ALL SAINTS' CONSERVATION AREA:

Character Statement
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**10 Introduction**

1.1 A conservation area is defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Leicester’s conservation areas contain the best of the older parts of the City as well as serving the needs of Leicester today. Each conservation area is distinctive and contains qualities which help to give the city an overall character of its own. The City Council designates conservation areas, after consulting local people, under powers contained in national planning legislation and in accordance with advice from central government.

1.2 The City Council has a duty to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and has special legal powers to do this. It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent change but to manage change taking into consideration the existing character of the area. When the City Council considers a planning application for a site within a conservation area it must ensure that the development applied for preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area. To do this it must be clear as to what the character of the area is and this document is intended as the framework for such consideration.

1.3 Looking after and improving the qualities of conservation areas can bring real benefits to the people who live and work there. An attractive environment also helps to maintain property values. However, for a conservation area to be successful, both residents and property owners must play their part. The City Council will seek to improve the environment of conservation areas whenever the opportunity presents itself and when resources are available and will encourage others to do likewise.

**2.0 Location**

2.1 The All Saints’ Conservation Area is located on the north-western edge of Leicester’s City Centre, All Saints’ Church being about 0.5km north-west of the Clock Tower. The Conservation Area comprises an area of approximately 1.35 hectares (3.82 acres) in extent containing fifteen separate buildings (see Map 2).

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1Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69
3.0 Homogeneity

3.1 Despite its limited size the Conservation Area contains sub-areas of diverse character. The Highcross Street frontage retains buildings which indicate the nature of its history as the most important street of the medieval town (Fig 1). All Saints Churchyard is a distinctive enclave which forms a refuge from the activity of Highcross Street (Fig 2). All Saints’ Open is dominated by industrial buildings but these are included within the conservation area as they frame its most important street view (Fig 3). The site of All Saints’ Brewery is a significant group of nineteenth century industrial buildings forming a coherent group despite now being in multiple occupation (Fig 4).

4.0 Land Uses

4.0 Of the properties in use the predominant land use, apart from the church and churchyard, is industrial. All Saints’ Church is a redundant place of worship. There is a residential flat above 107/109 Highcross Street, and a shop at 178 Highcross Street.

5.0 Layout

5.1 The main spine of the layout is Highcross Street which at present forms the main A50 route for traffic to the M1 motorway travelling north. All Saints’ Churchyard and the brewery site form self contained areas to the east of this spine. All Saints’ Open is a historic thoroughfare which is important in townscape terms. 134 to 152 Highcross Street retain vestiges of a burgage plot layout now much eroded by demolitions. Overall the conservation area is significant in containing legible signs of its transition from a medieval street, through a period of some elegance in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to the mixed industrial area of the twentieth century. Great Central Street is a wide street with a marked industrial character but containing some imposing buildings.
6.0 Townscape

6.1 All Saints’ Church is the key feature in the townscape of the conservation area (Fig 5). The narrowing of the street at the western end of the church channels views along Highcross Street in both directions (Fig 6). The gradient of Highcross Street also contributes to the quality of these views. The buildings along Highcross Street are important townscape features forming the enclosure of the street and thus defining the setting of the church. All Saints’ Open provides a key view of the west front and tower of the church (Fig 3).

6.2 The churchyard is a further important feature providing a glimpse of green space from Highcross Street (Fig 7). The view out of the churchyard is enclosed by the rear of the imposing EW Bryan building on Great Central Street and by the adjacent former brewery buildings to the south (Fig 8). However to the north the space is poorly resolved and this effect has been increased by demolitions in the Elbow Lane area. The pattern of planes provided by the headstones is an important townscape feature within the churchyard (Fig 9).

6.3 Great Central Street is a historically and architecturally significant street in itself and contains a number of large and good quality buildings. Its contribution to the conservation area comprises the buildings on the east side between Northgates and the group of factories now known as Global House. These include the buildings on either side of All Saints’ Open which frame the view of All Saints’ Church. The greater width and early twentieth century industrial character of the street also contrasts with the essentially medieval layout of Highcross Street (Fig 10).
6.4  178 Highcross Street is a key building in the townscape of Highcross Street and Great Central Street being designed as a prominent corner building to link and lead the eye into views along both streets (Fig 11).

