Leicester City Council

Old Town Character Area

Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

Evidence Document

Leicester City Council I November 2022

Contents

1

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Development Context

The regeneration of Leicester is a key theme of Leicester's development plan. In considering the central area of Leicester, areas have been identified which have distinctive characters and context, identity, opportunities and challenges and therefore different development objectives. These areas will also make a very important contribution to addressing the city's future housing needs.

Much of the development activity needed to enable restructuring of the economy will occur in the area within and around the city centre, within the Central Development Area (CDA). Leicester's future economic prosperity will depend on making sure that it has the right appeal to a skilled and mobile workforce as well as being an attractive place to live and work. The quality of life, environment, housing, jobs and the cultural, leisure and retail offer of the city and central area in particular, will play a major role in this. The aim of the CDA is to enable Leicester City Council (LCC) to direct, optimise and encourage investment, whilst managing development appropriately within a local context, so that high quality

development is delivered, which in turn creates certainty and developer confidence.

LCC has divided the CDA into 14 distinct areas, including 9 character areas and 5 other regeneration areas, to recognise the individual context of each area and for future policy to be based on the area's defining characteristics. These are:

Nine (9) Character Areas:

1. Wharf Street,
2. Mansfield Street,
3. St. Margaret's,
4. St. Georges Cultural Quarter,
5. Belgrave Gateway,
6. LRI & DMU,
7. Railway Station,
8. Old Town and
9. New Walk.

Five (5) Other Regeneration Areas:

1. Abbey Meadows and Pioneer Park,
2. Waterside,
3. Leicester City Football Club,
4. University of Leicester and
5. Walnut Street.

Figure 1: CDA - Character & Regeneration Areas

Crown copyright and database rights 2019.
Ordnance Survey 100019264
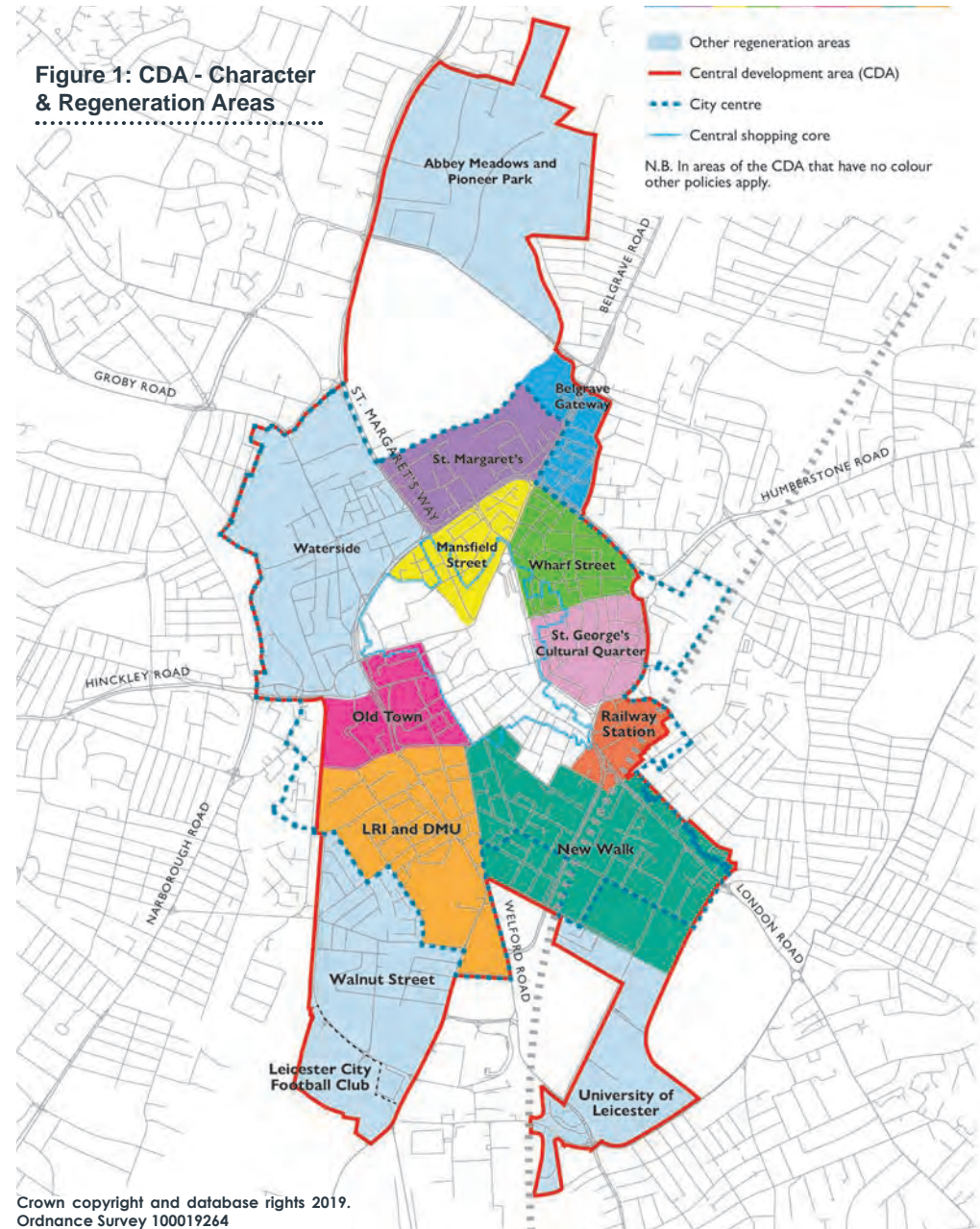
1.2. Townscape Appraisal & Character

What is Character?

Character is what defines a place. It's the main factors that help us distinguish one area from another based on its uniqueness and distinctiveness.

The report of CABE 'By Design'(2000) describes 'Character' as "*A place with its own identity*". Its objective as a key urban design principle in regeneration and the built environment is to "*promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture*" (By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System Towards Better Practice, CABE, 2000).

What is a Character Area?

"*An area with a distinct character, identified so much so that it can be protected or enhanced by planning policy*"(The Dictionary of Urbanism, 2005).

The nine character areas identified by LCC (see page 4) can be categorised by the following layers:

- History & Heritage
- Urban Grain & Built Form
- Scale, Height & Massing
- Socio-economic Characteristics
- Land Uses
- Open Spaces
- Access & Movement
- Frontages & Legibility
- Architecture, Materiality & Details

What is the Townscape?

