
1.3 How it will be used	4
1.4 Consultation process	4
1.5 Regeneration context	4
1.6 National and Local Policy context	6
<b>2. Understanding the site</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Significance of the site	7
2.2 Boundary alterations	7
2.3 Location	9
2.4 Topography, geography and landscape	9
2.5 Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings	10
2.6 Archaeology	10
2.7 Historic Development	11
<b>3. Character Areas</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 The Gate Streets	15
3.2 Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate	33
3.3 Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street	41
3.4 King's Square and King's Walk	48
<b>4. Guidelines and enhancements</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>5. Maps</b>	<b>58</b>





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is a Conservation Area?

A conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' as set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

When dealing with planning applications in conservation areas the Local Authority is required to ensure that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' (Section 72); the Local Authority also has a duty 'from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement or any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas' (Section 71).

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 prevents the demolition of buildings in conservation areas without consent and allows for the service of 'Repair Notices' for vacant buildings in a similar way to those for listed buildings.

These sections of the 1990 Planning Act form the foundation for Gloucester City Council to manage the built environment in such a way as to retain the special qualities of their conservation areas. There are, however, a wide range of legislation, national guidance



Gloucester Cathedral seen from St Michael's Tower.  
Photo: GCC.

and local policies which assist in this task. They deal with other types of heritage asset, such as listed buildings, additional controls to supplement those included in the 1990 Act (often called Article 4 Directions), various types of repair and enforcement notices, and advice on how to assess the impact of development on the setting of an area or building.

Consequently, it is important that this document is read in conjunction with

additional guidance and local and national policy documents. Where applicable, links have been provided to the documents to provide additional guidance. This appraisal forms part of the Council's Historic Environment Record and evidence base for the Local Plan.

It is essential that any management plan supports a modern community and is considerate of social and economic factors. In view of this consultations have been (and will be) undertaken during the appraisal process, and these will impact on the formulation of the management policies outlined later in this document.

## 1.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and its Purpose

This appraisal has been prepared by Gloucester City Council, with input from Donald Insall Associates; it has been funded through the Cathedral Quarter High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).

The appraisal is set out in 3 parts:

1. Understanding the area: This consists of a brief summary of the area, its historic development, its significance and components. Much of this has been

compiled from third party documents, including the 2007 Conservation Area Appraisal

2. Site appraisal: The conservation area is divided into four character areas. The key elements of each character area, and how they contribute to the character and significance of the conservation area, will be outlined and appraised. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to each character area will also be assessed and used to inform the final section of the document.
3. Management of change: This section will set out a series of principles to help guide future development whilst ensuring that the special character of the area is preserved and where possible enhanced.

### 1.3 How it will be used

A conservation area appraisal defines the special interest of the conservation area that merits its designation and describes and evaluates the contribution made by the different features to its character and appearance. It will be used by council officers and Members when considering applications for development, but also as a guide for

developers, owners, and tenants in preparing proposals which are in line with national legislation and guidance and local policy on the protection of conservation areas. The appraisal also seeks to understand the City Centre Conservation Area's capacity for change and its potential to meet local development needs and pressures.

This appraisal aims to increase the appreciation and understanding of the conservation area and help businesses, tenants and owners understand the legislation that protects this complex historic city.

### 1.4 Consultation process

It is a statutory requirement under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for conservation area guidance produced by or on behalf of the Council to be subject to public consultation, including a public meeting, and for the local authority to have regard to the views expressed by consultees.

Public consultation has been undertaken at various stages through the production of this appraisal, including at the beginning of the process; a draft of the appraisal will also go out (has gone out) to public consultation. This public consultation has been vital in understanding the thoughts, issues and

pressures which face the City Centre Conservation Area from those who live, work, and use the area, as well as the local authority who are responsible for the administration of planning policy to ensure that its character or appearance is preserved or enhanced.

Groups which were informed of the consultation or specifically consulted include:

Gloucester Business Improvement District

Gloucester Housing Strategy Team

Gloucester City Council Planning Officers

Gloucester Heritage Team

Gloucester City Council Cabinet Members

Gloucester Culture Trust

Gloucester Development Forum

University of Gloucestershire

Gloucester Civic Trust

Owners/occupiers of properties within the Conservation Area

The results of these consultations have informed the preparation of this document.

### 1.5 Regeneration context

At the time of this review, the Cathedral Quarter High Street Heritage Action Zone is approaching its final stages. Having been awarded £1.9m in funding from Historic



England, this scheme has delivered change to part of Westgate Street providing grants to property owners for renovation and refurbishment of shopfronts and the conversion of vacant upper floors to residential use, as well as delivering improvements to the public realm. It is the intention that the work completed through the HSHAZ will encourage further regeneration as well as educate residents and owners as to the benefit of investment in heritage and good design. This will have an impact on the current condition of Westgate Street and its environs and should be assessed during the next conservation area appraisal review. At this point in time 10 facades/shopfronts have been restored/renovated, and 5 new upper floor residential units created as a part of this scheme.

However, despite the HSHAZ interventions, and the undoubted improvements that it has delivered, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the future direction of high streets, with many believing that these areas need to provide more than retail to encourage visitors.

A Townscape Heritage Initiative was awarded to Southgate Street to improve the area from St Mary DeCrypt Church to the southern end of Southgate Street in 2013. This has now concluded and there is a large improvement which is reflected in this review.

### *Current and Recent Regeneration Schemes*

There are several large-scale developments underway in the City Centre Conservation Area, and a number completed since the 2007 appraisal. These include the demolition of the Gloucester Technical College and the redevelopment of Greyfriars (Friars Orchard Scheme).

There is also significant regeneration underway in the King's Quarter of the city centre, an area which includes part of the City Centre Conservation Area. This £200m+ city council led regeneration project, supported by £20 million in Levelling Up funding, is providing a new mixed development in that area of the city. Within the conservation area the former Debenhams site is being repurposed by the University of Gloucester. This building has one of the largest footprints in the city centre and its repurposing will bring 4 500 students and hundreds of new jobs to the area. Work is now underway to create the Forum, a mixed use office, hotel, leisure, retail and residential development on the edge of King's Square, just outside the conservation area. All schemes are due for completion in 2024.

The planned closure of Longsmith Street Carpark as part of the regeneration of the Fleece Hotel site is currently on hold, with uncertainty facing the future of this important historic site.



**Works at 14 Westgate Street as part of the Cathedral Quarter HSHAZ. Photo: GCC.**

The regeneration initiatives above aim to revitalise historically significant as well as negative parts of the conservation area, which it is hoped will encourage further regeneration. The impacts of these should be assessed within the next review of this document to understand the full effects of these projects and how they may inform future phases of development.



King's Square was redeveloped in 2022. Photo: GCC.

## 1.6 National and Local Policy Context

The obligations of local planning authorities towards conservation areas within the legislative process have already been outlined at the start of this document, however there is considerable policy, both national and local, which provides more details on how legislation should be implemented.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 provides national policy. Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is a key component of the NPPF's drive to achieve sustainable development.

Section 16 of the NPPF, 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the heritage framework in detail in relation to various 'heritage assets'. Conservation Areas are referred to as designated heritage assets in the NPPF.

Both the Joint Core Strategy (produced in partnership between Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council, setting out a planning framework for all three areas and adopted in December 2017) and the Gloucester City Plan (adopted in January 2023) refer to designated heritage assets.

Policy SD8 in the Joint Core Strategy concerns the historic environment and it states that 'Development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, having regard to valued and distinctive elements of the historic environment' and that 'Designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced as appropriate to their significance, and for their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place...Development should aim to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and put them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'.

Policy D1 of the Gloucester City Plan focuses on the historic environment; it states that

'Development proposals must conserve the character, appearance and significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings'

## 2. Understanding the site



The meeting of Westgate Street and Northgate Street at the Cross. Photo: GCC.

### 2.1 Significance of the site

The City Centre Conservation Area lies between The Docks and the Cathedral Precinct and encompasses the main retail core of the city. The four principal streets meet at The Cross, reflecting their Roman origin, and the boundary of the conservation area follows the line of the former Roman wall, now lost below later development. The grid pattern of streets and back lanes are predominantly laid out on the Roman plan. In the north-east and the south-east quadrants, these have been

overlaid by post-war development which created two large shopping centres.

The conservation area retains a high number of historic buildings, dating from the 11th century onwards. Medieval churches, and former merchants' houses, many with fine timber-framed frontages, can be found in the main streets, of which Westgate Street is the most intact. There are also some noticeable examples of high-quality 20th Century development, including the former Debenhams built between 1928 and 1931, the Oxbode and HSBC Bank built in the 1960s.

The key characteristics of the City Centre Conservation Area are summarised below:

1. The centre of Gloucester City, located between The Docks and the Cathedral Precinct
2. High density of commercial, local government and cultural uses with a growing number of residential properties
3. Primary shopping frontages along the Gate Streets
4. Retains the Roman street layout, overlaid by Saxon development, of the four main streets meeting at The Cross
5. Surviving Roman remains, exposed and below ground. For example the King's Bastion and the footings of the East Gate, as well as Roman wall remains within a retail premises on Southgate Street.

6. Back lanes and alleys, where they survive, on a grid pattern with some remains of medieval burgrave plots
7. Two outstanding 12th Century friaries – Blackfriars and Greyfriars as well as several other scheduled sites without above ground remains
8. A high number of grade 1 and 2\* listed buildings dating between the 11th and 19th centuries, the highest concentration of which is in Westgate Street
9. Several very early medieval churches – St Mary Decrypt, St Nicholas Church, St John the Baptist and St Michael's Church
10. Survival of several medieval stone undercrofts in Westgate Street associated with wealthy merchants' houses
11. Several outstanding timber-framed houses and Inns of the 15th-17th centuries, including The New Inn in Northgate Street, listed grade I
12. Some high-quality examples of 20th Century design

### 2.2 Boundary alterations

As a part of the appraisal process, two small extensions to the City Centre Conservation Area are proposed. They are:

#### Area 1 – Area of green on the northern side of Westgate Street

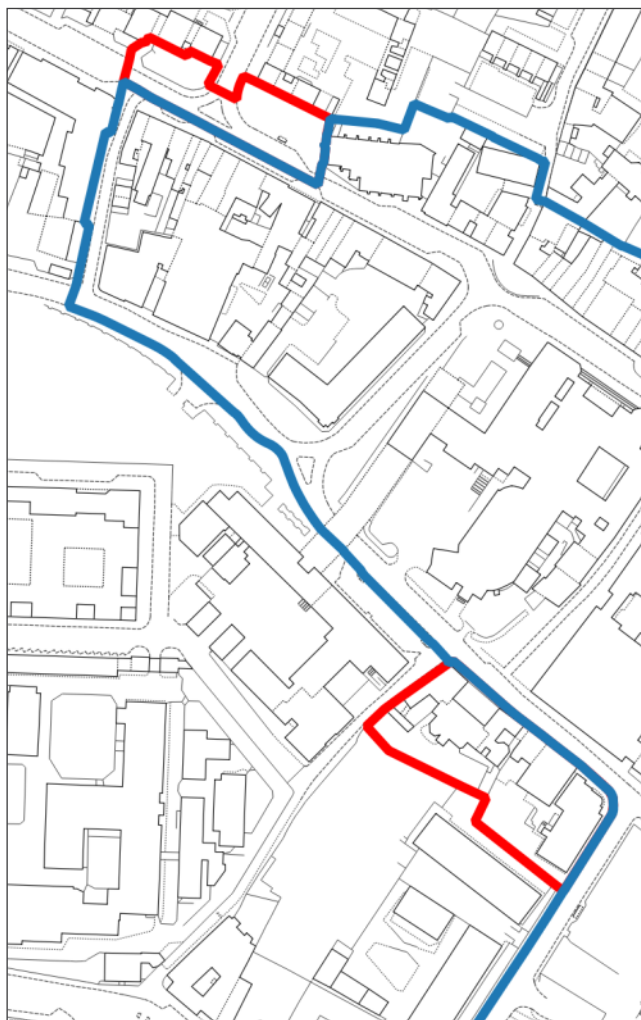
The Dukeries is a 1960's residential





Trees screening the Dukeries development from Westgate Street. Photo: GCC.

development to the northern side of Westgate Street and is outside the network of conservation areas which surround the city centre. Nos 102-106 Westgate Street stand to the east of this and are of similar period of development. Both ranges of buildings are noticeably at odds with the buildings on Westgate Street, due to their scale, mass, materiality, condition and detailing, and as such, detract from their setting. The areas of public realm, including soft landscaping and trees to the front of these buildings are an important buffer which provide a significant piece of landscape to the streetscape, and as such it is felt that they should be protected from removal as this would have a detrimental



Map showing alterations to the boundary of the Conservation Area. The existing boundary is shown in blue. The alterations are shown in red.

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impact on Westgate Street, as well as on the setting of St Nicholas Church. This small alteration to the conservation area boundary would provide this protection.

## Area 2 – Bearland House, Bearland Lodge, numbers 41,43,45, 47,49 Longsmith Street.

Bearland House and Lodge are impressive 18<sup>th</sup> century houses which, alongside numbers 41-49 Longsmith Street, are currently within the



Bearland House. Photo: GCC.

Barbican Conservation Area. It is proposed that the boundary between these two conservation areas is redrawn to bring this domestic range of buildings into the City Centre Conservation Area. It is felt that the residential nature of this range of buildings responds more to the architectural character of the City Centre Conservation Area, with its terraces of historic buildings, rather than the Barbican Conservation Area which is dominated by Gloucester Prison.

## 2.3 Location

Gloucester is the county town of Gloucestershire, with Cheltenham located 10 miles to the east, Tewkesbury 15 miles to the north and the Forest of Dean to the west. To the south is Stroud and the Cotswold escarpment, which rises steeply from the plain. This is crossed by the M5 motorway, connecting the north of England to Bristol, Bath and the southwest.

The City Centre Conservation Area is the historic core of Gloucester and provides the majority of its primary and secondary shopping frontages. It is a vibrant part of the city offering day and night-time activities and a mix of uses. The form of the conservation area is largely established by its historic layout which remains intact, forming a loose grid of routes.



Gloucester City Centre seen from Robinswood Hill, with the Malvern Hills behind. Photo: GCC.

## 2.4 Topography, geology and landscape

Central Gloucestershire itself is located on a spur of higher ground just above the floodplain of the River Severn. The city lies on lower lias clay and gravels in the Vale of Gloucestershire. To the north, west and south the terrain is low lying, but the Cotswold escarpment, along with the outlying Robinswood Hill and Churchdown Hill, rises

steeply to the east, around 5 miles from the city centre.

Within the City Centre Conservation Area, contours confirm that there is a high spot close to the crossing point of the four main streets, with the steepest slope occurring on the west side of Ladybellegate Street. The change in gradient is also noticeable along Westgate Street, which drops gradually towards the river. Until the 19th Century, the River Twyver or Fullbrook ran westwards along the north



side of St Aldate Street (forming the northern ditch of the medieval city) and into what was Mill Lane but has long since been culverted. The River Severn has changed course several times; the eastern branch of the Severn silted up and a new branch developed further west.

## 2.5 Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings

The wider city is divided into 14 conservation areas with the City Centre the most central. Immediately to the north is the Cathedral Precincts Conservation Area which is linked to Westgate Street by College Street and which provides important open spaces which are surrounded by highly graded historic buildings. To the west is the Barbican Conservation Area, which includes the southern elevation of Longsmith Street and the western elevation of Ladybellegate Street. To the southwest, beyond Commercial Road, lies the historic docks surround by the vast warehouses of the Docks Conservation Area. Continuing east is the Southgate Conservation Area which is an area of mixed commercial and residential development. The Spa Conservation Area wraps around the southwest edge of the city centre, with its elegant Regency terraces and open green spaces. Finally, to the east, the boundary abuts the Eastgate and St Michael's Conservation Area, comprising mainly 19th



**St Nicholas's Church and the Malvern Hills beyond.**  
Photo: GCC.

Century development along outer Eastgate Street and Cromwell Street residential areas.