6.5  The experience of townscape in the area is also affected by materials, planting and architectural detail. These factors will be dealt with in later sections.

7.0 Archaeology

7.1  The conservation area has great archaeological importance. It falls within the area of the walled Roman and medieval town and Highcross Street was Leicester’s original high street, the main north-south thoroughfare of the historic town. Past archaeological investigations in the area have revealed between 2.5m and 3.5m of archaeological deposits in the All Saints’/Highcross Street area accounting in part for the rise in level from north to south along Highcross Street. Archaeological deposits have been disrupted by nineteenth and twentieth century development but much material still remains within the conservation area and the surrounding part of the City.

7.2  The conservation area is close to the area of the late Iron Age settlement and there is clear evidence of Roman settlement within the conservation area boundary including evidence of substantial Roman buildings. All Saints’ Church is a major medieval building. Medieval timber survives at 107/109 Highcross Street and there are possibly other elements of medieval fabric in other buildings. Medieval pottery, coins and metalwork have all been recovered from the conservation area.

7.3  A full archaeological report is attached as Appendix 2 and relevant findspots are marked on Map 3.

8.0 Development of the area

8.1  The construction of Vaughan Way in 1958 radically changed the western part of the City Centre. Historic maps show a continuation of the medieval street pattern north-westwards from the junction of High Street and Highcross Street with the latter running as a continuous thoroughfare across what is now the inner relief road. This continuous pattern is reflected in the streets around Highcross Street.
8.2 The map of Roman Leicester produced by Leicester Museums (Map 4) shows the North gate to the Roman town just to the south of the present junction of Highcross Street and Sanvey Gate. Highcross Street has thus persisted as an important thoroughfare throughout Leicester’s history after the rectilinear Roman street pattern was overlaid by the less formal medieval layout. All Saints’ Church was an important medieval church with an extensive parish and would have been a focus of the life of the area in the medieval period and later (Map 5). 107/109 Highcross Street contains medieval timber visible at the rear (Fig 12).

8.3 John Nichols, the eighteenth century Leicestershire historian, recorded that the first knitting frame was brought to Leicester and set up in 1680 and established near the North Gate, thus initiating one of the driving forces of Leicester’s industrial growth.

8.4 Map evidence from the eighteenth century onwards shows a fairly constant pattern. Both Stukeley’s map of 1722 and Roberts’ map of 1741 (Maps 6/7) show Highcross Street as High Street with development to the street frontages and orchards on the land behind. All Saints’ Church and churchyard remain constant features and the boundaries of the churchyard shown on the 1741 map appear to approximate to the present boundary. Prior’s Map of 1777 (Map 8) again shows a continuous street frontage opposite the church, unbroken by All Saints’ Open. For the first time the name of the Street is shown as High Cross Street.

8.5 On the map of 1804 included in Susanna Watts’ A Walk through Leicester, (Map 9). All Saint’s Open appeared linking High Cross Street with Dead Man’s Lane roughly on the line of the present Great Central Street. All Saints’ Open was lined with buildings and development extended from the frontage to North Gates southward along part of Deadman’s Lane. Unicume’s map of 1828 (Map 10) shows the name High Cross
Street and the development of the brewery on the southern boundary of the churchyard. Two pubs also appear either side of the church: the Pied Bull, the brewery tap on the south side, and the Cross Keys in the building which remains as 107/109 Highcross Street. Development had extended along the street frontage to Deadman’s Lane to the north of All Saints’ Open and at the site of the North Gate. By 1840 map evidence shows considerable development on the south-west side of High Cross Street to the south of All Saints’ Open forming rear courtyards on the site of what is shown on the 1828 map as Madras School.