The term 'townscape' is used to describe a town's overall character and structure. It can encompass the variety and quality of buildings in a given area, as well as the relationships between those buildings and the different types of space between and around them. It refers to the interaction between individuals and a place, as well as to the role it plays in shaping the environment for our daily lives. It is the consequence of how people connect with, understand, and experience the various components of our environment, both natural and cultural (Natural England, 2014).

As the vast majority of UK residents now live in urban areas, the nature and quality of the urban environment have a significant impact on people's life and well-being. Threats to local identity and distinctiveness are frequently a source of public concern.

Change is an inevitable aspect of a living, dynamic built environment. However, in order to achieve sustainable outcomes, change must be comprehended in context. Proper and detailed information on the nature of the environment that may be changed, as well as the implications or impacts that change will have on it, will be critical to achieving beneficial and generally supported change.

What is Townscape Appraisal?

A townscape appraisal forms the basis for managing change effectively. It can help to inform development strategies so that new development contributes positively to the townscape's character, supports local identity, and generates built-up areas that are appealing to live, work and visit. The appraisal, which is accompanied by maps, illustrations and pictures, explains how a place has changed over time in response to natural, social and economic forces and how this is represented in its streets, architecture and used materials.

The location, design, scale, massing and type of development that can be accommodated within an area can all be guided by the understanding of the area's intrinsic character and attributes. A townscape appraisal is a well-established technique for assessing the effects of change, informing decision-making and demonstrating the government's commitment to protecting and improving the character of our cities and towns.

Trends and drivers of change, including urban sprawl and regeneration, climate change, increasing use of electric vehicles and commuting patterns, can all be taken into account when appraising a townscape. These data can be utilised to create mechanisms that will guide positive decisions, activities and actions in the future to conserve, manage and promote distinctive townscape character. The results of a townscape character appraisal can be used to guide other processes such as judging and evaluating townscape quality or value, or deciding the appropriateness of specific development.

1.3. Overarching Policy

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021 in paragraphs 126 – 128 under Section 12, Achieving Well-designed Places, states the importance of plans creating a clear design vision and expectations, at an early stage, tailored to the context and an area's defining characteristics. This will support the creation of high-quality buildings and spaces and give applicants some certainty on what is likely to be acceptable.

To support the NPPF objectives and further comply with Local Plan policy, additional evidence data and clarifications towards the appropriateness of future development will be outlined within appropriate Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that will follow. Such an example is the Waterside SPD adopted in 2015, which successfully promotes and encourages regeneration, creating certainty and developer confidence.

The Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance evidence base document, one for each character area, intends to provide a framework to meet the NPPF objectives. Furthermore, a 'Quality Design Framework' for Leicester will be produced by the Council to provide extra clarifications and expand upon aspects of design policies within the Local Plan.

NPPF paragraph 130 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the quality of the overall area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development,

- are visually attractive because of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping,

- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities),

- establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit,

- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public spaces) and support local facilities and transport networks, and

- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

12. Achieving Well-Designed Places

126. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

127. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.

128. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design Guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high level of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.

NPPF Extract (July 2021): Paragraphs 126 - 128

1.4. Townscape Character Management

To inform and guide policy, it is helpful to understand the level and scope of change that the specified character areas are likely to undergo during the plan period and beyond. Some of the character areas will predominantly include heritage assets, with few development opportunities, requiring protection to conserve their very distinct character. Others may undergo significant residential growth and intensification and will require guidance to manage this growth cohesively and comprehensively, also considering the need for new infrastructure as residential neighbourhoods grow.

The Townscape Management Options used by the London Borough of Croydon in their Local Plan 2018 used a methodology to simplify growth, which is relevant to the Leicester context. They outline five options to categorise and understand this level of change and how it will be managed through planning policy. These options are:

1. Respect and protection of heritage assets

2. Evolution without significant change

3. Developing an area's character

4. Intensification by increased density and higher density building types

5. Redevelopment

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

Figure 2: Character Areas Townscape Management
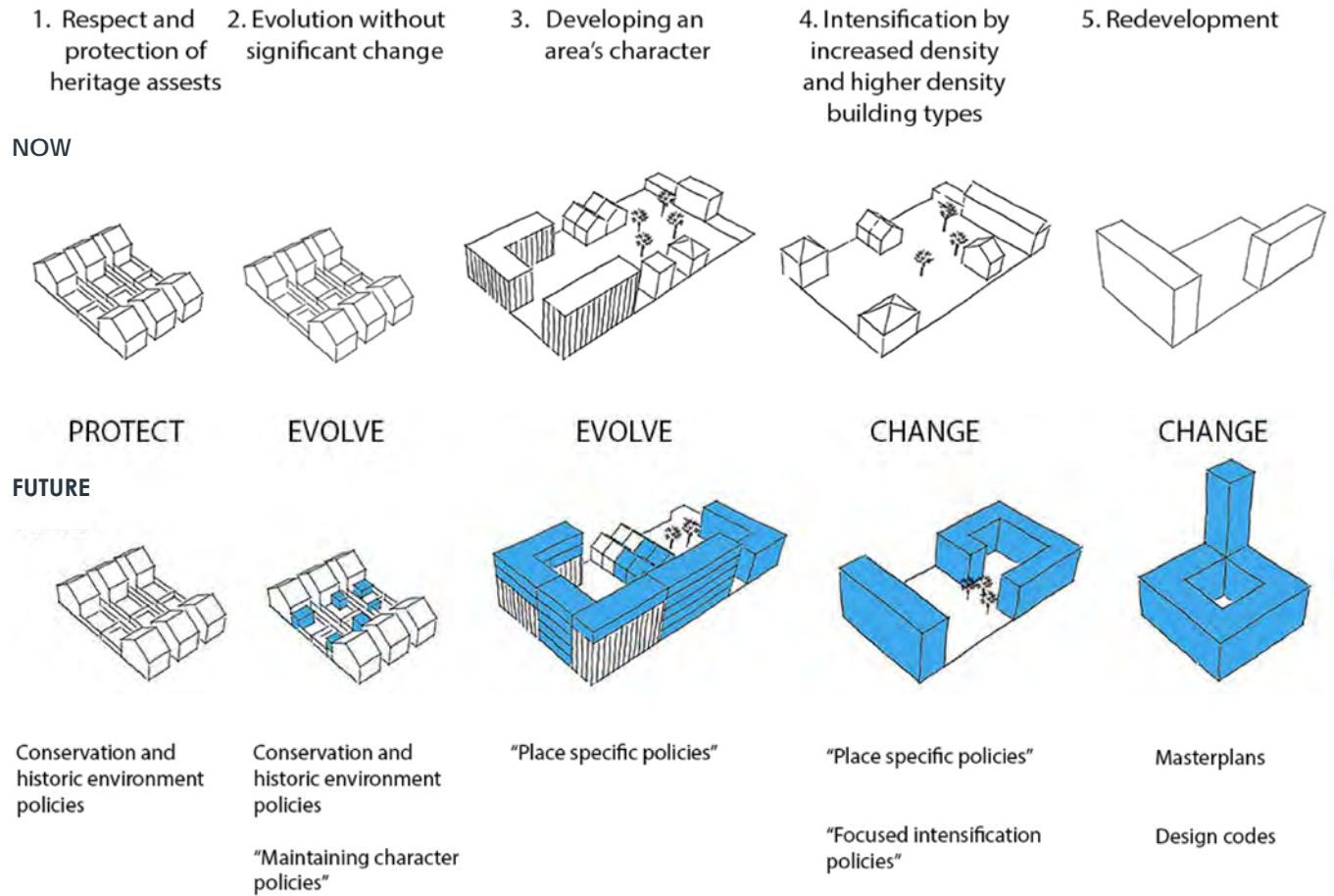
© **London Borough of Croydon, Croydon Local Plan 2018 (Feb 2018).**