The City Centre Conservation area is partially pedestrianised so vehicular access to its core is limited. The pedestrianisation scheme creates a pleasant shopping environment for

the four main streets, with car parking situated around the edges. There are both surface and multi-storey car parking facilities off Ladybellegate Street; There is roof car parking above Eastgate Shopping Centre and to one side of King's Square.

There is an important pedestrian link from Brunswick Road to Southgate Street, past Greyfriars, which also connects into Eastgate Shopping Centre and the adjoining covered market. The principle vehicular entrances into the City Centre Conservation Area are from Royal Oak Road and The Quays, leading into public car parking and the county council offices in Quay Street. The Inner Relief Road wraps around the city centre on the northern, eastern, and south-eastern sides, feeding into the parking for the two shopping centres and into Lower Eastgate Street, to the two surface car parks off Hampden Way. There is a pedestrian route from King's Square towards the railway and bus station.

## 2.6 Archaeology

There are a high number of scheduled monuments within the City Centre Conservation Area which are shown on the following link [Search the List: Map Search | Historic England](#). Most of these lie below existing buildings. The best preserved above ground remains are the buildings and ruins of Blackfriars and Greyfriars. Both consist of





Greyfriars. Photo: GCC.

considerable standing remains with Blackfriars considered to be the most complete Dominican Friary on a national basis. Any substantial groundworks within the conservation area have the potential to impact archaeological remains of national importance whether scheduled or not.

## 2.7 Historic development

The name Gloucester is derived from the Roman name Glevum, combined with the suffix 'cester', which means a Roman walled settlement or fortress. The CCCA forms the historic core of Gloucester, and the boundaries largely follow the lines of the Roman city walls, later used by both Saxons

and Normans until largely demolished in the Civil War of the mid-17th Century.

The historical development of the city has been covered in detail in a variety of publications, references of which are included within the bibliography.

The principal features of the historic development of the City Centre Conservation Area are as follows:

### Roman

Roman occupation commences in AD48 when a Roman fortress was constructed at Kingsholme, taking advantage of the lowest bridging point of the River Severn;

A new fortress is established on the site of Gloucester city centre around AD 57 which by AD 97 had become a Roman 'Colonia' or veteran settlement on the same footprint;

The cross plan of the streets was laid out, with the Gate Streets largely aligned along the Roman layout;

The forum and basilica lay alongside Southgate Street;

A suburb developed on land to the west, reclaimed from the river;

Roman Gloucester survives as an urban centre into the 5th century. It's status during the 6th and early 7th century is unclear and it



Roman remains under Eastgate Street. Photo: GCC

may have continued as a partly occupied central place during the dark ages.

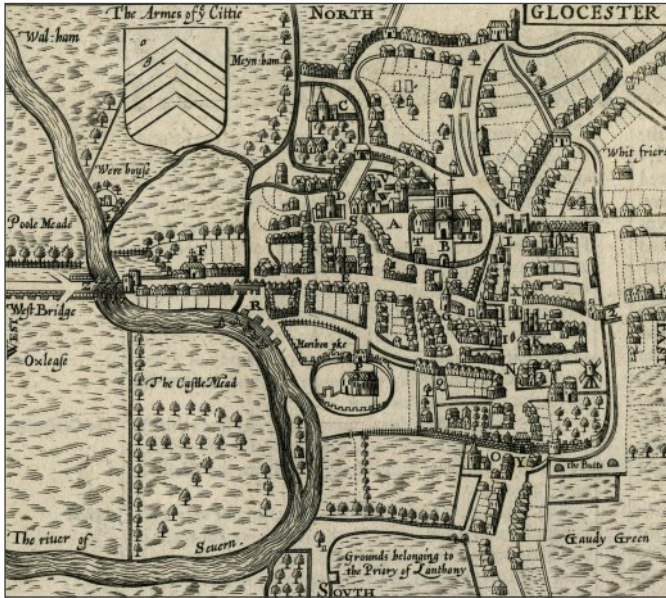
### Anglo-Saxon and Norman

In 679 the Christian king of the Hwicce's, Osric, founded a minster in Gloucester which was rebuilt in 823;

New streets laid out in the 9th Century, many of which remain, and the town walls were refortified;

Queen Aethelfleda founded St Oswald's Priory in around 900;

This 'Old Castle' and was probably a ringwork type structure utilising part of the city walls. It probably developed into a 'Mottle and Bailey'



Speed's 1610 map of Gloucester. Photo: British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

type castle after some years. The 'Old Castle' was built in the early 12th century close to the river, and Gloucester grew due to its location. The market and mint developed as a response to this.

The Abbey of St Peter, which stood on the old Minster site, re-founded by William in 1072, became one of the principle Benedictine centres in England.

## Medieval

Henry III was crowned in St Peter's Abbey in 1216;

Greyfriars was established in 1231, Blackfriars in 1239 and Whitefriars in about 1268;

Gloucester's wealth derived principally from the making of wool cloth;

Long, thin burgage plots were laid out along the principal streets, to promote development;

Westgate Street contained the market, several churches, the mint and a number of vaulted stone merchant's undercrofts constructed in the prosperous late 12th and early 13th Centuries;

Southgate contained the fish and corn markets;

Eastgate Street was the Jewish Quarter until the Jews were expelled in 1275;

Northgate Street contained another market and was lined with shops;

St Peter's Abbey was rebuilt and extended in the 14th Century.

## Tudor and Jacobean

In the late 1530s due to the dissolution of the monasteries, the power of the church diminished and Gloucester became notable for its markets and manufacturing;

The Bluecoat School was built in 1566 in Eastgate Street;

Gloucester became a significant port,



The High Cross before its demolition in 1751. Photo: British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).



helped by improvements to Gloucester Quay;  
In 1643 the Civil War resulted in the demolition of the suburbs to the south, east and north;

Gloucester declined in the late 17th Century as the textile industry became less important, although new industries, such as metal working, developed.

## Georgian

Gloucester prospered as roads improved and river borne trade through Bristol increased;

The quayside facing the River Severn continues as an important part of the city's economy;

The city centre roads widened with Eastgate demolished in 1778 and the remaining gates in 1781;

New markets were built off Eastgate Street and Southgate Street in 1786;

Existing buildings were re-fronted in fashionable brick;

New public buildings were constructed;

A new gaol was built on the site of the Norman castle in 1788.

## Regency

A new spa developed to the south of the city centre after 1814, providing a short-lived



Shire Hall, Westgate Street. Photo: British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

impetus to the building of new shops in the city centre. It was eventually closed in the 1830s;

Gloucester and Berkeley Canal opened in 1827, which meant that by 1900 Gloucester had become one of the largest and most profitable ports in the country;

The first basin in Gloucester docks was constructed in 1812 with warehouses built from 1826 onwards;

Grain and timber became the most important imports.

## Victorian

Between 1840 and 1900 the Docks continued to expand, providing Gloucester with its principal source of income;

Birmingham and Gloucester railway arrived in 1840;

The volume of canal borne traffic peaked in about 1850, but decreased rapidly after the railways developed, providing links to Birmingham, Swindon and Bristol;

In 1849 St Michael's Cross was demolished and rebuilt to one side;

In 1855 Eastgate market was rebuilt;

Gloucester Wagon Works was developed in the 1860s

In 1872 the School for Science and Art in Brunswick Road was completed, shortly followed by the public library and Price Memorial Hall (later the museum) which were added on either side

The middle classes moved out of the city centre and new residential suburbs developed outside the historic core;

In the late 19th Century, banks, offices, and larger stores moved into the city centre;

In the 1890s the new Guildhall was built in Eastgate Street, on the site of the former Bluecoat School.

## 20th Century

In 1900 the buildings between Commercial Road and Ladybellegate Street were demolished for the new electricity works;





**Southgate Street in the early 1900s.**  
Photo: Historic England Archive.

Between 1901-1907 there was rebuilding around The Cross to ease congestion;

By 1914, the city centre had become almost entirely commercial;

In the 1920s and 1930s, buildings were demolished in Northgate and Eastgate Streets for new development; this includes the construction of Debenhams which was built between 1928-1931;

New buildings including The Technical College in Brunswick Road (1938-41)(now demolished) and the Central Post Office in The Oxeboode (1934) were built;

The city escaped major damage during the

Second World War;

New housing was built in the 1930s and 1950s/60s including the Fountain Square area at the western end of Westgate Street;

St Michael's Cross was removed from the city centre in the 1950s

The late 1950s saw the completion of the bypass. In 1962, Bruton Way became the first section of the Inner Relief Road to be opened, with the Kimbrose gyratory system completed at the end of Southgate Street in the early 1960s. The opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966 removed through traffic from South Wales and was further relieved by the opening of the M5 in 1971;

G A Jellicoe's Plan of 1962 led to the demolition of much of the medieval streets and buildings in the northeast and southeast quadrants, to provide the Eastgate Shopping Centre (1966-1974) and King's Square (1969-1972), served by the rooftop car parking and linked across Eastgate Street by a first floor bridge;

Jellicoe's Plan also allowed for the creation of a Via Sacra, a pedestrian route linking the cathedral and other historic sites of the main shopping area;

The County Hall buildings off Westgate Street were constructed in the late 1960/70s;

The portico to the old Eastgate Market was



**Longsmith Street car park. Photo: GCC.**

moved to form a new entrance to the Eastgate Shopping Centre in 1973;

Periodic development in the 1970s and 1980s saw the demolition of some of Gloucester's best Non-Conformist churches and also the replacement of the Gloucestershire Infirmary in lower Southgate Street with Southgate House;

The Gloucester Technical College was demolished in 2011 to enable residential development in the form of the Friars Orchard scheme.

### 3. Character Areas

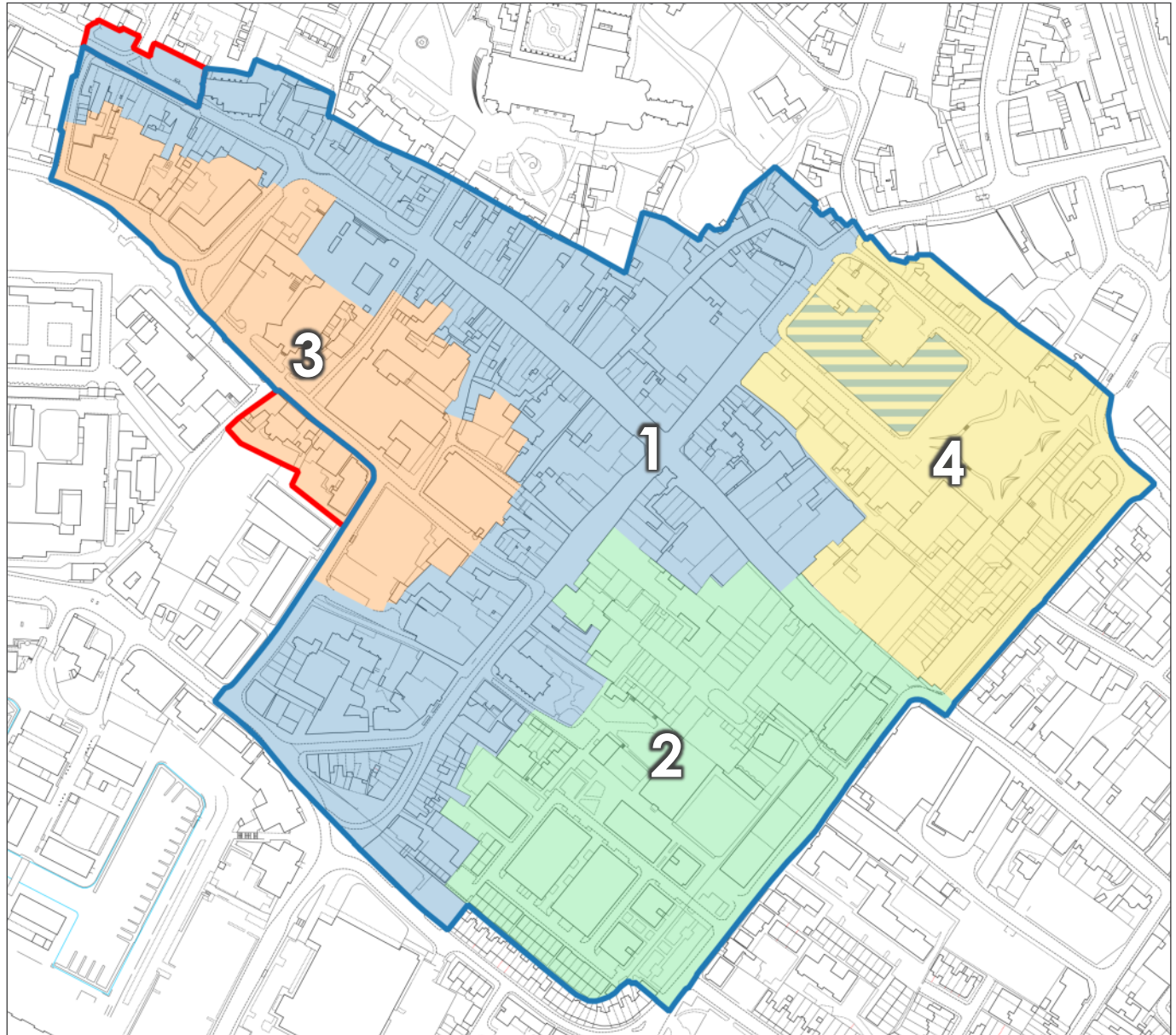
Within a conservation area, it is sometimes possible to identify parts of the area which differ in character. Key factors in defining where one part of the conservation area differs from another include the density of buildings, their relationship to one another, the street layout and the historic pattern of development. Where clear differences do exist, these are identified as 'character-areas' and the conservation area is examined using those sub-areas. Four areas have been identified as being 'character-areas' within the City Centre Conservation Area. The areas reflect the historical evolution of the city, and the pattern of development in different areas. The character areas are as follows:

1. The Gate Streets
2. Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate
3. Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street
4. King's Square and King's Walk

#### 3.1 The Gate Streets

The Gate Streets Character Area comprises Westgate Street, Eastgate Street, Southgate Street and Northgate Street from their intersection at The Cross, extending outwards to Lower Quay Street (Westgate Street), no. 12 (Eastgate Street), Kimbrose Way (Southgate

**Map showing Character Areas  
of the City Centre Conservation Area.**







The re-sited Eastgate Market portico on Eastgate Street.  
Photo: GCC.

Street) and St Aldate Street (Northgate Street). With elements of the Roman, Saxon and Medieval town plan still clearly evident, in the form of the street layout, burgage plots and hidden alleyways, part of the Gate Streets character and importance lies in its historic origins and plan form. This is supplemented and enriched by the area's historic buildings, whose variety and quality are exceptional. Dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the historic buildings of the Gate Streets character

area include medieval friaries and churches, buildings with medieval undercrofts, a number of outstanding timber framed buildings, some of which have been refronted, as well as more recent 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings of note. The most complete and unaltered of the Gate Streets is Westgate Street, which contains a rich mix of well detailed historic buildings with limited modern infill. Overlaying this historic environment is the everyday modern hustle and bustle of a city centre shopping area, which adds its own unique character to this special place.

### 3.1.1 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Townscape refers to the arrangement and appearance of buildings, spaces and other physical features in both the built and natural environments

#### Layout and plan form

The layout of the space within the Gate Streets character area is defined by the historic development of Gloucester, in particular the intersection of the Roman streets at the Cross, which were subsequently overlaid by Saxon development. The surviving back lanes and alleyways, on a grid pattern with some remains of medieval burgage plots, also contribute to this.