8.6 The map of Leicester of 1857 (Map 11) does not distinguish between built-up and open areas so it is difficult to reach conclusions as to the progress of development by this date. Similarly Spencer’s maps of 1874 and 1879 (Map 12) show areas between streets completely shaded with only the churchyard delineated.

8.7 The first Ordnance Survey of 1886 (Map 13) gives an accurate impression of the pattern of development by this date. The church and churchyard, the brewery and industrial development to the south, and the two pubs remain on the north-eastern side of High Cross Street. The south western frontage to the street is completely built up and the houses which remain today can be distinguished. All Saints’ Open has terraced development on the north side with courtyard housing between Charlotte Street (on the line of Deadman’s Lane) and Highcross Street and a mixture of small scale industrial premises on the south side. There is an iron foundry at the rear of 142-148 Highcross Street.

8.8 By 1902 (Map 14) the Ordnance Survey shows the established pattern fairly unchanged in Highcross Street although the greater area covered at the smaller scale shows terraced housing on the north side of the churchyard. Great Central Street is named and on its present layout and there is a ‘Mission Room’ on the southern side of the junction of All Saints’ Open.

Map 8. 1777

Map 9. 1804 (Reproduced with kind permission of Cassell)

Map 10. 1828
and Great Central Street: this is likely to be the building which is now converted to industrial use. The small-scale housing on Deadman's Lane had been demolished by the formation of Great Central Street in the late 1890s and east side of the street north of All Saint's Open is lined only by the backs of properties fronting Highcross Street.

8.9 By 1949 (Map 15) the continuous frontage on the south-west side of Highcross Street remained but redevelopment had occurred on the north side of All Saints' Open. The terraced housing to the north of the churchyard had also been demolished and that site was vacant. The Pied Bull pub had disappeared from the map but the brewery was still labelled as such. There was a vacant site to the south of 176 Highcross Street now occupied by a single storey factory building. There is also a vacant site to the south of the sub-station on Great Central Street. An Ordnance Survey map of around 1970 (Map 16), after the construction of Vaughan Way shows vacant land on the site of 142 and 146 Highcross Street. The street name had been compressed to its present style. The building on the south side of the junction of All Saints' Open and Great Central Street is still described as a church. Demolition of 136 to 140 Highcross Street took place in 1998 following fire damage.
9.0 Architectural Character

9.1 All Saints’ Church is the architectural centrepiece of the area. The church is one of Leicester’s outstanding buildings and represents an important historical and architectural record of building from the twelfth through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The brick chancel was built in 1829 and restoration and alterations took place in 1875. The main material is Dane Hills sandstone, mostly coursed but with some rubble containing other stone. Roofs are covered in Welsh slate (nave), lead (south aisle) and Swithland slate (chancel). The church is a prominent landmark and introduces stone and intricate decorative quality, not least in the seventeenth century clock on the south side and carved decoration to the doors, into the conservation area. The Norman west door (Fig 13) is the single most significant architectural feature of the conservation area.

9.2 The churchyard contains a fine collection of Swithland slate headstones with particularly good examples charting changes in taste from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century and some instances of fine slate carving, many signed by local stonemasons. Particularly significant are the two table tombs, one of Alderman Gabriel Newton (Fig 14) and the other of John Simpson and others.

9.3 Outside the churchyard the exposed timber in the rear gable of 107/109 Highcross Street is a remaining part of a timber framed building, with timbers dated dendrochronologically at 1355, incorporated into building which also includes much later fabric. The remainder of the conservation area is dominated by red brick and slate. Details reflect the varying ages of the buildings and their functions. 150 Highcross Street, built around the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has a simple dentilled eaves detail, segmental arched windows and a semicircular arched doorway. The building formerly had a simple doorcase with console brackets and sash windows with exposed sash boxes. Of around the same period 107/109 Highcross Street (Fig 15) has sash windows, fine biscuit terracotta chimney pots and a simple eaves course with widely spaced brackets. It also has a mid- to late-nineteenth century shopfront with console brackets, originally part of the Cross Keys pub. There is a simple nineteenth century brick outbuilding at the rear which has a glazed frontage to the rear yard.
9.4 Apart from 150 and 152 the remaining buildings fronting Highcross Street on the south west-side south of All Saints’ Open are of the mid-nineteenth century and are missing much original detail. They are marked by a somewhat higher level of decoration than the older buildings. 148 retains fragments of a mid nineteenth century shopfront. The window heads at 146 have distinctive shallow arches with stone keystones and outer voussoirs. The window heads at first floor level at 134 are stone with scrolled incised decoration. This property also has a terracotta decorative eaves detail and dormers with terracotta ridge cresteings. There is a range of one- and two-storey brick outbuildings at the rear of 146-152 some of which may once have been inhabited.  