1.5. The Scope

Leicester is an important and spatially unique place, recognised for its heritage, vibrancy and multiculturalism. However, Leicester's city centre and the greater CDA is not without its challenges. The growth agenda, widespread regeneration and the value of the urban fabric are of particular importance. Furthermore, to support the review of its Local Plan, LCC is required to ensure that the Local Plan is based on sound, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the spatial, economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area (Paragraphs 31, 32, 33 NPPF). The Council is therefore revisiting and revising its existing evidence base to ensure it is robust and relevant for today and tomorrow.

A detailed 'Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance' evidence document has been prepared for each character area to identify, explain and illustrate the diverse identity, components and peculiarities that can be found within them. Through desktop and site analysis, various characteristics that inform local distinctiveness have been recognised.

Each evidence document focuses on one character area, providing the base of guiding future development, identifying opportunities for improvements, addressing urban design or spatial weaknesses and highlighting development opportunities and even intensification potentials. It responds to the requirements of the NPPF, building on the success of the Waterside SPD, while supporting policies and development guidance that is tailored to the circumstances and context of each character area.

Main objectives:

- Thorough understanding of the character, components and identity of each character area, providing the analytical basis for further decision-making.

- Identify potential development constraints, together with aspects that could present future development opportunities.

- Identify growth potential within each character area, developing a coherent vision and objectives for the area's development.

Delivering change may require amendments to current planning policy or difficult decisions to be made regarding the current urban grain and layout and land use development. It is not the purpose of each document to make detailed recommendations about the future of these areas but rather to identify areas where change could be positive for local neighbourhoods and where the existing character makes a particular (negative or positive) contribution to its context. Each document forms the evidence base to inform future planning policies and any relevant supporting guidance. It provides a strategic assessment and analysis of the character, distinctiveness and qualities found within the CDA.

It is expected that in time this guidance will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, which will also focus on directing and prioritising pro-active interventions which may include public realm, transport, heritage, streetscapes etc. and objectives and townscape guidance specific to each character area.

1.6. The Structure

The document is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Defines the development context, providing vital definitions for the comprehensive understanding and further usage of the present document. Furthermore, chapter 1 defines the document's scope and structure, while presenting the townscape character management framework through which every character area is evaluated and further developed.

Chapter 2 – Townscape Analysis

Sets out a detailed analysis of the elements that form the current character of the studied area, focussing on its components, unique characteristics, defining attributes and existing connections and relations between the built environment and the open spaces that will influence, impact and later define the area's development potential.

Chapter 3 – Townscape Diagnosis

Having critically evaluated all analytical outcomes, chapter 3 presents the main constraints and development opportunities that can be found within each character area.

Chapter 4 – Guiding the Future

Establishes a high-level vision for the area's future development, setting the main objectives and parameters through which development will take place.