The Gate Streets are generally characterised by a tight urban grain, though there is considerable variation in the width of the principal streets themselves; this variation reflects the sites of medieval markets or island buildings which were demolished as part of highway improvements, some of which started as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Today it is an area dominated by retail, one that is predominantly pedestrianised, with vehicular access limited to this space for much of the day. As such part of the character within this part of the conservation area lies in the shopfronts and the activity brought by visitors, workers, and shoppers. There is no one style or age of building predominant within this compact area, with buildings ranging in age, scale, material and design. The far-reaching views which converge at the Cross allows the consideration of these streets as a group.

#### Land uses

Historically, many buildings within the Gate Streets would have been occupied by family businesses with residences above, but from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, as the docks developed, so did the city, with residential growth moving towards the suburbs of the Spa and London Road. New buildings were constructed for governmental, administrative, manufacturing, or commercial uses. More recent development, for example the construction of the 1960s shopping centres,



resulted in the further loss of residences, so that today, there are relatively few homes in within this part of the city centre. Moves to encourage the residential use of the often-vacant upper floors within parts of the character area are currently being undertaken as part of the Gloucester's Cathedral Quarter HSHAZ; the repopulation of the city centre is a wider aim of the city council.

Whilst the Gate Streets are dominated by retail premises, there are also buildings accommodating other services such as banking, hospitality or entertainment; there are also several religious buildings throughout the character area, with active worship remaining in Southgate Street and Northgate Street. Administrative services can be found at Shire Hall.

The Debenhams building, a substantial site which bridges both the Gate Streets and the King's Square character areas, is currently undergoing conversion to enable its use by the University of Gloucester as a teaching site. The reuse of this important prominent site is a positive step, one that will revitalise this part of the conservation area.

### **Building density, scale and proportions**

#### *Westgate Street*

Within Westgate Street the density of its built

form increases as it progresses towards the Cross, with the eastern end of this historic thoroughfare showing a greater concentration of buildings than the more disjointed western end. The building line is also varied, with features such as St Nicholas Church, positioned at an angle on the northern side of the street, the jetties of the Folk and No 66 and the recessed portico of Shire Hall, all adding variety to the street scene. There are a number of street trees at the lower end of Westgate Street.

The scale and proportion of the buildings on Westgate Street add texture to the street scene. Whilst there are a handful of substantial and imposing 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings on Westgate Street, for example Shire Hall and, on the corner, 1-3 Northgate Street, many of the other buildings on this historic route are more domestic in scale, varying between 2 and 4 storeys in height, occupying narrow plots and presenting an unbroken line to the street; they are also mainly historic, and most have a shopfront at ground floor level, though the quality of these varies. Positive examples can be found at 19, 64 and 66 where good quality late 19<sup>th</sup> Century shopfronts remain.

Above the shopfronts facades are diverse, whilst the roofscape, with its varied heights and features such as parapets, gables and both plain and decorative dormers, increase



**Westgate Street. Photo: GCC.**



**Eastgate Street and the Cotswolds beyond. Photo: GCC.**

interest. It is the variations within Westgate Street, and the glimpses to what lies beyond, that give this historic route its immense character, richness and architectural diversity.

To the north of Westgate Street is College Street, which, with its modest simple 15<sup>th</sup> century timber framed buildings sitting opposite a substantial decorated 3 storey

Victorian row, provides an iconic view of Gloucester's 11<sup>th</sup> century Cathedral. Close by the narrow College Court provides a more enclosed feel; the medieval ogee arched gateway, made famous by Beatrix Potter in *The Tailor of Gloucester*, is a particular feature in this space.

### *Eastgate Street*

In contrast Eastgate Street is characterised by late 20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment. Common characteristics in these buildings include substantial plot sizes, buildings of 2 to 3 stories, flat roofs and, in a number of cases, large overhangs. The tendency towards brutalism in this area, the proportions of the buildings, their massing and the lack of variety in the roofscape, are at odds with the range and scale of the buildings on Southgate and Westgate Street. There are some exceptions to this, for example at Nos 19-23, two late 19<sup>th</sup> century banks and the Guildhall, which are notable as surviving examples of earlier buildings. However, the predominance of late 20<sup>th</sup> century development which surrounds them makes them appear isolated.

### *Northgate Street*

Whilst the range of buildings in Northgate Street is diverse in terms of age and architectural style, many of them are 3



**Northgate Street. Photo: GCC.**

storeys in height. Exceptions to this include Nos 6-10 Northgate Street, which is 4 storey and the Debenhams site, the latter of which marks the intersection with the Oxboode. There are also 2 storey buildings on Northgate Street, at numbers 35 and 37, though these modest buildings appear out of character with the rest of the street scene. Plot sizes too vary, from modest single ones to the property currently housing TK Maxx, which is at least 10 bays in





**Southgate Street. Photo: GCC.**

width.

The building line to each side of Northgate Street is predominantly consistent, with a notable exception at The New Inn which has a jettied first and second floor. On the opposite side of the road, the Church of St John is set slightly back and marks the turning from Northgate Street onto St Johns Lane. Buildings

along this side street are mainly 2 and 3 storeys in height and are less condensed, with regular breaks to the building line. These breaks provide glimpsed and far-reaching views towards the Cathedral.

Whilst there is great variety in terms of building age and style on Northgate Street, the overall impression is one of a more consistent street scene than the neighbouring Westgate Street.

### *Southgate Street*

With St Michael's Tower and St Mary De Crypt positioned along it, as well as a combination of modern, historic, stone faced and timber framed buildings, there is considerable variety amongst the buildings that line Southgate Street. Whilst buildings do not generally exceed 4 storeys in height, the plot size, and the building line is varied, as is the roofscape, with chimneys, decorative turrets, ornate gables, differing roof lines and church towers all clearly visible and providing enrichment to this historic street.

As well as being a focal point within the streetscene, St Mary De Crypt marks the entrance to Greyfriars, and provides a break from the otherwise tight urban grain. Its tower also provides a noticeable landmark, which alongside St Michael's tower, effectively bookmarks the street at St Mary's. The community facilities and green space

provide space for rest, assembly and an easily understood historic landmark, all of which have been enhanced through recent work. Unfortunately it is also an area where anti social behaviour is evident.

The triangle formed at the southern end of Southgate Street by its connection to Commercial Road and Kimbrose Way also has a tight urban grain, however in this location a public open space has been created. Bearing in mind this area overlooks private spaces, rear gardens and rear elevations and is only partially screened by a piece of street art, it remains an unusual and perhaps incongruous feature of the conservation area.

Slightly to the west of the southern end of Southgate Street is Blackfriars' Priory. The presence of this historic monastic site not only provides further variation in terms of plot size, scale and proportions, the fact that it sits comfortably within its own grounds and is bordered on one side by a Georgian terrace which has retained its front gardens and historic boundary treatment gives a more open feel and diminishes the density of this part of the character area.

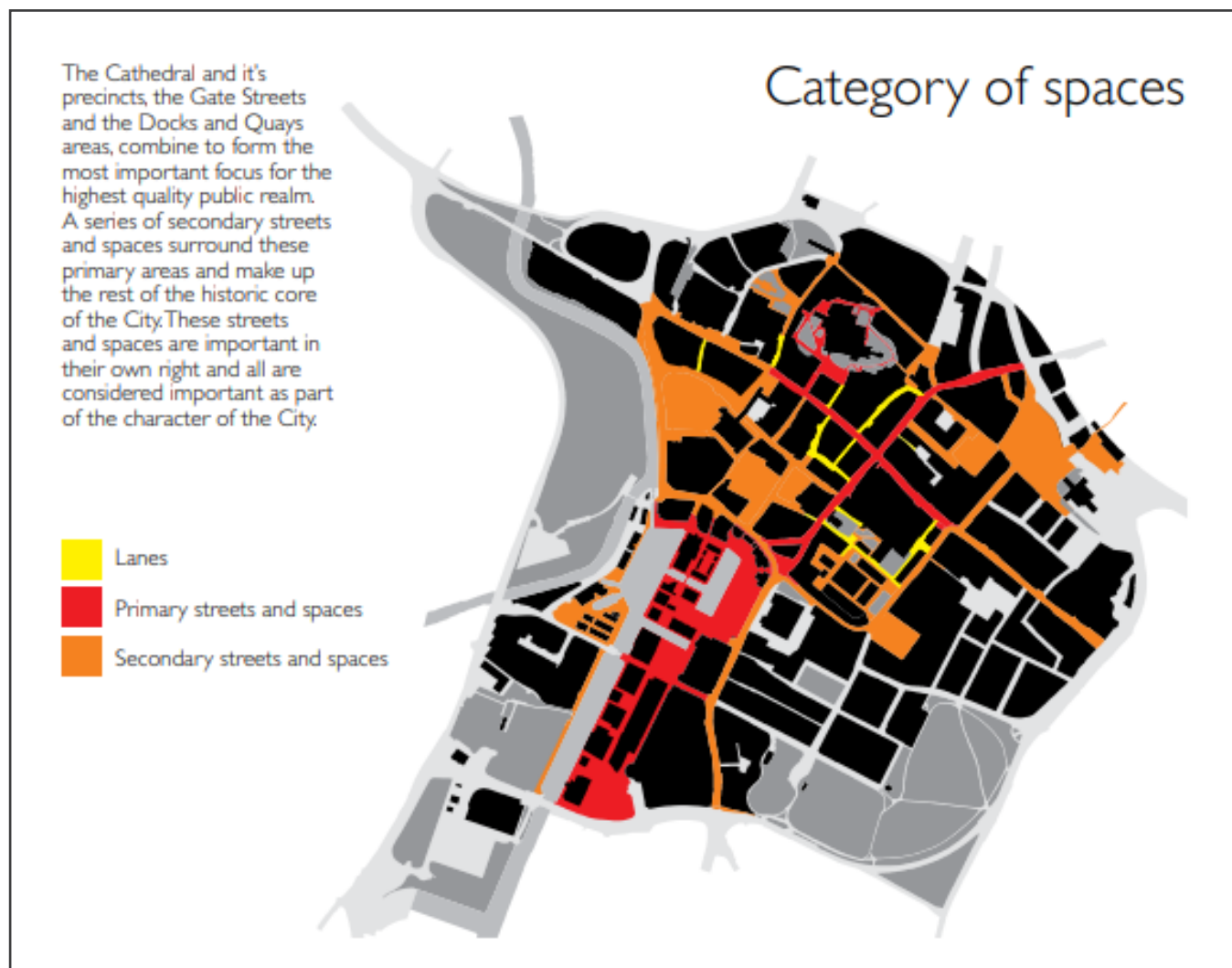
### **Alleyways and backstreets**

A feature of the Gate Streets, in particular Westgate Street, are the small back lanes that were laid out during the Saxon period when the city is known to have been replanned with



Maverdine Lane, off Westgate Street. Photo: GCC.

a grid of streets and a series of secondary routes. These offer a different perspective to the busy urban character of the Gate Streets, typically narrower but often with glimpsed views to rear elevations and a range of smaller scale buildings, both domestic and commercial. A number of these routes have been overlooked and are now suffering from deterioration. Typical issues include lack of lighting, poor repair, insensitive infill development, blocking of historic openings and the installation of security grilles. This has



Categories of spaces in Gloucester City Centre (excerpted from Gloucester Public Realm Strategy 2017, p. 5).



led to anti-social behaviour and their use for refuse storage which deters pedestrian use. Examples of the back lanes and alleyways within this character area include:

- Bull Lane
- Maverdine Lane
- St John's Lane
- College Court
- Cross Keys Lane
- Alley to the east of 11 Westgate Street – Pinchbelly Alley
- Alley to the north of the New Inn

## Views

Views within the Gate Streets are varied and diverse, with key views from the Cross looking outwards along each of the four main streets. The view along Northgate Street is perhaps the shortest of these, because the road curves as it heads outwards, whilst the view along Westgate Street is far reaching and looks towards the Malvern Hills. This important view, which is enabled by the linear form of the street, the way it falls away as it heads westwards, and its predominantly pedestrianised nature, contains not only distant elements, but also the architecturally diverse buildings that line the street and more immediate landmarks such as St Nicholas

Church. Enclosed views, for examples along Bull Lane and College Court can also be found in close proximity to Westgate Street, whilst along College Street is a terminated view, with the Cathedral providing the focal point. The Cathedral also provides a background to a deflected view up St Johns Lane from Northgate Street, which entices the observer to explore further.

Southgate Street offers long ranging views north and south, framed to either side by the fine-grained buildings characteristic of this part of the conservation area. Looking to the south from the Cross, the view terminates at No 1 Commercial Road where the road splits in two, encompassing a number of features along its way. The chimneys of St Mary De Crypt, the timber framed gables of Robert Raike's House and the characterful roofscape comprising a variety of gables, chimneys and roof slopes are of particular note.

Eastgate Street stretches beyond the boundary of the City Centre Conservation Area with the long, straight nature of the road enabling far-reaching views both through the Eastgate and St Michaels Conservation Area, to the Cotswold Hills beyond. Street trees are prominent in many of these views and make a positive contribution to them, bringing an element of green into this urban setting. The first-floor

bridge which is part of the Eastgate shopping centre interrupts a number of these views at high level and can cause overshadowing which is unfortunate.

### 3.1.2 STREETScape CHARACTER

Streetscape is the outward facing visual appearance and character of a street, area or locality.

#### Open Space

The semi pedestrianised nature of the Gate Streets and the Cross creates a freely accessible area within the centre of Gloucester, one that is used not only for enabling people to access the shops and services that line these streets, but also, to some extent as a destination in itself, with the presence of benches, and the use of the pedestrianised streets for outdoor dining, encouraging people to linger in these areas.

Other than the Gate Streets themselves, there is limited public open space within this character area. The churchyard of St Mary de Crypt, which can be accessed from Southgate Street along Marylone, is a rare green space and provides a degree of tranquillity away from the busy shopping streets. The presence of a number of trees in this space contributes to this area's ambience, however, recent incidents of anti-social

## Views and buildings in the Gate Streets Character Area



Westgate Street. Photo: GCC.



Southgate Street from Marylone. Photo: GCC.



College Court. Photo: GCC.



St John's Lane. Photo: GCC.



Bull Lane. Photo: GCC.



New Inn Lane. Photo: GCC.





**Tranquil open space in the churchyard of St Mary de Crypt. Photo: GCC.**

behaviour detract from calm and respite that this place can offer.

Other open spaces within this character area include the area at the southern end of Southgate Street and the space to the west of Shire Hall. Whilst this latter area benefits from

the presence of a number of street trees, it remains a location which could be improved and enhanced.

Whilst not always accessible to the public, green spaces can be found within Blackfriars. In addition to the south of the priory site, some retained front gardens front onto Ladybellegate Street and are visible from the public domain. Though limited in number these are a rare example of inner-city development which had a traditional front garden.

Within the character area is a limited amount vegetation, sometimes within the form of street trees, whilst other are planters located on the street network. Although limited in number, and not always sensitively placed, this vegetation is part of the streetscape and adds a visual contrast to an otherwise high density of hard landscaping and terraced buildings.

## Public Realm

The Gate Streets were the subject of a substantial pedestrianisation scheme which began in the 1990s and encompassed their intersection and extended as far as the junction with Brunswick Road (Eastgate Street), the junction with Blackfriars, (Southgate Street) Upper Quay Street (Westgate Street) and the junction with the Oxbode (Northgate Street). Much of the



**Street surfaces in the Gate Streets Character Area. Photos: GCC.**

public realm within the Gate Streets today, dates back to this time.

In terms of street surfaces a variety of materials have been used within the Gate Streets including York Stone and Forest Pennant Stone slabs for pavements as well as small red clay setts in a herringbone pattern in the central areas of upper Westgate and Eastgate Street, or a higher quality stone setts (upper Southgate and Northgate Streets) which are more robust and allow for vehicle movements. In some areas coloured tarmac, or resin bound gravel have been used. A strip of clay or stone setts in stretcher bond are usually laid between the edges and middle sections of the streets.

Also of interest are the outlines of archaeologically known buildings laid out in black engineering bricks which are set into the paving at various points along Eastgate and Westgate Streets. Whilst these outlines are unusual, the information on them is both limited and dated, and somewhat lost in the myriad of street clutter that now dominates central Gloucester; something that leads to underappreciation of this distinctive feature.