9.5 On the north-east side of Highcross Street the theme is similar. Number 103 has a segmental carriage arch, chequered brickwork and an oriole window. On the side of this building is a particularly fine timber doorcase with Ionic pilasters (Fig 16). The former brewery buildings are simple in detail but have drama in the two storey archway leading through to the rear range of buildings. They are also significant in enclosing the churchyard on its southern boundary.

9.6 All Saints’ Open has one quite simple nineteenth century building at number 4 with its gable end onto the street. The factory on the southern side of the junction with Great Central Street may contain remnants of the former mission hall but has a completely modern frontage. To the south of those is an electricity sub-station with finely detailed brickwork: one of a family of such buildings around the City. 61 Great Central Street is a functional modern building in brick with metal windows. To the south of that is the former E W Bryan factory of around 1900 (Fig 17) which is of four storeys, imposing and well detailed, with giant pilasters in brick, timber windows, and Baroque details over the door and the windows at the top of the end bays all made in reconstituted stone. This building is now part of Global Works which also includes a building to the south of two storeys in brick with distinctive circular windows at first floor level.

9.7 The industrial buildings on the northern side of All Saints’ Open, extending along Great Central Street and Highcross Street...
are functional structures from the inter-war and immediate post-war years now much altered. To the north of this group of industrial buildings, however, are two buildings of much greater interest. 176 Highcross Street is a three storey late nineteenth century brick building with a modern shopfront to the ground floor café. It has a carved stone cartouche at fascia level possibly inserted later to match the similar details on the adjoining building, and a delicate egg and dart moulding at eaves level. There is a modern one- and two storey extension to Great Central Street. 178 Highcross Street, next to the site of the North Gate is a prominent building which turns the corner from Highcross Street and Great Central Street with its triangular plan and turret. The building was built between 1902 (it is not shown on the OS map of that date) and 1914 and retains its original shopfront, stone mullioned windows and a series of stone cartouches at fascia level.

10.0 Boundary Treatments

10.1 There are few remaining fragments of historic boundary treatments in the area and all those that do remain are part of the churchyard. The retaining wall of the churchyard to Highcross Street is of purple rubble granite with a sandstone coping all possibly dating from the 1875 restoration. This wall formerly had railings. The southern boundary wall retains a fragment of mixed materials including granite and slate, eighteenth century brick and a fragment of red terracotta tile. The north boundary wall to the churchyard is of early-nineteenth century brick with blue and red brick copings and some stone. The eastern and northern boundaries are enclosed by buildings.

10.2 The electricity sub-station on Great Central Street retains its original simple steel railings, gates and gatepiers.

11.0 Spaces, Trees and Hedges

11.1 The main spatial quality of the area is in the churchyard which forms a semi-enclosed space set back from Highcross Street. The enclosure is eroded by past demolitions of buildings to the north and the formation of an open car park on the adjoining site. Nevertheless the churchyard is an attractive space of considerable historic character.

11.2 Apart from two self-set ashes at the rear of 150 Highcross Street trees are restricted to the churchyard. There are nine mature

3 Recent improvements to All Saints’ Churchyard and the front retaining wall have taken place since the Character Statement was adopted.
limes and an immature maple on the southern and northern
boundaries and areas of elder, elm and ash scrub around the eastern
end of the churchyard. Self-seeded elder is established between
the northern boundary wall and the adjoining row of headstones
pushing the masonry out of alignment. Yew hedges form an
enclosed central area in the cemetery.