2

Townscape Analysis

2. Townscape Analysis

2.1. Location & Context

KEY

- ✳ Main Landmarks
- ⛪ Community Facility
- 🏛 Museum
- 🎓 University
- ✎ Secondary/ Primary School
- 🧒 Nursery
- ✚ Medical Facility
- 🌲 Playground
- 🚌 Bus Station
- 💚 Green Node - Park
- ❤ Civic Heart, Clock Tower
- ⋯⋯ Walking Radius
- ▢ Old Town Char. Area
- ⋯⋯ Surrounding Char. Areas
- ▢ Green Open Space
- ▦ Main Bus Routes
- ▮ Central Shopping Core
- ▮ Shopping Centres
- ▮ Water
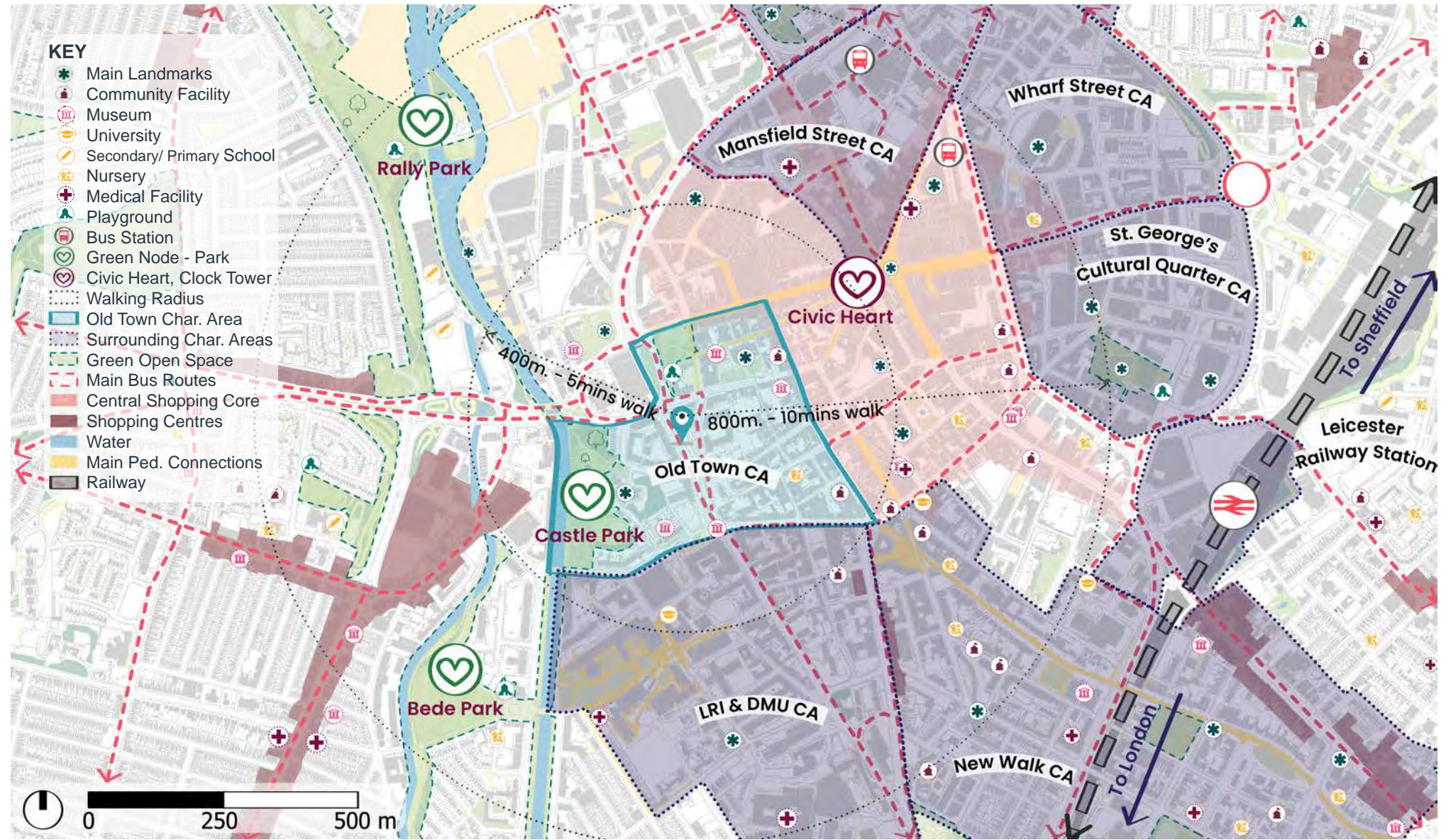- ▮ Main Ped. Connections
- ▮ Railway

Figure 3: Old Town Character Area within the Greater Context

© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

The Old Town character area is located within the CDA, being part of Leicester's city centre (located at its south-western edge). It connects Leicester's city centre with surrounding residential neighbourhoods, mainly to the west. Surrounded by LRI & DMU & New Walk character areas, it is a destination area for both local residents and visitors.

The Clock Tower, Leicester's civic heart, can be reached within a 5 minutes walk, together with the De Montfort University and Bede Park (a neighbouring park to the west of river Soar). Moreover, the Railway Station and the two main bus stations (Haymarket and St. Margaret's), can be reached within a less than a 15 minutes walk.

Old Town character area is bordered by High Street and St. Augustine Road to the north, river Soar to the west, Carts Lane, Grey Friars, Berridge Street and Pocklingtons Walk to the east and Newarke Street to the south. Two axes along Oxford Street and Berridge Street permeate the area from north to south, with multiple landmarks and heritage assets spread across the overall character area (including St. Martin's Cathedral, St. Mary De Castro Church, the Guildhall, the Magazine Gateway and Leicester's Castle).

Being the city's historic core, Old Town bears influences from the Roman, Medieval, Georgian and Victorian periods, incorporating four conservation areas within its boundaries. Today Old Town character area is a 'jewel' within Leicester's city centre, showcasing Leicester's story and uniqueness, while providing a residential community embedded within a greater mix of uses.
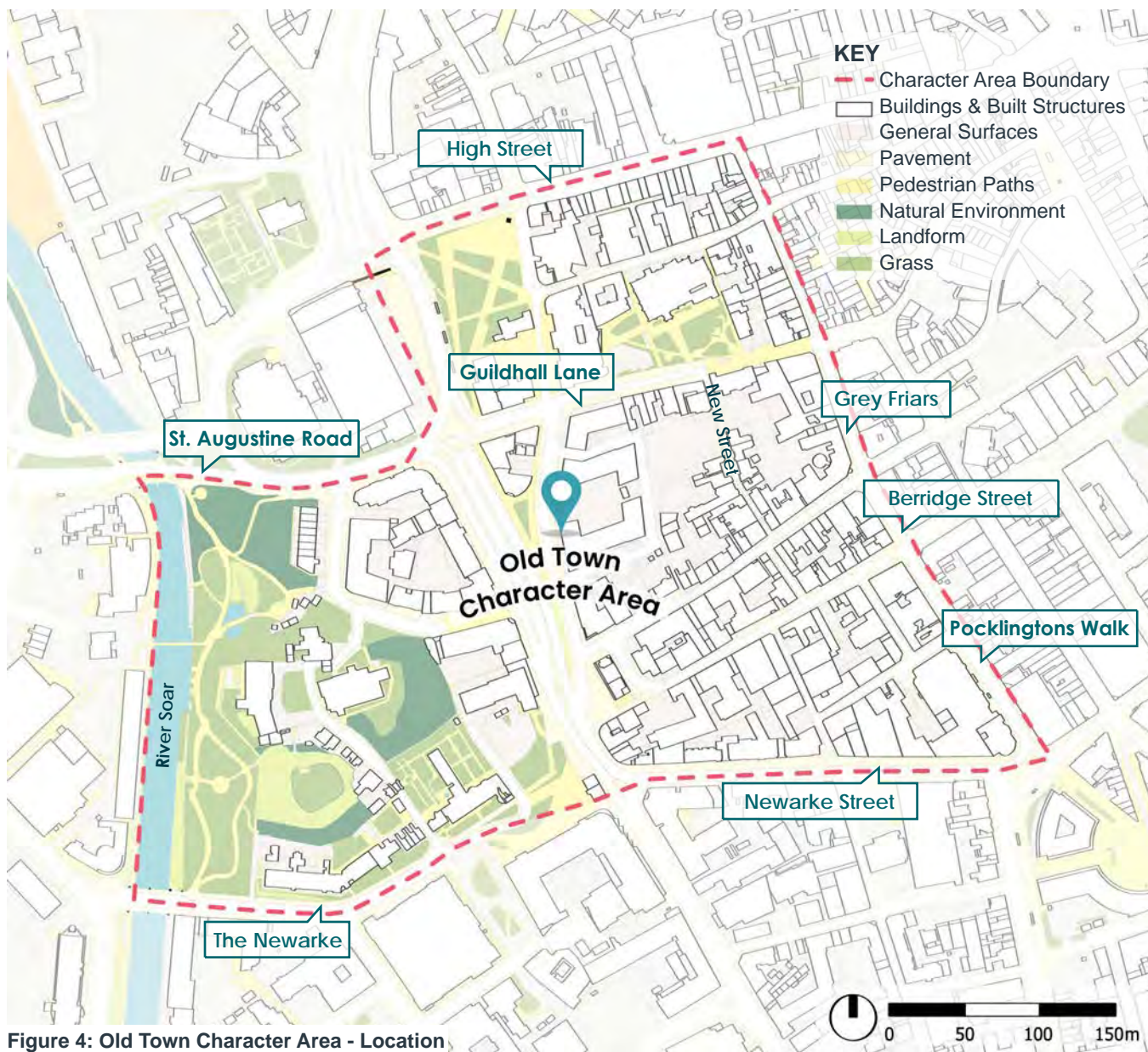