Currently underway in Westgate Street, as a part of the HSHAZ, is a scheme to improve the public realm. Having undertaken public consultation, a number of proposals, including decluttering the street, repairs to street surfaces, the introduction of more greenery

and seating and improved interpretation have now been put forward. Works will commence in 2024.

Evidence of the Via Sacra, a pedestrian scheme that originated in the Jellicoe Plan and linked the then new shopping centres with the historic elements of the city centre and the Cathedral, can be found in all the character areas including the Gate Streets. In some cases traditional materials were used for the paving of the route, whereas in others a cruciform pattern is inlaid in the street surface. Unfortunately, whilst the route may provide a link between a number of Gloucester's historic sites, there is a lack of consistency in terms of how this route is depicted, as well as a lack of interpretation and maintenance, all factors that erode the legibility of this interesting route.

Whilst there are examples of the use of high quality and traditional materials within the Gate Streets, and interesting surface features, sporadic change, a lack of maintenance and insensitive and poor-quality repairs in the years since pedestrianisation have eroded and diminished the sense of cohesion that was originally intended.

This lack of cohesion is also reflected in the wide range of street furniture that is evident within this central area, which includes bins, bollards, seating and wayfinding. Again,



Cluttered street furniture in Westgate Street and Eastgate Street. Photos: GCC.



whilst there may have initially been a uniformity of approach, in the intervening years, any co-ordination appears to have been lost, with an irregularity in the type and the placement of the public realm furniture, much of which is dated and poorly maintained. This, alongside the privately owned outside eating areas, food wagons and advertisements, give the Gate Streets a chaotic and often cluttered feel.

Within the Gate Streets is also a considerable amount of public art, from the mosaic panels which indicate the previous historic uses of the rear streets, to the sculptures seen at the Cross, the junction of Southgate Street and Commercial Road. The quality of these works varies, and their placement and lack of interpretation means that many of these items are not fully understood or appreciated; they add to the cluttered feel of these streets.

The introduction of a Public Realm Strategy in 2017 sets out a clear approach to the selection of materials, designs and the location of these throughout the City Centre Conservation Area to strengthen the relationship between primary, secondary and rear streets and is a welcome introduction. Whilst it may not be possible to undertake a comprehensive redevelopment of the public realm in this conservation area at present, as development opportunities arise, the public realm strategy should be used to guide



Grade I listed Dick Whittington's (100 Westgate Street).  
Photo: GCC.



The twelfth-century undercroft in the Grade I listed Fleece Hotel. Photo: Historic England Archive.

development to ensure that high quality and appropriate materials are used. For further information please see [prs-adopted-version.pdf \(gloucester.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/prs-adopted-version.pdf)

### 3.1.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

A substantial part of the special interest of the City Centre Conservation Area is derived from its buildings, which give the Gate Streets a rich texture and provide an illustration of the development of the city. Many of these buildings are 'listed' which means that they are included on the government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Landmark Buildings, which may be listed or unlisted, make a particular contribution to the streetscene. There are also a number a number of unlisted 'positive buildings', whose contribution may be less than a landmark, but which still have considerable value ('Unlisted landmarks' and 'positive buildings' may be considered to be non-designated heritage assets, NDHA, and a number of these will be on Gloucester's Local List.) Unfortunately, though, there are also examples of less sympathetic and inappropriate development within the conservation area, with a number of buildings that are detrimental to, or have a negative impact on the conservation area. Neutral buildings, make no contribution (neither positive or negative) to the area's special



**The Folk of Gloucester (99-103 Westgate Street). Photo: GCC**

interest; they can however, in some cases, help to enable an appreciation of a heritage asset. (This will be discussed later in this appraisal, in relation to the recent Friars Orchard Scheme.)

A full list of the buildings within the City Centre Conservation Area, identifying the contribution that they make can be found on page X, whilst access to the full range of listed buildings in Gloucester's City Centre Conservation Area can be found on: [Search the List: Map Search | Historic England](#)

## Listed Buildings

These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from Gloucester City Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out.

The City Centre Conservation Area contains 139 listed buildings, the highest proportion, 79, being found in or around Westgate Street, with 41 in or around Southgate Street. The rest of the conservation area accounts for just 19 entries. The high quality of these buildings means that within the conservation area are 23 grade I or II\* listed buildings (or entries) including Blackfriars and Greyfriars which are listed grade I as well as being scheduled monuments. Some of the highest graded listed buildings within the Gate Streets include:

26 Westgate Street (Grade I) Dating back to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, this refronted former merchants house is notable for the quality of its surviving historic fabric in particular its leaded glass. Its elaborate multi jettied façade can be viewed in Maverdine Lane

The Fleece, 19 Westgate Street (Grade I) 15<sup>th</sup> century timber frame pilgrims' inn with surviving 12<sup>th</sup> century undercroft. Its 19<sup>th</sup> century timber frame façade faces onto Westgate Street

5-11 College Street (Grade II\*) 15<sup>th</sup> range of dwellings or shops and dwellings. Substantially altered in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>



**St Nicholas's Church, Westgate Street. Photo: GCC.**





**The New Inn, Northgate Street.**  
Photo: Peter Broster (CC BY 2.0).

century and altered/restored in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Dick Wittington, 100 Westgate Street (Grade I) Late 15<sup>th</sup> Century merchants house, with an 18<sup>th</sup> century frontage of high architectural quality.

## Landmark buildings

Landmarks are buildings or structures that due to their height, location or detailed design stand out from their background. They contribute to the character and townscape of the area and provide navigation or focal points or key elements in views. Some of these buildings are important architecturally of historically, whereas others may be of

community value, and they may be listed or unlisted. Landmark buildings in the Gate Streets character area include:

### *Westgate Street*

St Nicholas Church (Grade I) Historic church dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century which marks the north-western edge of the conservation area and now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust

Bishop Hooper's House/The Folk, 99-101 Westgate Street (Grade II\*) Mid 16<sup>th</sup> century traditional timber frame building retaining considerable original fabric

Shire Hall Complex (Grade II) Early 19<sup>th</sup> century magistrates court designed by Sir Robert Smirke with substantial additions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A substantial and dominant building on the lower end of Westgate Street

58 Westgate Street and 2-8 College Street (Grade II) Late 19<sup>th</sup> century range of shops and offices by FW Waller. Its decorative details and prominent position ensure its contribution to the Westgate streetscene.

### *Eastgate Street*

Lloyds Bank, 19 Eastgate Street (Grade II) Northern Renaissance style late 19<sup>th</sup> century building has a red brick and granite ashlar façade with terracotta details. It was



**The Church of St Mary de Crypt, Southgate Street.**  
Photo: GCC.

designed by FW Waller.

### *Northgate Street*

The New Inn (Grade I) Nationally important and substantially intact high quality timber

frame 15<sup>th</sup> century galleried inn

St John the Baptist Church (Grade II\*) Historic church dating back to the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century with many significant phases of alteration and change.

The former Debenhams store (unlisted) – Substantial high quality example of 1930s architecture with art deco decoration.

#### *Southgate Street*

St Michael's Tower (Grade II\*) The tower of the former 15<sup>th</sup> century Church of St Michaels stands at the Cross, the highest point in Gloucester City. As well as acting as a focal point, St Michaels Tower provides key views across the City.

St Mary De Crypt (Grade I) Historic church first recorded in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It's attached church yard is an important green space within the City Centre Conservation Area as well as contributing to the setting of Greyfriars.

Blackfriars (Grade I, Scheduled) Founded around 1239, Blackfriars is one of the most complete surviving Dominican 'black' friaries in England (so called due to the colour of their robes). This group of buildings retains is of considerable importance, for its relative completeness and the survival of its scriptorium, one of the country's oldest surviving library buildings.



**Historic shopfront at 19 Westgate Street.**  
**Photo: GCC.**

9 Southgate Street (Grade I) Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century building constructed for Thomas Yate, an alderman and apothecary of Gloucester and is of note for the outstanding architectural quality of its carved and panelled timber façade, which would have once been painted in an orange russet colour.

A map showing the City Centre Conservation

Area's landmark buildings can be found on page X.

#### **Positive buildings: Unlisted buildings of merit/NDHAs**

There are a number of buildings within the City Centre Conservation Area that are not listed, and which do not perhaps have the prominence or presence to be identified as 'landmarks', but still make a positive contribution to the streetscape and its' richness. Positive buildings within the Gate Streets include:

25-27 Westgate Street, late 19<sup>th</sup> century shops and dwellings with stone dormers above

1-3 Northgate Street, early 20<sup>th</sup> century ashlar faced bank

32-34 Southgate Street, Victorian recreation of a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber frame building

71-73 Southgate Street, Gloucestershire Furniture Exhibition Centre, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century building by A.W. Probyn with a large first floor display window.

#### **Neutral and negative buildings**

Neutral buildings within the Gate Streets include 4-6 Southgate Street (neutral) and 11-25 Southgate Street (negative).

#### **Historic shopfronts**





**Sixteenth-century timber framing (right) and nineteenth-century brick façade (left) at 39-41 Westgate Street—both Grade II listed buildings. Photo: GCC.**

As one of Gloucester's main retail centres, shopfronts make an important contribution to the character of the area, with shopfronts on the ground floor of many buildings within the Gate Streets. Unfortunately, though, whilst there may be many shopfronts, historic ones are relatively rare, with those that do survive, and which retain historic fabric, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With so few of these surviving, those that do are of considerable importance and should be conserved; partial areas of fabric should also be considered valuable and reinstating lost elements should be encouraged. It is also worth noting that further historic fabric may be hidden by large fascias or over-faced with contemporary materials, and that care should be taken when dealing with such sites.

The following historic shopfronts have been identified -

- 5 Southgate Street
- 28 Southgate Street
- 45-47 Southgate Street
- 76 Southgate Street
- 80 Southgate Street
- 82-84 Southgate Street
- 13 Westgate Street
- 19 Westgate Street



**58 Westgate Street/2-8 College Street. Photo: GCC.**

- 52 Westgate Street
- 64 Westgate Street
- 66 Westgate Street
- 100 Westgate Street

### **Architecture and materials**

The diversity of buildings within the Gate Streets, in terms of their age, period of development, function and style inevitably leads to a wide range of architectural features, methods of construction and building materials.

Perhaps the most diverse street, Westgate



**The former Bon Marche/Debenhams building, Northgate Street. Photo: GCC.**

Street, includes timber frame buildings, some of which, for example The Folk and 66 Westgate Street are jettied, whilst others, for example the Dick Whittington Public House and 26 Westgate Street, have been historically refronted and now have facades of brick or render respectively. Other examples of timber framing can be found on Southgate Street, in the form of the Robert Raikes Public House, and on Northgate Street, with the New Inn, an historic medieval coaching inn.

The building styles of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century are also represented within the Gate

Streets. With facades of brick and render, these buildings often have pitched slate roofs, many of which sit behind parapets. These buildings include features such as sliding sash windows, pediments, keystones, string courses and cornices. Gloucester's Shire Hall however, the core of which was constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, is ashlar faced. The principal elevation of this substantial structure is dominated by a giant inverted Ionic portico, whilst the later wings are rusticated at ground floor levels and have rooftop balustrading.

Later 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings are also evident within the Gate Streets, with the domestic revival style 58 Westgate Street/2-8 College Street being a prominent example. With its gabled dormers, upper floor timber framing, decorative barge boards and mullioned windows, this striking building is identified as a landmark within the conservation area.

There are a number of ecclesiastical buildings within this character area, including the 13<sup>th</sup> century Blackfriars and the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Mary de Crypt. These iconic stone buildings contain such external features as tracery, buttresses, stone mullion windows with hood mouldings and stained glass and provide enrichment to this historic part of Gloucester.

Whilst the church buildings are generally earlier, the more recent past is also visible



**Boundary railings at Blackfriars. Photo: GCC.**

within the Gate Streets, with considerable 20<sup>th</sup> century development evident. Whilst some of these buildings, for example the former Debenhams Store which fronts onto Northgate Street, is undoubtedly a positive building with its dressed stone facades and art deco





**Historic boundary wall at Blackfriars.**  
**Photo: GCC**

detailing, many of the others are less successful, for example 2-4 Northgate Street and 1-3 Eastgate. Often brutalist inspired, these bland heavy buildings, with their lack of details and extensive use of concrete, are out of place in this sensitive historic setting.

### **Boundary treatments**

The densely packed nature of the built form on the Gate Streets, and the way many of the buildings face directly onto the street means visible boundary treatments in this character area are relatively limited. Some that can be seen from the public domain, and which

make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area include the railings and plinth that surround St Mary de Crypt. Blackfriars also retains a range of historic boundary treatments which includes walls of historic stone and brick, as well as the railings and plinth that front the Georgian terrace that are attached to this historic site.

### **3.1.4 CONDITION AND THREATS**

Whilst the Gate Streets contain some of the most important elements within the conservation area, their condition, both in terms of the built environment and the public realm, gives cause for concern, with many buildings in a poor and deteriorating condition, a proliferation of inappropriate signage, as well poorly maintained and outdated street surfaces and furniture. Whilst the current HSHAZ scheme has provided some funding to assist owners of buildings in Westgate Street to repair and restore their buildings, and to enable the conversion of upper floors to residential use, many buildings remain within the Gate Streets that are in need of repair and maintenance. The number of vacant premises in this character area, especially at ground floor level, exacerbates this concern.

A summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regards to the Gate Streets, is provided below.

## The Gate Streets Character Area

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Historic Street Layout – Roman, Saxon, Medieval and later</p> <p>Outstanding range of historic buildings, from the 12<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> centuries</p> <p>High number of ecclesiastical buildings</p>	<p>Poor quality and unsympathetically over scaled late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings</p> <p>Excessive and sometimes poor-quality street furniture (some of which is defunct)</p> <p>Lack of/poor quality highway maintenance</p> <p>Buildings at Risk/ buildings in a poor state of repair</p> <p>Street level car parks (Ladybellegate Street)</p> <p>Lack of interpretation of historic environment</p>	<p>Ensure high quality new development that is sensitive to the historic city centre</p> <p>Strengthen pedestrian links between the Docks and the Cathedral</p> <p>Reduce unauthorised and inappropriate advertising and fascia signage</p> <p>Increase awareness and protection of non-designated heritage assets</p> <p>To improve public awareness of the city's history and its heritage assets through improved interpretation</p>	<p>Insensitive development (within the character area or its setting)</p> <p>Increasing number of vacant premises – shops and upper floors</p> <p>Lack of maintenance (built environment)</p> <p>Erosion of historic features/use of inappropriate materials</p> <p>Inappropriate and unauthorised signage</p> <p>Ongoing insufficient maintenance and renewal of the public realm</p>



## 3.2 Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate

The 'Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate' Character Area has undergone significant change since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Once dominated by the Brunswick Road campus of the Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, the buildings on this site, including the 'positive' late 1930s purpose built technical college, as well as the college's less successful later elements have in the last



**The cast bronze doors of the now demolished Technical College, preserved as part of the Friars Orchard development. Photo: GCC.**

decade been demolished and replaced with the 'Friars Orchard' scheme, a predominantly residential development.

Despite this level of development, this character area remains one for which further ambitious regeneration plans have been put forward with a scheme that involves the Eastgate Shopping Centre and Market Hall and well as Greyfriars itself. When it proceeds it will provide Gloucester with a new cultural centre, one which will provide the city with entertainment and performance space, hospitality options and an urban park.

Today though, the Brunswick Road Character Area is one of contrasts; it is a mix of old and new and encompasses evidence of built form from the earliest times, for example the remains of the footings of the Roman 'East Gate' on the corner of Brunswick Road and Eastgate Street, up until the more recent 21<sup>st</sup> century residential Friars Orchard development. In between are medieval remains, in the form of Greyfriars Church, as well as buildings from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition, whilst there are areas of activity and energy for example, the modern shopping centre, a large proportion of this character is a place of relative tranquillity, which although used as a thoroughfare, feels far away from the hustle and bustle of Gloucester's retail centre. The green spaces within this character area,



**The Friars Orchard development defines much of the Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate Character Area. Photo: GCC.**

which can feel unexpected and even at times secluded, contribute to this feeling of calm.