12.0 Paving and Ground Surfaces
12.1 Most of the hard surface in the area has been replaced by
modern materials but some areas of good quality historic surface
materials remain. Although road and footway surfaces are tarmac
all the roads in the conservation area have red granite kerbs. The
main pathway in the churchyard is laid in concrete pavers but areas
of York stone paving remain in the parking area between the
church and 107/109.

12.2 There is a small forecourt of York stone pavers and granite
setts to the west door of the church. The best areas of historic
surface are the yard to the brewery site which retains many of its
red granite setts and wheel tracks and some blue brick paving in
the inner yard. There is a similar area of red granite setts inside
the carriage arch between 101 and 103 Highcross Street.

13.0 Lighting and Street Furniture
13.1 Lighting, street furniture, and street nameplates in the area
are entirely modern and functional.

14.0 Land Use and Social Factors
Vacancy
14.1 The most striking problem of the area is the high level of
vacancy of the building stock. All Saints’ Church is redundant
but in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. This situation
is not ideal but it at least ensures that the condition of the building
is maintained and enables some public access to be maintained.

14.2 The problem of vacancy and the attendant problems of
deterioration in the physical condition of the buildings affects 134
146, 148, 150 and 152 Highcross Street most severely. The future
of these buildings has been uncertain pending resolution of future
traffic routes in the Highcross Street area.
Traffic
14.3 Highcross Street has been a major route into Leicester from the north throughout the history of the City. This traffic flow remains as a major determinant of the character of the area particularly at the narrow point of the Street formed by the west front of All Saints’ Church. Studies are in hand to find alternative routes for this traffic and thus to reduce or eliminate the severance effect of traffic on Highcross Street.

15.0 Loss of Character
15.1 The factors identified in 13.0 above contribute significantly to loss of character in the conservation area. In addition to these the following factors detract from the character of the area:

i the absence of enclosure on the north boundary of the churchyard;

ii the gap in the street frontage on the site of 136 to 144 Highcross Street; ¹

iii the modern screen wall on the street boundary of the former brewery site;

iv the use of poor quality surface materials, particularly on footways throughout the area;

v the utilitarian nature of some of the industrial buildings between Great Central Street and Highcross street to the north of All Saints’ Open.

16.0 Other Statutory Protection
16.1 All Saints’ Church is listed grade B. 107/109 Highcross Street. Listed building descriptions are included in Appendix 1.

¹ 134 - 152 Highcross Street have been demolished since the adoption of the Character Statement in January 1999.
Appendix 1

Listing Descriptions

HIGH CROSS STREET (east side)
All Saints’ Church

Grade B  Date of listing: 05.01.50
D.o.E. Plan ref: SK 5804 7/117


HIGH CROSS STREET (east side).
Nos 107 & 109

Grade II  Date of listing: 14.03.75
D.o.E. Plan ref: SK 58047/254

Early C19 red brick front to probably C16 timber frame end cross-wing. Front: early C19 red brick, slate roof with gabled ends, wide eaves cornice with soffit brackets, two storeys, three widely spaced sashes with margin lights to first floor, without glazing bars, ground floor Victorian shop front with cornice and pilastered central doorway, carriageway on left. Cross-wing, originally said to be the Cross Keys Inn, timber frame mostly brick faced, but exposed timber framing to rear gable end. Arched brace roof with braced crown post over tie-beam.
Appendix 2

Archaeological Considerations

A2.1.0 Introduction
The All Saints’ Conservation Area forms part of the Archaeological Alert Area (AAA) as defined by the Leicester City Sites & Monuments Record (SMR), and adopted in the City’s Local Plan. The AAA comprises the historic core of Leicester, including the prehistoric settlement, the later Roman civitas, and the medieval and post-medieval town and suburbs. All Saints’ lies within the walled Roman and medieval town, and is bisected by Highcross Street. The latter formed Leicester’s original high street, the main north-south thoroughfare of the historic town.