Figure 4: Old Town Character Area - Location

© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

2.2. History & Evolution of Old Town

The Old Town character area is located on the western side of the city. It is the Medieval historic core of the city and contains numerous heritage assets.

Despite the changes to parts of the ancient town and the character area around St Nicholas Circle over the decades, there is still some evidence of the buildings, medieval street pattern and narrow plots from that era.

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

i

Historic maps are used to illustrate the figure ground from the present day. Heritage assets are highlighted showing their relationship to the historic plans and emphasising their importance in this character area at particular times in the past.

The location of the Old Town character area has been marked for further clarity.

Medieval Era

The Motte and Bailey Castle was built in about 1068. The earthwork and buried remains are evident alongside the 12th century northern extension to the bailey, and the northern part of the fortified enclosure known as The Newarke, including the Turret Gateway and the Magazine Gateway. The enclosure was entered from the east via a large gatehouse situated at the bottom of Newarke Street, near the centre of the eastern wall. It is known as the magazine by virtue of its use as such during the Civil War. This gatehouse, Listed Grade I, survives intact and is a three-storey structure, built of sandstone ashlar, with the gate passage offset to the north side.

Up until the late 15th century the castle was still occasionally used as a royal residence. Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI and Edward IV are all known to have stayed there. Richard III also stayed there twice in 1483. During his stays he signed off his letters "from my castle at Leicester." This was the last known record of residency from a member of the royal family at the Castle. In 2012, the remains of Richard III were discovered following archaeological excavation within a Leicester City Council car park in the Greyfriars area of Old Town. The remains were re-interred less than 100m from the original burial site and in a new tomb in Leicester Cathedral.

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

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

1741

The 1741 plans of Old Town show Friar Lane and Millstone Lane as the main east-west routes through Old Town. Newarke Street, Friar Lane and Millstone Lane (and their frontages) have remained relatively consistent since the Georgian era.

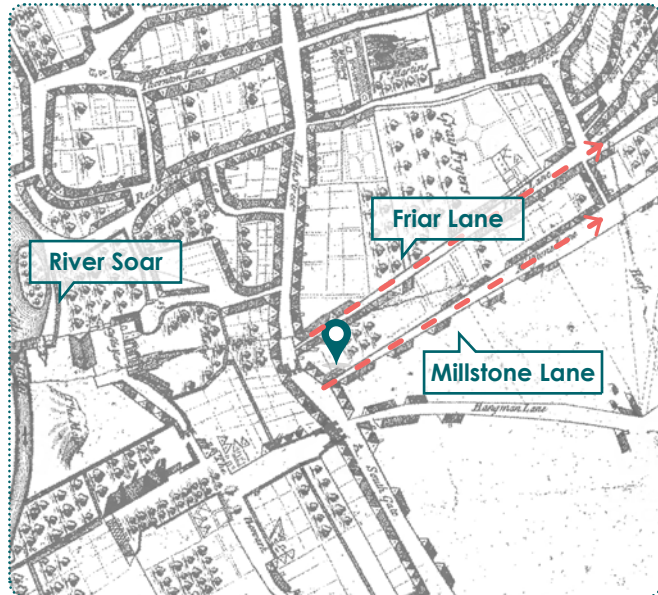The River Soar has always formed a natural barrier between the character area and the west of the city.

1800s

During the 18th Century, with an increasing population, more land was needed and many new buildings were constructed in the south-east of Old Town. This location was attractive as it was far away enough from the congestion of the market and coaching inns, but not too far away to be inconvenient for access to the commercial heart of the town. This was also attractive to many of the wealthiest businesses and social classes.

In 1886 St Nicholas Circle consisted of densely populated blocks and Southgate Street forms the key north-south route out of the character area. From this time period, the west of the character area has always been less densely populated with the Castle Motte and Castle Grounds.
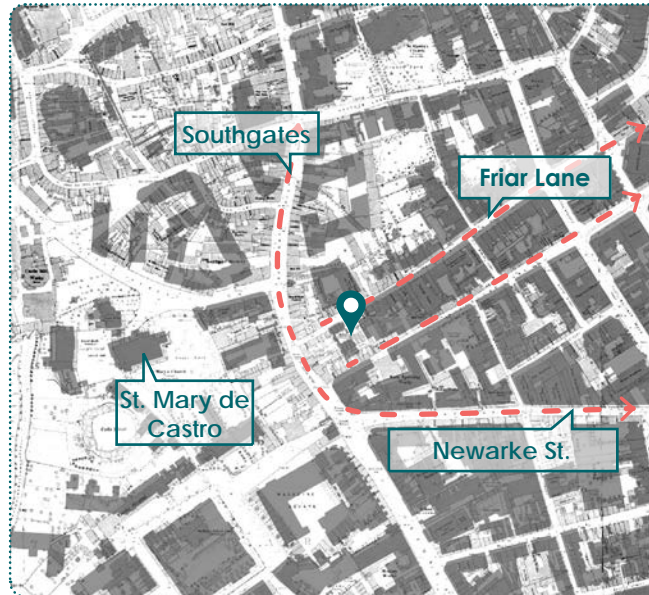
1914-16