### 3.2.1 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

#### Layout and plan form

There are a number of factors contributing to the layout of this character area. Much of the land is now defined by the Friars Orchard development, completed in 21<sup>st</sup> century, but there are other areas where parts of the historic development of this site are still evident. The streets around Priory Place and the Quakers Meeting House shows the remains



**The Museum of Gloucester, Brunswick Road.**  
**Photo: Simon Burchell (CC BY-SA 4.0).**

early 19<sup>th</sup> century development, whilst Greyfriars and its associated spaces give an indication of the layout of the area at an earlier time. Mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century development, in the form of the Eastgate Shopping Centre, has its origins in the 'Jellicoe Plan', a comprehensive, but now much criticised scheme, which informed major development in central Gloucester in the 1960s and 1970s.

## Land uses

The predominant land uses in this character area are residential and retail, however there are also other elements including community uses (Museum of Gloucester and the Public

Library), and religious (Quakers Meeting House). In addition, commercial units have been made available on the ground floors of some of the Friars Orchard blocks; this option appears to have had only limited uptake, something that subdues the atmosphere in this area.

## Building density, scale and proportions:

Whilst the Eastgate Shopping Centre is a substantial, intensely developed site, this intensity and size is not reflected in the pattern of development of the rest of the character area. There may be small areas of relative density, for example in the terraces in this character area (both historic and modern), however space remains between the small clusters of buildings such as between Priory Place and Greyfriars House and Church, and between the elements of the new development, for example between the Friars Orchards blocks and terraces. In addition, whilst a substantial number of new dwellings were created as a result of the recent scheme, the feeling within this character area is not one of over intensification, surprisingly an impression of space remains.

The scale and proportion of the buildings within this character area also varies, and whilst the design and substantial massing of the Eastgate Shopping Centre may detract



**Greyfriars House. Photo: GCC.**

from this part of the conservation area and have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed buildings in this locality, recent development has been more considered. With its sensitive scale and use of materials, its pared down design, modest storey height and careful spacing, Friars Orchard enables an appreciation of the historic environment in which it was placed; the removal of cars from much of this area, though 'under garden' parking, contributes to the success of this scheme.

Whilst a few of the historic buildings in this character area have a modest plot, others for example the Public Library, Museum of Gloucester and Winston Hall, have a larger footprint and are of a more generous size.



## Views and buildings in Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate



St Mary de Crypt and Addison's Folly. Photo: GCC.



The Museum and Library from the North. Photo: GCC.



The Malvern Hills from Eastgate carpark. Photo: GCC.



Friars Orchard towards Brunswick Road. Photo: GCC.



Greyfriars from Friars Orchard. Photo: GCC.



Greyfriars House from Greyfriars. Photo: GCC.



These buildings are predominantly 2-3 storeys, but the increased height of the storeys, their proportions, and in some case their embellishments, gives them a stature and presence, which adds considerably to the character of the conservation area.

### **Alleyways and backstreets**

The historic back street Greyfriars, can be found in this character area.

### **Views**

There are panoramic views from the top of the Eastgate shopping centre carpark however, because of the developed nature and topography of this part of the conservation area, the remaining views are shorter and more local though still of considerable importance. These include the historic view (looking west) from Brunswick Road along Greyfriars, and a newly created one, along Friars Orchard, again from Brunswick Road looking west. There are also a number of enclosed and terminated views in the open space immediately to the south of Greyfriars House and Church. Partially enclosed by historic buildings, and recently landscaped, this space, and the views within it, contribute to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. There are also views from the west of Greyfriars House, to the rear of St Mary de Crypt.

## **3.2.2 STREETScape CHARACTER**

### **Open space**

There are a number of open spaces in this character area, including ones that have either been created or enhanced by the recent Friars Orchard development, for example the area facing on to Brunswick Road. Others such as the 'Bowling Green', to the rear of the public library, and the Greyfriars burial ground are more historic. The green nature of these spaces, and the trees throughout this character area, (including a number that have recently been planted) bring a contrast and a freshness, to this city centre location.

### **Public realm**

The public realm in this character area is dominated by the Friars Orchard scheme, which introduced new street surfaces, street furniture/street art and planting. However, whilst this scheme is beginning to settle in, and whilst much of this area appears well cared for, regular maintenance will be needed to ensure that it remains in its current condition. In addition, interpretation for the street art within this area also needs consideration, as at present it lacks context and meaning.

Some historic surface treatments remain



**The Via Sacra in the historic backstreet Greyfriars.**  
**Photo: GCC.**

within this character area, in particular to the front of Greyfriars House, whilst the route of the Via Sacra is clearly evident in this character area, with its cruciform pattern inset into the footpath along Greyfriars.

Street art is limited, confined to the 'wall'





Winston Hall, Constitution Walk (Grade II\* listed).  
Photo: GCC.

along Brunswick Road and the 'coffin' benches next to Greyfriars. Unfortunately no interpretation is provided to support these artworks, and they appear lost and without meaning.

### 3.2.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The architectural character of this part of the conservation area is varied, with many neutral buildings and a substantial negative building. Scattered amongst this are a number of listed buildings. These buildings are of importance in their own right, but they also contribute to an understanding of Gloucester's history, and provide a visual enhancement within the

street scene.

#### Listed Buildings

The Listed Buildings within the Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate Character Area include:

Winston House (Grade II\*) Substantial brick built mid-18<sup>th</sup> century house with intact boundary treatments.

Museum of Gloucester, Brunswick Road (Grade II) Late 19<sup>th</sup> century building (originally a lecture hall) by FS Waller, adjacent to the

Public Library, Brunswick Road (Grade II) Originally designed by Fulljames, Waller and Son to a 13<sup>th</sup> Century Gothic design, and extended around 1900.

Addison's Folly (Grade II) The surviving portion of a former house on the south side of the former Bell Lane, which includes masonry that is probably medieval and from demolished parts of Greyfriars.

#### Landmark buildings

Greyfriars House and Church (Grade I) Early 19<sup>th</sup> century classically style town house and the adjoining remains of the nave and north aisle of the church of the former Franciscan Friary. Also a scheduled monument.

Re-sited (Grade II) market hall entrance built



Addison's Folly (Grade II listed) with the Eastgate Shopping Centre visible behind. Photo: GCC.

to designs by Medland and Mowbray in 1865

#### Positive buildings: Unlisted buildings of merit/NDHAs

There are no unlisted buildings of merit in the Brunswick Road and Greyfriars Character Area.

#### Neutral and negative Buildings

There are a number of neutral buildings in this character area, in particular those that make up the Friars Orchard development. However, whilst these buildings may be termed as



**Victorian gothic details on the Public Library, Brunswick Road. Photo: GCC.**

neutral, their neutrality enables an appreciation of the historic environment in which they are located. The Eastgate Shopping Centre is a negative building.

### **Historic shopfronts**

There are no historic shopfronts in this character area.

### **Architecture and materials**

Although the number of historic buildings in

this character area may be limited, a number of styles, features and materials are still represented. The cluster of historic buildings around Greyfriars (with the exception of the church itself) date back to the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and contain features consistent with that period including sliding sash windows, fan lights, cornice and parapets, and to Greyfriars House, a portico and pediment. These buildings are constructed of brick, brick and stucco or stone, whilst roofing materials are predominantly slate.

The later 19<sup>th</sup> century is represented on Brunswick Road in the form of the public library and museum. Built in a Victorian 13<sup>th</sup> century Gothic style, the public library is an ornate building with a range of decorative features including its red tile roof laid interspersed with decorative courses and patterns, its squared rock-faced coursed rubble stonework, its arched canopies and its foliated capitals. In contrast is the City Museum and Art Gallery. Another Victorian interpretation of an earlier period, this time an eclectic early Renaissance style, the building includes within it features such as copper cupolas, an ashlar fronted dormer and an entrance with a shell hood with scalloped edges.

Winston House, located on Bell Lane, however is much earlier (mid 18<sup>th</sup> century),



**The ruins of Greyfriars, a scheduled monument. Photo: GCC.**

and its multi-pane sash windows, with exposed sash boxes reflect this. It also has a Palladian (Venetian) window. The front elevation contains an Ionic stone door surround, whilst facades are brick with stone detailing.

Although now a ruin, the remains of Greyfriars retain a number of architectural features. Though now predominantly blocked in, the arched openings between the nave and the north aisle are still clearly visible, as are elements of some of the building's tracery. In addition, though much of this historic site has been lost, it remains a haunting and evocative place, one that defines the character of this part of the conservation area.





**Eastgate Market Hall, part of the Eastgate Shopping Centre. Photo: GCC.**

The modern buildings in this area are predominantly brick, though the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Eastgate Market Hall has ribbed granite aggregate panels which alternate with angled steel mullioned window; to top it are concrete rainwater chutes, in a style reminiscent of the modernist architect Le Corbusier. Opinions of this striking building are mixed.

### **Boundary treatments**

The street facing nature of the Friars Orchard blocks, and the back-to-back character of the terraces, limits the extent of the boundary treatments in the development. Where they do exist, they are in keeping with the development and include red brick walls, close boarded fencing, and, on the Brunswick

Road part of the scheme, railings in red brick plinths. Red brick can be found in other parts of the character area, including alongside the bowling green, to the rear gardens on Priory Place. Unfortunately, the modern boundary treatments to the front of this terrace lack a sense of continuity, as whilst brick, they differ in colour.

Whilst the elevations of Winston House are brick, the boundary treatment is not, with ironwork railings set into dressed stone plinths enclosing the front of the property. Whilst this boundary treatment reflects the historic high status of this building, it is now somewhat overwhelmed by the massing and unsympathetic design of the Eastgate shopping centre, to which it is adjacent.

### **3.2.4 CONDITION AND THREATS**

Overall, the condition of this character area is good. Whilst some of the historic buildings in this part of conservation area would benefit from improved maintenance, the introduction of the Friars Orchard scheme, and the public realm improvements made as a part of this, had brought about positive change.



**Boundary treatments in the Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate Character Area. Photos; GCC.**

## Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate Character Area

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Range of historic buildings, including the outstanding Greyfriars</p> <p>Important below grounds remains</p>	<p>Poor quality and unsympathetically over scaled late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings (which impacts on setting of listed buildings)</p> <p>Lack of interpretation of street art</p>	<p>Ensure high quality new development that is sensitive to the historic city centre</p> <p>Increase awareness and protection of non-designated heritage assets</p> <p>To improve public awareness of the city's history and its heritage assets through improved interpretation</p>	<p>Insensitive development (within the character area or its setting)</p> <p>Lack of maintenance (built environment)</p> <p>Erosion of historic features/use of inappropriate materials</p>



### 3.3 Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street

The Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street Character Area focuses on a collection of historic streets immediately to the south of Westgate Street. Whilst not perhaps one of central Gloucester's primary routes, Longsmith Street, which descends through Bearland and Quay Street towards the River Severn, and its off shoots provide evidence of the layout of historic Gloucester dating back to the medieval period. Longsmith Street runs parallel to Westgate Street to which it connects through a number of side streets and alleyways.

Within this streetscape are a number of impressive and significant historic buildings, for example the grade I listed Ladybellegate House, a substantial early 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouse, and Gloucester's Crown Court, constructed in the early 1800s as the assize, quarter session and county court. Whilst the style of this latter building may be severe classical and restrained, the use of high quality ashlar in its construction gives an indication of the status of this important building. Ladybellegate House, and the row of late 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouses which line part of Berkeley Street, provide evidence of residential development at that time. Further evidence of 18<sup>th</sup> century development can be



Historic buildings on Bearland. Photo: GCC.

found on the southern side of Longsmith Street, in the form of Bearland House and Bearland Lodge. Whilst these attractive buildings are not currently within the City Centre Conservation Area, they make a positive contribution to its setting.

Unfortunately, the Longsmith Street locality also contains some of Gloucester's less successful examples of modern development, with the 1960s multistorey carpark and the early 1970s extension to the

telephone exchange, overshadowing and detracting from the historic buildings within this area. In addition, whilst attempts have been made to improve the appearance of some of these buildings, for example by recladding the immense 1960s extension to Shire Hall, these structures remain a negative feature within this character area.

The street level car park, which runs along the eastern side of Ladybellegate Street, whilst it creates a feeling of openness, does little to enhance the character of the area. It is also considered to be detrimental to the setting of Blackfriars Priory. The continuous flow of road traffic in this area, something that is encouraged by the availability of car parking, is also a negative feature, though the recent development of the car parking site to the west of Ladybellegate Street to provide student accommodation, has provided a more structured setting to the conservation area.

#### 3.3.1 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

##### Layout and plan form

The layout of this character area is defined by the historic development of Gloucester, in particular the layout of the medieval city, which includes a number of alleyways and side streets. However, whilst the street layout may remain relatively unaltered the buildings



Historic buildings on Bearland. Photo: GCC.

and spaces that line these streets have undergone substantial change over the centuries, and relatively few historic structures remain above ground today; much of this area is taken up by immense later 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings such as the extension to Shire Hall, which bridges Bearlands and cuts this character area in two. There is no sense of continuity or connection between the majority of the buildings in this character area and little evidence of a common building line; the grain of development, in contrast to the adjacent

Westgate Street, is less constrained.

### Land uses

Once the home to Gloucester's important iron smith industry, the land uses along Longsmith Street, Ladybellegate Street and Quay Street are today varied. Whilst car parking accounts for some of the land use, civic and administrative services are also represented. There is also a limited amount of residential accommodation in this character area, but no retail.

### Building density, scale and proportions

There is a marked contrast in the scale and proportions of the historic buildings and the buildings of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century within this character area. Whilst the historic buildings, for example, Ladybellegate House, Gloucester Court and the 18<sup>th</sup> century houses along Berkeley Street may have been buildings of status, stature and size at the time of their construction, today they appear modest and are overshadowed by the vast modern structures next to which they are located. The historic buildings are generally between two and three storeys in height, and up to seven bays wide.

The late 20<sup>th</sup> century structures, in particular the early 1970s extension to the telephone exchange and the 1960s addition to Shire



Gloucester Crown Court. Photo: GCC.

Hall are immense, with extensive footprints, many storeys and tall storey heights. The proportions of these colossal buildings, their massing and form, give an impression of density to this character area, although there is space between many of the buildings within this part of the city.

### Alleyways and backstreets

This character area contains a number of alleyways and backstreets, some of which are



## Views and buildings in Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street



Cross Keys Lane. Photo: GCC.



Looking north-west on Bearland. Photo: GCC.



Berkeley Street. Photo: GCC.



Looking north from Longsmith St carpark. Photo: GCC.



Bull Lane. Photo: GCC.



Looking south from Longsmith St carpark. Photo: GCC.





**Berkeley Street.** Photo: GCC.

medieval in origin and which link to Westgate Street. These include:

- Bull Lane
- Cross Keys Lane
- Berkeley Street

## Views

Whilst the Shire Hall 'bridge' blocks views down Longsmith Street towards Bearland, there remain a number of significant views within this character area. Some of these can be found from the top on the Longsmith Street Car Park, which enable a range of far

reaching views across the centre of Gloucester including ones towards the Docks, towards the Cathedral and others that provide an unusual, but interesting picture of the backs of many of Gloucester's historic buildings.

At ground floor level views are more limited in their scope, though still attractive and appealing. They include the view looking north along Ladybellegate Street which terminates at Ladybellegate House and enclosed views into Bull Lane and Cross Keys Lane. Berkeley Streets has views of particular importance, including towards the south which terminates at Bearland House, whilst the other looking north, which provides glimpses of Gloucester Cathedral.