Assessment of records from earlier archaeological investigations demonstrates the presence of a substantial depth of buried archaeological remains (c.2.5 - 3.5m) within the All Saints’/Highcross Street area. This in part accounts for the gradual rise in ground level running south from the junction of Highcross Street and Great Central Street. Previous archaeological investigation has demonstrated considerable disturbance of these deposits caused by 19th and 20th century development. However, it has also shown the survival of well preserved deposits in those areas unaffected by modern cellars/basements, and even the survival of pockets of archaeology below the existing basements.

A2.2.0 Archaeological Character

A2.2.1 Register of Known Archaeological

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<td>50SE.RP</td>
<td>County Gaol (99 Highcross St) [m]</td>
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Key: rf/ rs Roman finds/ structures  mf/ s medieval finds/ structures  pmf/ s post-medieval finds/ structures
A2.2.3 Prehistoric Leicester
Although there is no clear indication of the presence of prehistoric settlement within the All Saints’ Conservation Area, archaeological research has demonstrated the presence of a late Iron Age community situated on the gravel terrace overlooking the River Soar. Evidence remains fragmentary, but spreads over a wide area from The Newarke to the Great Central Station, and from the River Soar in the west to the underpass and Vaughan Way.

A2.2.4 Roman Leicester
The evidence for Roman occupation and activity is demonstrated by the extensive collection of Roman artefacts, pottery, coins and metalwork (50SE.MP,PP, RL) recovered from the area. Excavation during the 20th century has revealed evidence of substantial Roman buildings, including tessellated pavements the latest, of which appear to have survived into the post-Roman period (50SE.AE). Painted wall plaster, architectural stonework, suggest these may represent high-status structures. Immediately outside the Conservation Area, the north gate of the Roman town was situated at the junction of Highcross Street and Great Central Street. The town wall—m-east-west approximately parallel with Sanvey Gate (50SE.PW) A series of excavations have located the alignment of the walls, most recently c.75m east of Highcross Street. A2.2.5 - Medieval and Post-Medieval Leicester. All Saints Church (50SE.AY) forms the core of the Conservation Area, and is of early medieval date. Despite limited 19th century, restoration, the church contains elements of the original Norman church, notably the west doorway and base of the tower. The church saw substantial alteration during the 13th & 15th centuries, and during the 19th century the chancel was rebuilt in brick. To the north of All Saints’ Church, 107-109 Highcross Street (50SE.GD) includes elements of original 14th century timber-framing. Documentary sources also record the presence of the 14th century ‘Shirehall’, a court house and cells situated beyond the County Gaol; probably in the vicinity of 101 Highcross Street.

It is possible that elements of other medieval and post-medieval structures may survive as part of the existing buildings especially those facing onto Highcross Street.

Records again indicates the preservation of important buried medieval remains, these comprise a wide range of artefacts (50SE.MP, PP, RL) recovered during construction work.

The All Saints’ Brewery complex represents an apparently well preserved example of a the 19th century brewing industry. Although the malthouse has been demolished, many of the other ancillary buildings survive.
Map 1. City of Leicester Conservation Areas

1. New Walk
2. Castle Gardens
3. Cathedral / Guildhall
4. Town Hall Square
5. Old Humberstone
6. Braunstone Village
7. Belgrave Hall
8. Market Place
9. Aylestone Village
10. Knighton Village
11. Stoneygate
12. Evington Footpath
13. South Highfields
14. Spinney Hill Park
15. Loughborough Road
16. Daneshill
17. St. George’s
18. Market Street
19. High Street
20. Evington Village
21. Ashleigh Road
22. Westcotes Drive
23. All Saints’ Listed chronologically
ALL SAINTS’ CONSERVATION AREA: Character Statement

Map 3. All Saints’ Conservation Area: Known Archaeological Sites.

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