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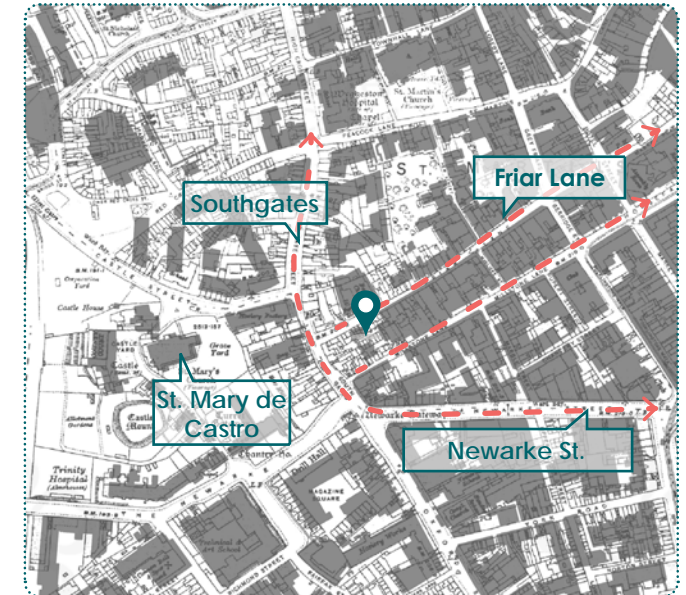

Figure 5: 1741

Figure 6: 1886 - 1887

Figure 7: 1914 - 1916

Figure 8: Southgates shown in the 1950s Prior to Clearance for the Underpass. (Leicester Mercury)

Figure 9: Underpass Construction in the 1960s - Many of the Adjacent to Southgates Blocks had been cleared. (Leicester Mercury)

1960s

During the 1960s, medieval streets and blocks around Southgates/St Nicholas Circle were levelled and cleared for the construction of the new underpass and ring road. The underpass was eventually opened in the late 1960s. The construction of the ring road, underpass and St Nicholas junction detrimentally altered the character of the centre of Old Town into a motor vehicle dominated area. Moreover, a major barrier was created between the west and east of the character area.
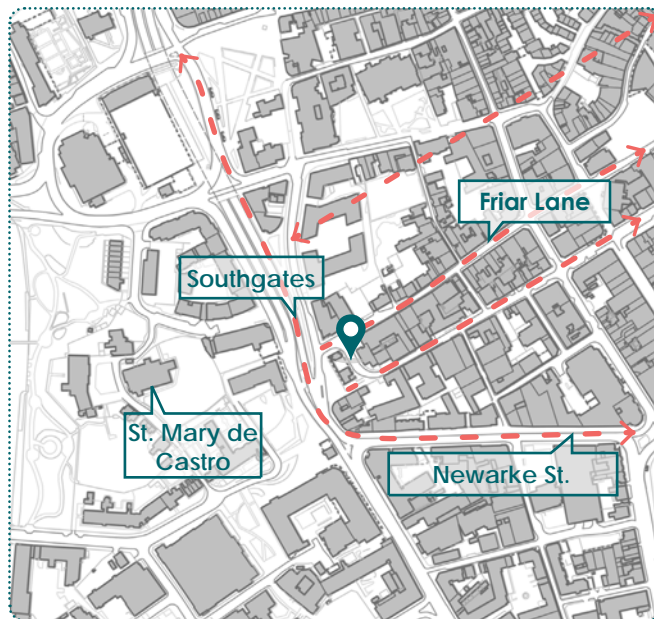
2013–2017

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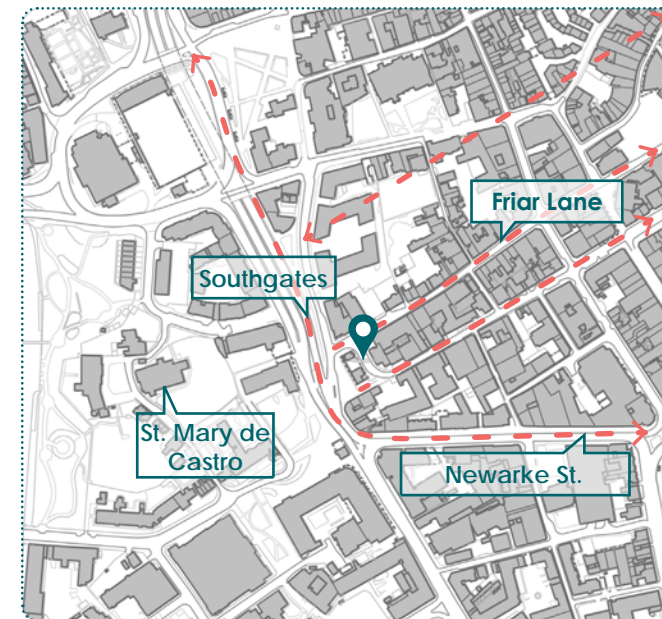

Figure 10: Late 1960s

Figure 11: 2013-2017

2.3. Heritage & Townscape Assets

After reviewing the history and evolution of the Old Town character area, this sub-chapter presents the main heritage and townscape assets of the area (figure 12). However, it should be noted that it does not seek to reproduce the Conservation Area Appraisals (relevant to this character area), although they have informed the present content. For further details the Conservation Area Appraisals and the Conservation Area Management Plans should be referred to and considered.

Additional buildings which make a positive contribution are identified. They are buildings which are not listed, locally listed or within Conservation Areas, however, this classification reflects their importance as part of the townscape of the character area. As such there is a general presumption against the demolition of these buildings.