## 3.3.2 STREETSCAPE CHARACTER

### Open space

The prevalence of street level parking on and around Longsmith Street, and the road layout around Quay Street, give a feeling of openness in this city centre area. However, whilst this may be the case, these car parks, some of which are poorly maintained and have irregular boundary treatments, make little aesthetic contribution to the conservation area and detract from its historic character. Rather than providing a sensitive setting for the heritage assets in this



**Multi-storey and surface car parks on Longsmith Street.** Photo: GCC.

character area, these spaces identify it as a place of transition, for people to leave their cars and go. They do little to encourage appreciation of one of Gloucester's more historic areas.

Public open spaces, for example, the areas around the entrances to Berkeley Street and Bull Lane, whilst small, are more positive. With their established street trees, and the provision of seating around Berkeley Street, these small spaces encourage people to linger; they also enhance the setting of the nearby listed buildings within this historic area.



The gardens to the front of Ladybellegate House and Bearland House, whilst modest and not within the public domain also make a positive contribution to this character area. Their boundary treatments, in the form of traditional ironwork railings, not only contribute to the historic interest of this area, they also enable views of these important buildings.

### Public realm

*Surfaces, Street Furniture and Street Art.*

Whilst there is evidence of traditional street surfaces on Berkeley Street modern surfacing treatments are more prevalent within this character area, with tarmac being used on both pavements and roads, and substantial areas using modern paving slabs. Unfortunately, there is also evidence of a lack of maintenance, and poor repairs.

The Via Sacra runs through this character area.

Other than bollards, parking meters and signboards, street furniture is limited in this area, with only a scattering of benches around the entrance to Berkeley Street. There is also no street art. The lack of enhancement to this area, further reinforces the transitory nature of this area.

## 3.3.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER



Ladybellegate House. Photo: GCC.

### Listed Buildings

The Listed Buildings within the Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street Character Area include:

Ladybellegate House, 20 Longsmith Street (Grade I) Early 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouse constructed in 1704 for by Henry Wagstaffe

Cider House, 2 Quay Street (Grade II) Utilitarian building with a complex history and various uses including a coach house, warehouse and a slaughterhouse.

20 Berkeley Street (Grade II) Late 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouse constructed of brick with stone

and rendered details.

### Landmark buildings

There are no Landmark Buildings within this character area.

### Positive buildings- Unlisted buildings of merit/NDHAs

The Telephone Exchange, Berkeley Street, Neo-Georgian late 1930s building constructed of brick with an ashlar ground floor.

### Neutral and Negative Buildings

Negative buildings in this character area include Longsmith Street carpark, the extension to the Telephone Exchange and the extension to Shire Hall.

### Historic shopfronts

There are no historic shopfronts in this character area.

### Architecture and materials

The majority of the historic buildings within this character area are 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as such show various details associated with the Georgian/Regency period for example multi pane sliding sash windows, pedimented door surrounds, fanlights and parapeted roofs. Buildings are predominantly brick, sometimes



The Shire Hall extension. Photo: GCC.

with stucco detailing, though there are examples of render and ashlar, with slate and tiles being used on the roofs.

The late 20<sup>th</sup> century developments within this character area, in particular the extension to the telephone exchange, contain a number of traits consistent with Brutalist architecture, for example the extensive use of concrete, massive forms and heavy looking materials. Attempts have been made in recent years to

improve the appearance of some of these structures, for example by recladding the Shire Hall extension and introducing new fenestration, however these alterations do little to ameliorate the negative impact of this massive structure. Materials used in these modern buildings include brick, concrete, decorative cladding and aluminium windows.

### Boundary treatments

Unfortunately, many of the boundary treatments in this part of the conservation area make little positive contribution to the character and appearance of this historic space. The boundaries to the ground level car parks on Ladybellegate Street, which are enclosed by a combination of modern and older brick walls, are in need of maintenance and repair, whilst the use of modern timber fencing, to the southern end of the carpark appears an incongruous insertion. The masonry walls to the rear of the Longsmith Street car park, also need maintenance works. In contrast to these are the boundary treatments to Ladybellegate House and Bearland House. Whilst the latter building may be part of the setting of this conservation area rather than within it, the retained historic railings set in stone that front both these houses, are attractive elements



The Telephone Exchange extension.  
Photo: GCC

that enhance this location.

### 3.3.4 CONDITION AND THREATS

There are concerns with the condition of this character area, in terms of its built form, its public realm and its open spaces. Whilst the multi storey and street level car parks may be viewed as regeneration opportunities, they are currently in a poor condition, a factor which detracts from the conservation area. Street surfaces also require appropriate maintenance and repair, as do some of the historic buildings within this area. There is considerable scope for improvement.



## Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street Character Area

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Historic Street Layout –Medieval and later</p> <p>Range of high-quality historic buildings</p>	<p>Poor quality and unsympathetically over scaled late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings</p> <p>Lack of/poor quality highway maintenance</p> <p>Buildings at Risk/ buildings in a poor state of repair</p> <p>Street level car parks (Ladybellegate Street)</p>	<p>Ensure high quality new development that is sensitive to the historic city centre</p> <p>Redevelopment of Longsmith Street Car Park and car parks along Ladybellegate Street.</p> <p>Increase awareness and protection of non-designated heritage assets</p> <p>Strengthen pedestrian links between the Docks and the Cathedral</p>	<p>Insensitive development (within the character area or its setting)</p> <p>Ongoing insufficient maintenance of the built environment</p> <p>Ongoing insufficient maintenance and renewal of the public realm</p>



King's Square. Photo: GCC.

### 3.4 King's Square and King's Walk

Historically the site of much earlier development, today the King's Square and King's Walk Character Area is characterised by a large open public space and the architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst the majority of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings in this area are well designed and use high quality materials, later change has been less successful. For example the contrast between the Post Office, which has been extant since 1934 and has classical detailing and a Portland stone façade and the 1970s King's Walk Shopping Centre, a substantial structure which lacks architectural merit and high quality materials is marked; the latter building

makes a negative contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Despite its weaknesses, within King's Walk is access to a significant part of Gloucester's past, with the entrance to the 'King's Walk Bastion', part of the Roman city wall, being located in the shopping centre. Whilst a modest access point within a large retail centre, it is an indication of the extensive Roman remains that continue to exist beneath Gloucester's city centre.

Whilst it is the rear, weaker and rather bland elevation of the former Debenhams that overlooks King's Square, the immense size and overwhelming presence of this building make it one of the defining features of this part of the conservation area. Works are currently ongoing on this site, with enhancements to this substantial building proposed.

The exception to this 20<sup>th</sup> century domination is the northern side of St Aldate's Street, where a row of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings remains; these buildings follow the line of part of Gloucester's Roman wall, and part of the route of the Via Sacra.

The King's Square and King's Walk Character Area and its setting are also areas where considerable change has happened in recent years and is currently ongoing. Under the heading of the King's Quarter, projects



The Post Office, Oxboe. Photo: GCC.

have included the renovation of King's Square (complete) and the repurposing of the former Debenhams site (ongoing). On the edge of the conservation area, the Forum, a scheme which includes substantial residential development, as well as a new four-star hotel, is progressing. A number of 'incubators', aimed at promoting growth in specific areas, have also been located within the King's Quarter. The new developments, as well as the focus on promoting growth, will help to ensure a positive future for the centre of



Gloucester.

### 3.4.1 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

#### Layout and Plan Form

The layout of the space within the King's Square Character Area is predominantly defined by early 20<sup>th</sup> century development, in particular the creation of King's Square and The Oxbode which were constructed in the late 1920s, following the slum clearances in that area, as well as the construction of Bon Marche (the former Debenhams store). Although there have been additional changes to the area since that time, which involved further clearances and the pedestrianisation of the Square, the legibility of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century scheme remains.

The open nature of King's Square, and the generous width of The Oxbode, give much of this character area a feeling of space, despite its urban city centre position. This contrasts with St Aldates, which retains a more enclosed feeling, something that has been enabled by the retention of its 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings along its northern side.

#### Land Uses

With the impending arrival of the University of Gloucester and the public library on the former Debenhams site, educational provision



The Regal Cinema (now public house). Photo: GCC

and community use will become a major land use in this area. It will sit alongside the many retail premises that exist on the ground floors of both the Oxbode and St Aldates Street, and within the King's Walk Shopping Centre. Unfortunately, though, at present there are vacant premises, both at ground floor level and on the upper floor levels in these locations, something that subdues the vibrancy of this potentially thriving locality. Hospitality, in the form of the converted former 'Regal' cinema (now a public house) as well as a number of cafes, are also evident.

However, the focal point of this character

area is King's Square itself, a public open space that has recently been the subject of an extensive regeneration scheme. With a design based on the Severn Bore, the Square now includes granite wave shaped seating areas, water fountains and coloured lights. It is now Gloucester's premier outdoor events area.

#### Building Density, Scale and Proportions

In contrast to the open spaces within this character is the density of the buildings. Along the Oxbode and St Aldate's are tightly grained street elevations, and a consistent building line, whilst the King's Walk Shopping Centre contains many units in one substantial mass. Together these provide a sense of enclosure around the open space, something that is helped by the height of the buildings some of which are up to 5 storeys, for example the former Debenhams, and have increased storey heights.

#### Alleyways and Backstreets

There are no historic backstreets or alleyways in this character area.

#### Views

Many of the views within this character are local or linear. They include those facing east and west along the Oxbode, and also along

# Views and buildings in King's Square and King's Walk



Looking east from King's Walk carpark. Photo: GCC.



King's Square. Photo: GCC.



St Aldate Street. Photo: GCC.



North-west view from King's Walk carpark. Photo: GCC.



The Oxbode. Photo: GCC.



North-west view from King's Walk carpark. Photo: GCC.





St Aldates Street. Photo: GCC.

St Aldates. In the latter case, because of the narrowness of St Aldates, and the height of the buildings on either side, these views feel more enclosed; the backdrop of the Cathedral, which is clearly visible when looking west along St Aldates, reminds the observer of one of Gloucester's most important historic sites.

The recent regeneration of King's Square has enabled local views across this space, which are terminated by the buildings that enclose it. Those which terminated by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development, are of higher value than those that end on the later, 1960s – 1970s

scheme.

There are panoramic views from the top of the King's Walk Car Park.

### 3.4.2 STREETScape CHARACTER

#### Open Space

King's Square is the largest public open space, not just in this character area, but in the City Centre Conservation Area as a whole. Created in the late 1920s, it was not until 1972 that King's Square became a public open space. Fifty years later, in 2022, following its regeneration the Square was reopened. Now used to host weekly markets, live music and dance, family days, outdoor cinema and cultural activities, King's Square is promoted as Gloucester's major open air event space, and a destination in itself. The granite 'waves' which loosely enclose the square serve a number of functions, and can be used as seating, a stage set for plays or even for children to climb on; they encourage passers-by to stop and appreciate the space.

Adding to the character of King's Square are a number of mature street trees, as well as planting that has been added as part of the regeneration scheme, though this has yet to establish. Three more mature trees can be found at the western end of the Oxbode,



King's Square. Photo: GCC.

providing an element of green in this built-up area.

There is enclosed space at the rear of the Oxbode, and within the former Debenhams site along St Aldates, which serve as service areas to those buildings.

#### Public Realm

The resurfacing of much of King's Square was part of the recent regeneration scheme with Forest of Dean sandstone used in the form of pavers and setts; high quality traditional materials that enhance this important location. Changes to the Via Sacra, were also made, with the removal of the cruciform pattern from the Square and its replacement with inset medal roundels. Whilst it is intended that these roundels will be used in the future to support the Via Sacra route, it should be



**Via Sacra roundel in King's Square.**  
Photo: GCC.

noted that at present the cruciform pattern remains along St Aldate Street and in the King's Walk Shopping Centre as well as in other parts of the conservation area.

Surface treatments in other parts of this character area are more mixed, and whilst Forest of Dean sandstone is found on the Oxbode, some pavements, as well as the roads, have black tarmac surfaces. St Aldate also has concrete pavers.

The use of the less traditional materials, as well

as a lack of maintenance and poor-quality repairs beyond the Square itself, are all detrimental to the conservation area.

### 3.4.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

#### Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings in the King's Square character area.

#### Landmark Buildings:

The former Debenhams store (unlisted) – Substantial high quality example of 1930s architecture with Art Deco decoration.

#### Positive buildings- Unlisted buildings of merit/NDHAs

The Oxbode - Art Deco terrace above shops

The Post Office, 14 King's Square – Gloucester's first purpose-built head post office, with as striking classical ashlar façade.

The Regal, 33 St Aldate Street - Former cinema dating back to the 1930s and constructed in an Art Deco style. Now a public house.

60 Northgate Street and 1 – 23 St Aldate Street – terrace of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings some of which contain historic shop fronts and others with upper storey shop windows.



**Nem House, Clarence Street. Photo: GCC.**

Nem House, 37-41 Clarence Street, substantial 20<sup>th</sup> century building with stone faced lower floors, brick upper floors and sliding sash windows.

#### Neutral and Negative Buildings:

Negative buildings within this character area include 23a St Aldate Street and the King's Walk Shopping Centre.





Historic shopfront at 21 St Aldate Street.  
Photo: GCC.

## Historic Shopfronts

The following historic shopfronts have been identified -

13 - 23 St Aldate Street

## Architecture and Materials

The simple clean lines, geometric shapes and 'streamlined' look of the Art Deco movement are well represented in this character area, with the Oxode, the Regal and former

Debenhams store all examples of this style. Not only are these buildings well designed and executed, their use of high-quality materials, in particular their dressed stone facade, give them a status and stature above many of the other buildings in this character area.

Another high-quality building, of a similar date but of a different design is the Post Office. Again faced in stone, this building is more classical in its detailing and includes such features as cornices, key stones, pediments and a rusticated ground floor. It is an attractive and visually appealing building.

The quality of the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture within this character area is less exalted, with, sadly, examples of uninspired design and overlarge structures and unsympathetic features. Materials are varied and include brick, concrete and large glazed features.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace that runs along St Aldates is predominantly brick at upper floor level, with some stone detailing. It contains within it an oriel window, a cupola, ghost signage and upper shop floor windows. This terrace makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

## Boundary Treatments

The street facing nature of the buildings



The Oxode. Photo: GCC.

within this character means there are limited boundary treatments that are visible.

## 3.4.4 CONDITION AND THREATS

Where there has recently been substantial investment within King's Square, and there continues to be with the regeneration of the former Debenhams site, there remain areas where there are weaknesses and threats within this character area. The lack of maintenance of the public realm and the poor-quality repairs beyond King's Square itself, are disappointing and detract from

## King's Square and King's Walk Character Area

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>High quality early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture</p> <p>Important below grounds remains</p>	<p>Poor quality and unsympathetically over scaled late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings</p> <p>Lack of/poor quality highway maintenance in places (the notable exception being King's Square)</p> <p>Buildings at Risk/ buildings in a poor state of repair</p>	<p>Ensure high quality new development that is sensitive to the historic city centre</p> <p>Reduce unauthorised and inappropriate advertising</p> <p>Increase awareness and protection of non-designated heritage assets</p> <p>To improve public awareness of the city's history and its heritage assets through improved interpretation</p>	<p>Insensitive development (within the character area or its setting)</p> <p>Increasing number of vacant premises – shops and upper floors</p> <p>Lack of maintenance (built environment)</p> <p>Erosion of historic features/use of inappropriate materials</p> <p>Inappropriate and unauthorised signage</p> <p>Ongoing insufficient maintenance and renewal of the public realm</p>



## 4. Guidelines and enhancements

The following set of policies are put forward as guidance for the Council in determining planning and listed building consent applications as well as for building owners, tenants, and developers when preparing proposals for change. They are divided into two sections, with the first, the management proposals, identifying the criteria for successful change within the Conservation Area. The second section identifies actions that can enhance this historic area, and which will be encouraged.

A level of consultation was undertaken at the start of the appraisal process in 2021, prior to the formulation of these policies, and a further consultation on them in the autumn of 2023 will also be carried out.

The principal aim of the following policies is the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, which will be brought about through the sensitive conservation of its historic elements, combined with positive change and regeneration where required. There is a presumption against demolition, except where buildings have been identified as having a negative impact on the Conservation Area and the viability of regeneration has been ruled out.

### 4.1 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS:

#### 4.1.1 Development Proposals:

**Aim:** Development proposals will preserve or enhance the City Centre Conservation Area's character and appearance and conform to local policies as outlined in section D1 of the Gloucester City Plan. This requirement applies equally to developments which are outside the Conservation Area but would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

**Policy:** Development will respect the scale, design, proportions, grain, and materials of the surrounding architectural vernacular. Detailing should be characteristic of the area and retain any historic plot boundaries/historic street layout. Development will be of a high-quality design which reflects its immediate context and sits comfortably with its setting and in important views.

#### 4.1.2 Demolition of Buildings

**Aim:** To ensure the significance of the Conservation Area is preserved and that any future development enhances its existing positive characteristics.

**Policy:** The full or substantial demolition of buildings or structures identified as making a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area (including NDHAs) is harmful to the significance of Conservation

Areas and will be regarded as substantial harm or less than substantial harm according to the circumstances of the case. Demolition of buildings identified in this document as making a neutral contribution to, or detracting from, the Conservation Area's special character will only be supported where there are acceptable plans for the site following demolition.

Proposals which look to adapt existing buildings in some form and support the climate change agenda will be positively received. Demolition is only likely to be permitted for the replacement of buildings identified as 'negative' within this conservation area appraisal.

#### 4.1.3 Boundary Treatments

**Aim:** Development proposals will preserve historic boundaries; new boundary treatments will be harmonious with surviving historic examples.

**Policy:** The removal of historic boundary treatments will be resisted where there is no justifiable reason for their removal. Where new or replacement boundary treatments are required, they should use a local and traditional material palette and be of appropriate scale and design.

#### 4.1.4 Inappropriate Alteration and the Loss of Original Features

Aim: To preserve, repair, restore or reinstate buildings historic features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area

Policy: The loss of architectural features such as the removal of existing chimneys or loss of traditional windows and doors will not be supported. In addition, when undertaking repairs to traditional buildings, appropriate traditional materials and fixtures and fittings should be used, for example lime mortars and renders and cast iron rainwater goods. The use of non-traditional materials/fixtures and fittings, for example cement-based mortars and renders, uPVC windows, and plastic rainwater goods, will not be supported.

The painting or rendering of unpainted brick or stonework will not be supported.

PV and thermal panels, satellite dishes, TV aerials, meter boxes and other modern additions will not be resisted, as long as they do not impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Locating them on the rear elevations or rear roof slopes may be an option.

#### **4.1.5 Shopfronts**

Aims: To conserve, repair or reinstate traditional shopfronts and, where new shopfronts or signage is required, ensure that it is well designed and appropriate to

the host building and the context of the conservation area.

Policy: The loss of historic shopfronts or historic features will be resisted. Proposals for new shopfronts or signage must be in line with the requirements set out within the adopted Gloucester City Council guidance on shopfronts, shutters and signage or GCC Local Plan.

#### **4.1.6 Public Realm**

Aims: To conserve existing historic and high-quality aspects of the public realm. To improve the appearance and quality of the public realm

Policy: The loss of historic elements of the public realm will not be supported. Where alterations to the public realm, or the addition of new elements/replacement items are required, they should respect the traditional materials and character of the Conservation Area and/or comply with the recommendations within the Gloucester Public Realm Strategy (GPRS).

Temporary repairs to hard landscaping which are not in keeping with original materials should be replaced on a like-for-like basis within 6 months of their installation.

Major new developments which require changes to the public realm will need to comply with the GPRS and preserve or

enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

New street and traffic signage should be coordinated to avoid excessive use of new signage, including A-boards, particularly at the entrances to alleyways and back streets.

#### **4.1.7 Review Process**

Aim: To review policies within this document on a regular basis to ensure that they remain relevant to any emerging and adopted policies and the condition of the Conservation Area.

Policy: Gloucester City Council will undertake a 5 year review of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, updating policy as required to ensure the plan remains a useful, relevant working document and reflects the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **4.2 ENHANCEMENTS**

#### **4.2.1 Maintenance**

Aim: To encourage owners to undertake minor works that will improve the condition and appearance of their properties which will have a wider positive impact on the Conservation Area as a whole.

Enhancement Policy: The Council



recommends that regular maintenance is undertaken to retain the value of the attractive traditional features present within the City Centre Conservation Area. A lack of maintenance can lead to decay, deterioration and the need for more complex and expensive repairs. Basic maintenance tasks include:

- The regular clearing of debris in gutters and rainwater pipes
- The pruning of vegetation near to buildings
- The re-fixing of loose roof tiles or slates
- The regular re-painting of timber

For further information on traditional building maintenance please contact [heritage@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:heritage@gloucester.gov.uk)

## 4.2.2 Sustainability/Regeneration

Aim: To offer increased residential opportunities within the city centre through the conversion and reuse of upper floors where appropriate.

Enhancement Policy: The conversion of upper storeys from commercial use to high quality residential will be encouraged where proposals retain an active street frontage, maintain surviving historic details, and where the impact of relevant planning requirements (for example cycle provision and refuse issues) do not have a detrimental impact upon the

character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Retrofitting measures which improve the thermal or energy efficiency of a building will be supported in principle. Proposals which require the loss of original fabric, or which adversely affect the setting or character of an existing building are unlikely to be accepted, however, each proposal should be judged on a case-by-case basis.

## 4.2.3 Public Realm

Aim: To declutter the public realm

Enhancement Policy: To undertake an audit of the street furniture and street art within the conservation area with a view to its rationalisation and improved interpretation. To be repeated on a 5 yearly basis.

## 4.2.4 The Via Sacra

Aim: To update the Via Sacra and improve its condition and interpretation.

Enhancement Policy: To undertake a review the route of the Via Sacra and to update it in accordance with the GPRS.

## 4.2.5 Local List

Aim: To preserve or enhance buildings that contribute positively to the conservation area.

Enhancement Policy: To undertake a yearly review of the local list with particular regard to the City Centre Conservation Area.

Current recommendations for Local Listing within the City Centre Conservation Area include the Regal and the Post Office (King's Square) and 3-5 Westgate Street.

## 4.2.6 Buildings at Risk

Aim: To preserve or enhance buildings that contribute positively to the conservation area.

Enhancement Policy: To undertake a yearly review of the condition of buildings within the City Centre Conservation Area and update the 'at risk' register.

## RELEVANT LINKS

### Policy

[Gloucester City Plan 2011-2031](#)

[Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031](#)

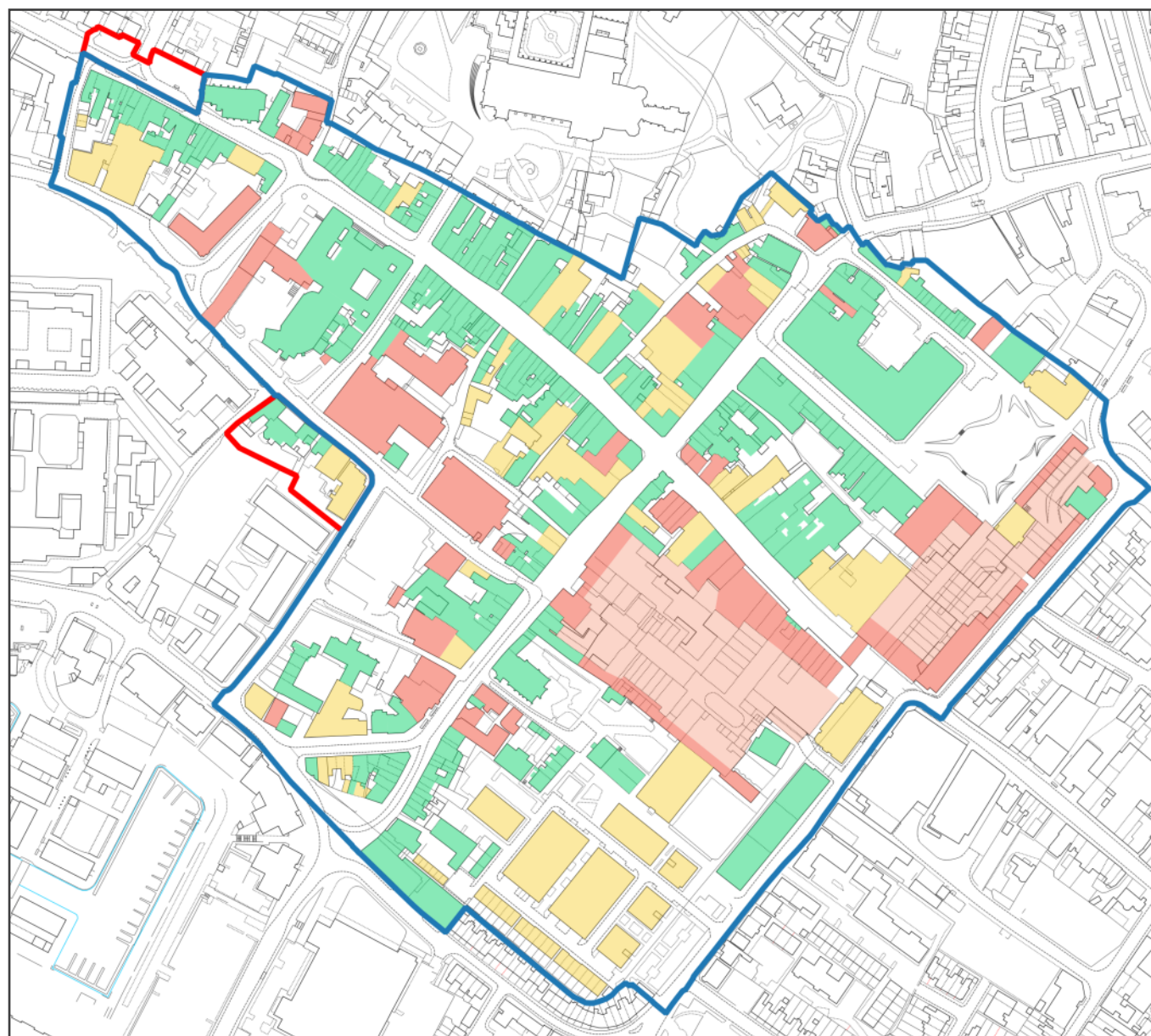
[Gloucester Heritage Strategy 2019-2029](#)







[Gloucester Public Realm Strategy](#)

### Guidance

[Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage—Design Guidelines for Gloucester](#)

## 5.1 Map: Building contribution



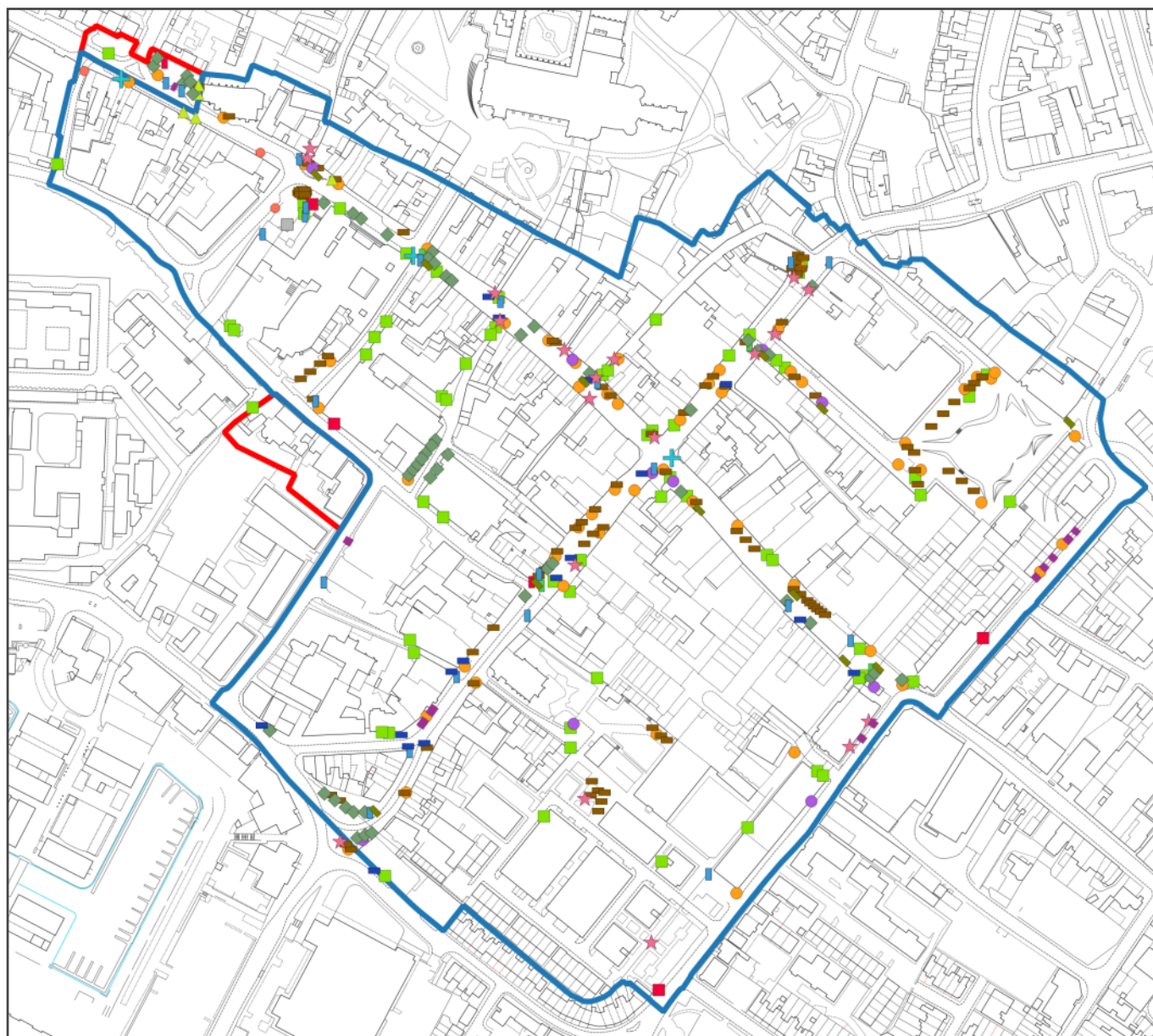
-  Conservation area boundary
-  Proposed new boundary
-  Positive buildings
-  Neutral buildings
-  Negative buildings
-  Indoor arcade and service area

This map illustrates the contribution that each building makes to the character of the Conservation Area. It does not account for the current condition or state of repair of the buildings.