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

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

KEY
- Key Views
- Heritage Setting
- City Wide Significant Views
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Conservation Area
- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Arch. Survey Needed
- Archaeological Alert Area
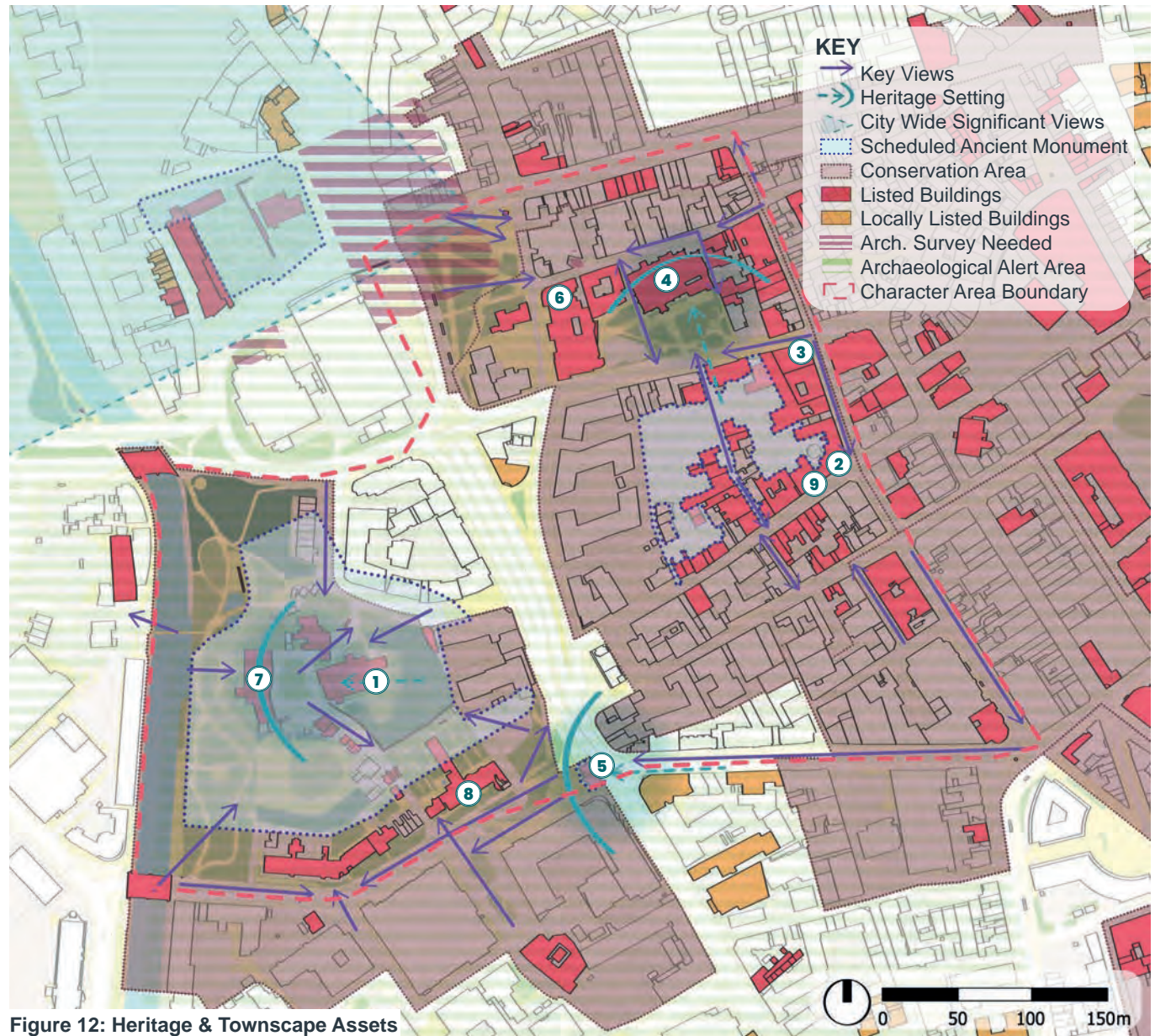- Character Area Boundary

Figure 12: Heritage & Townscape Assets

© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

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

- View north through the 15th Century Turret Gateway looking towards St Mary De Castro.

- View north along New Street with the street and adjacent buildings framing the spire of St Martin's Cathedral.

- View looking west along Newarke Street is terminated by the Magazine Gateway.

- View south-east across Jubilee Square towards the spire of St Martin's Cathedral.

- View west from The Gateway towards the frontage of Trinity House.

- View north-west from the footbridge towards the Grade II West Bridge Mills building.

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

The character area consists of numerous heritage assets that are either nationally designated or locally listed. The locations of some of the many heritage assets in the character area are shown on the plan on the right (figure 12). The images of these building's frontages are shown on the following page (pg 17).

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

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

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

4. St Martin's Cathedral

5. The Magazine Gateway terminates the vista along Newarke Street. The setting of this heritage asset is very important to the legibility within the character area.

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

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

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

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

The locally listed areas, rather than buildings, identified to the north are the known sites of the Roman Mithraeum (Holiday Inn site), one of a handful in the UK, the Forum and Basilica (Jubilee Square) and the Macellum which is the Central Market. Any development in and around these areas will require archaeological investigations.