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## 5.2 Map: Public realm (1 of 2)

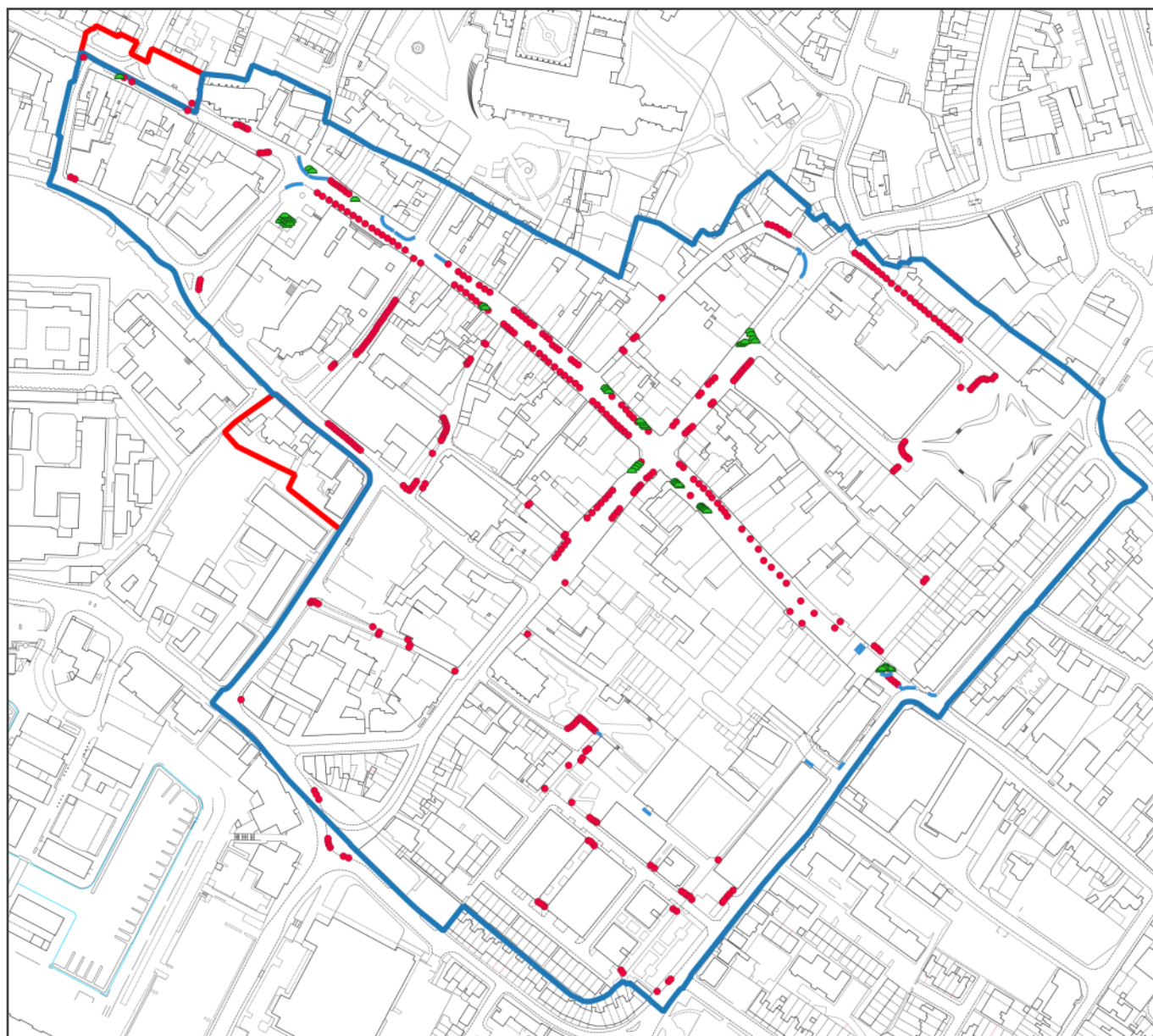







- Conservation area boundary
- Proposed new boundary
- Bus shelters
- ★ Public artworks
- ◆ Digital displays and advertisements
- Redundant cycle signs
- Parking payment meters
- Wayfinding and information signs
- ◆ Gloucester BID planters
- ▲ Planters
- Automatic bollards (redundant)
- Interpretation material
- + CCTV towers
- Phone boxes
- Benches
- Bins
- Unidentified street furniture
- Post boxes
- Electrical boxes

This map shows the approximate locations of items of street furniture in the public realm. A separate map on page 59 shows bollards, railings and cycle racks.

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## 5.3 Map: Public realm (2 of 2)



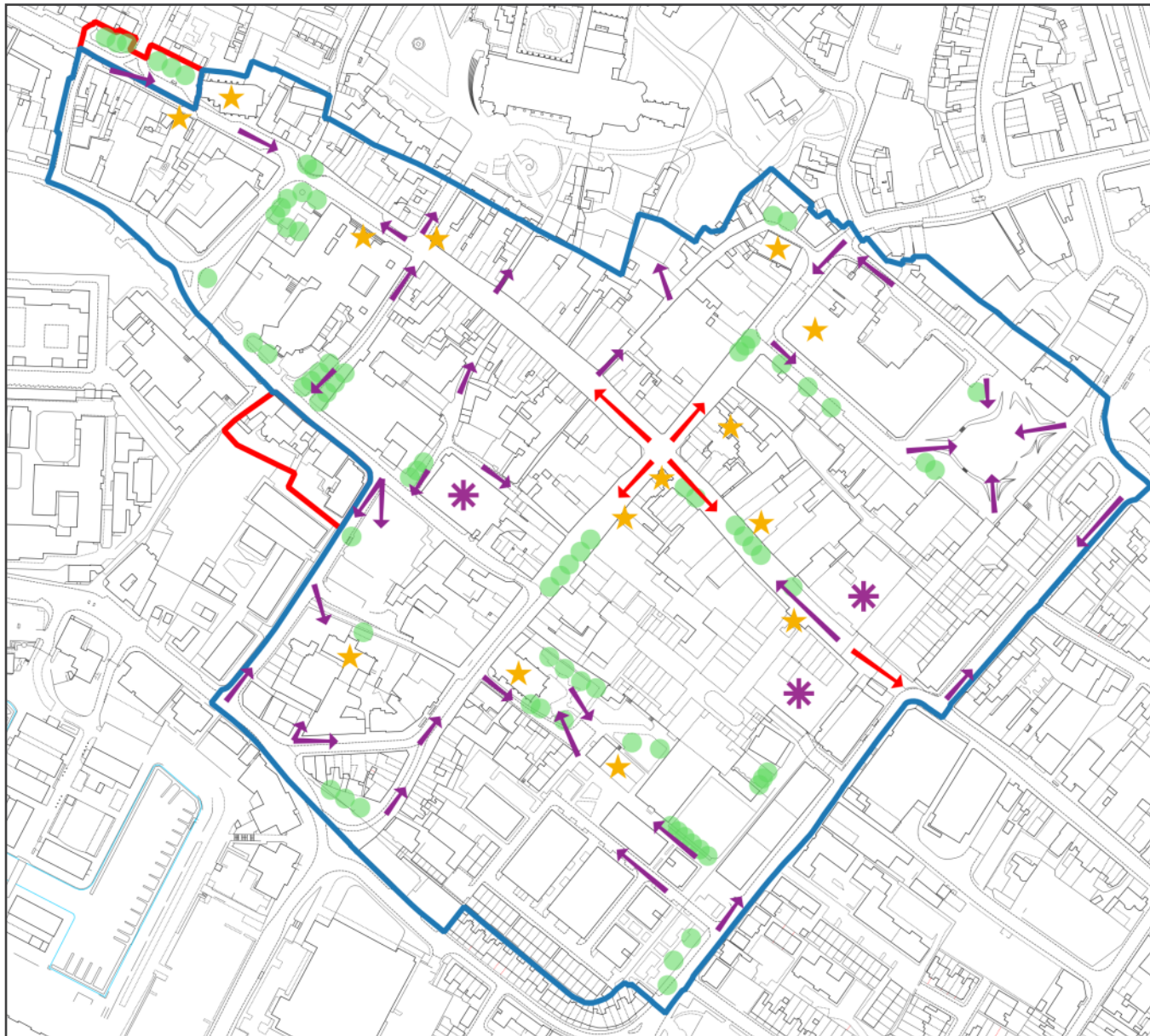
-  Conservation area boundary
-  Proposed new boundary
-  Railings
-  Cycle racks
-  Bollards

This map shows the approximate locations of bollards, railings and cycle racks in the public realm. A separate map on page 58 shows other items of street furniture.

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## 5.4 Map: Spatial analysis

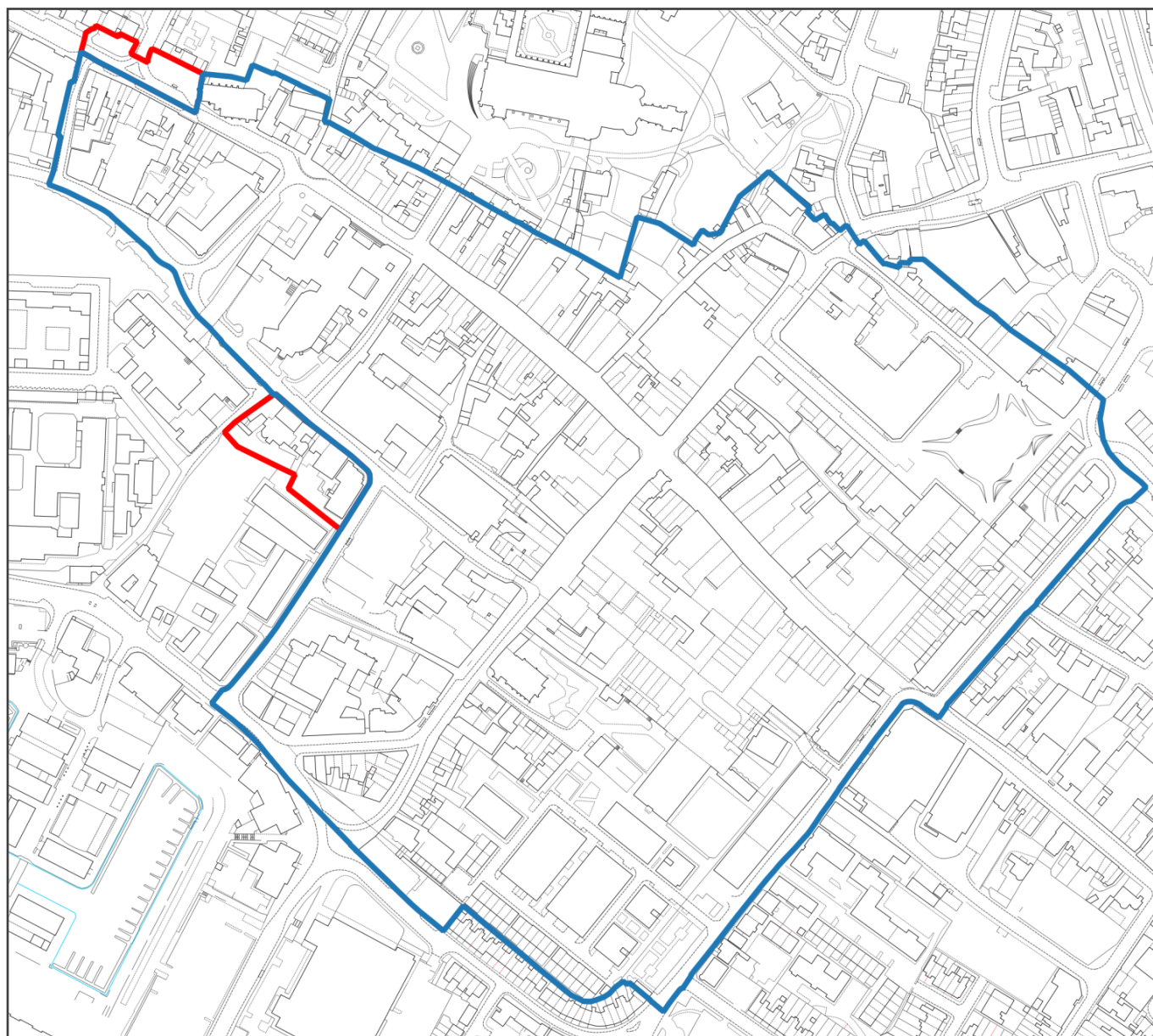



- Conservation area boundary
- Proposed new boundary
- Important trees
- ★ Landmark buildings
- Key views
- Local views
- ✱ Panoramic views (rooftop car parks)

There are many views within the City Centre Conservation Area, and as such not all have been shown on this map. It should be noted that if a view is not shown on this map it does not mean that it does not contribute to the character or special interest of the Conservation Area.

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## 5.5 Map: Conservation Area boundary and extensions



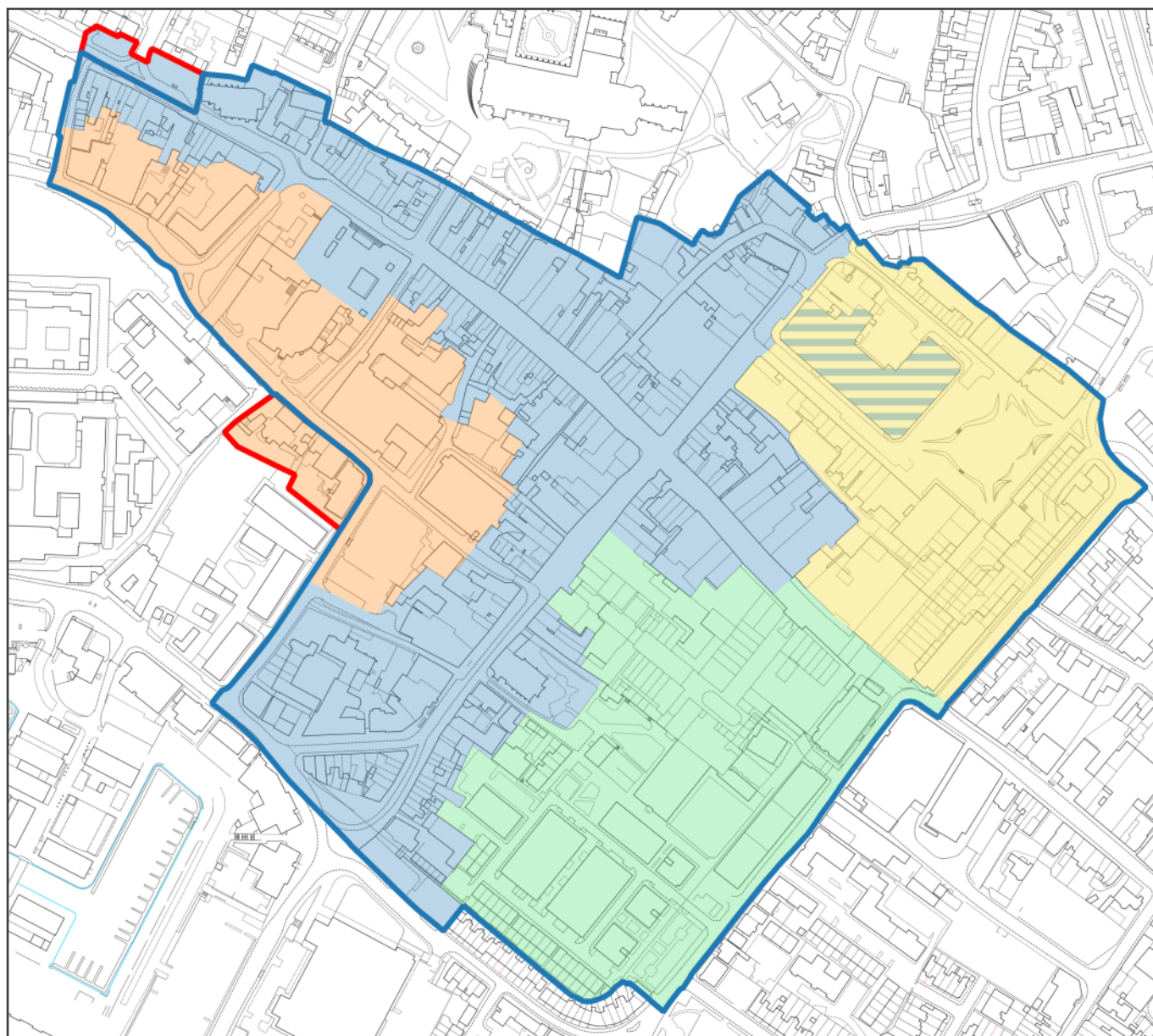
-  Conservation area boundary
-  Proposed new boundary

For more information see section 2.2  
(Boundary alterations).

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## 5.6 Map: Character areas



 Conservation area boundary

 Proposed new boundary

 The Gate Streets

 Brunswick Road, Greyfriars and Eastgate

 Quay Street, Longsmith Street and Ladybellegate Street

 King's Square and King's Walk

For more information see section 3  
(Character areas)

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