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

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

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

Archaeological Alert Area

Leicester has a clearly defined historic core. The historic core formed part of the town's defences, first established in the Roman era and re-adopted in the medieval period. The historic core of the city centre is defined as an archaeological alert area and indicates, to developers, where development is most likely to have an impact upon archaeological remains. The entire character area and immediate surrounding context is under the archaeological alert area.
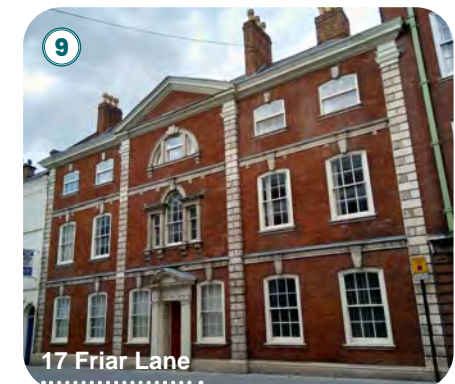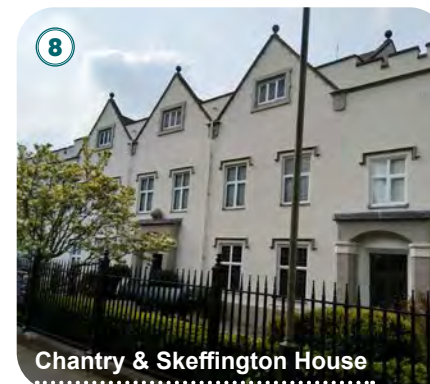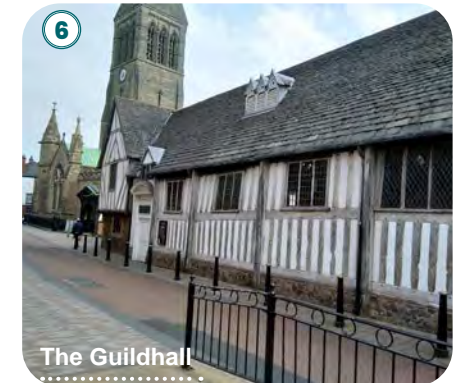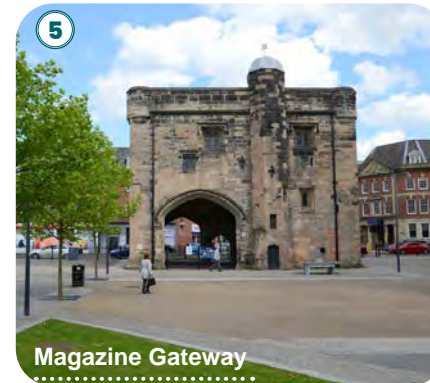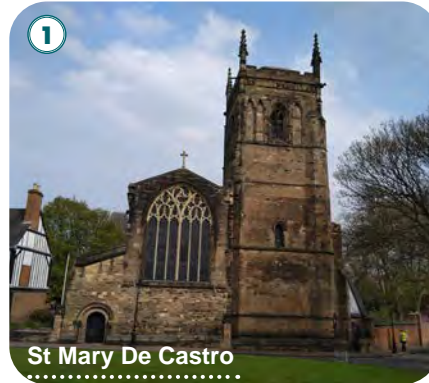
* Please see Heritage & Townscape Assets Plan (figure 12) for the location of the following key building frontages.

1 St Mary De Castro

2 1 Greyfriars

3 4 St. Martins

4 St Martin's Cathedral

5 Magazine Gateway

6 The Guildhall

7 Leicester Castle

8 Chantry & Skeffington House

9 17 Friar Lane
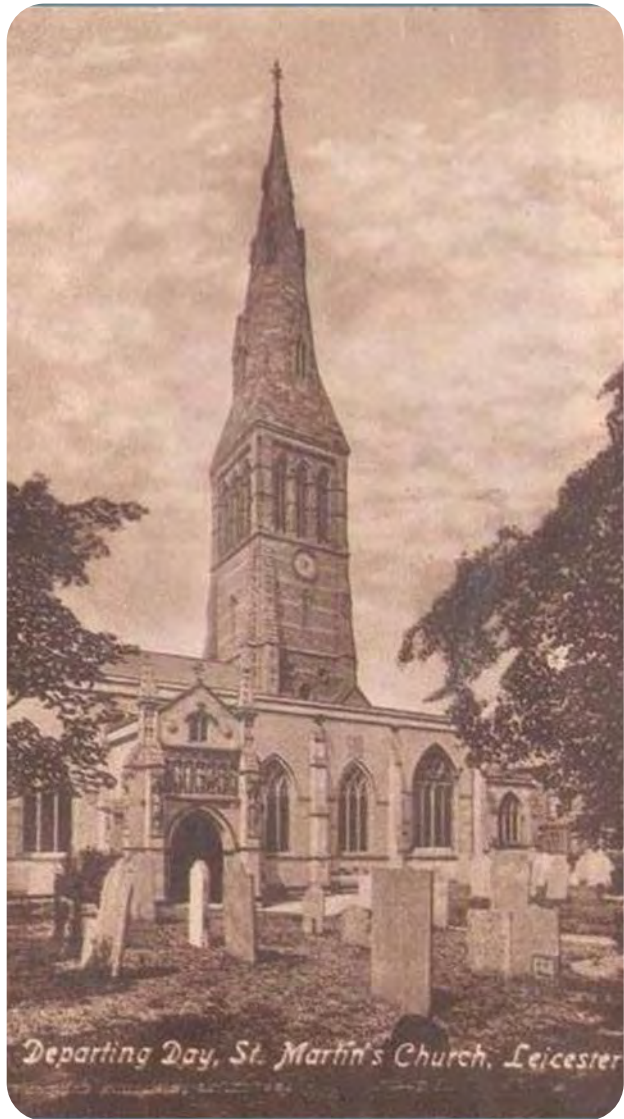
Figure 13: St Martin's Cathedral 1910 (Leicester City Council)

Figure 14: The Globe, Pub 1861- On the Corner of Carts Lane & Silver Street (Leicestershire Records Office)

Figure 15: Turret Gateway & St Mary De Castro, c1900 (Leicester City Council)

Figure 17: Postcard of Applegate Street (1891), (Leicester City Council)

Figure 20: The Magazine Gateway 1916. (Leicester City Council)

Figure 18: Old Town Viewed from St Martin's Cathedral 1867 (Story of Leicester)

Figure 16: Underpass, St Nicholas Circle & Southgates Bus Depot, 1969 (Ben Beazley)

Figure 19: Chantry & Skeffington House with the Wall to the Newarke Still Standing. c1910 (Story of Leicester)

2.4. Urban Grain & Enclosure

Urban grain is usually defined as the pattern of streets and plots/ blocks of an urban area. When the pattern is composed of several small blocks in close proximity it is usually described as fine urban grain, a common characteristic of historic urban centres or areas that have not been car dominated.

Clarity of layout is crucial and is usually achieved through careful arrangement of buildings and spaces, taking priority over roads and car parking. Perimeter blocks are commonly used to achieve successful development through connected streets and well-defined frontages. Fragmented urban grain identifies locations where perimeter blocks have been lost over time to the detriment of the townscape.

The Old Town character area's grain and layout is informed by its long history. One of the most successful aspects of the character area are the well-defined streets in the east of the area. Streets such as Millstone Lane and Grey Friars have strong building lines and with little to no fragmentation. The tight urban grain in this part of the character area has remained largely consistent from the late 1800s. To the west the River Soar forms a natural boundary with the Castle Gardens adjacent. Leicester Castle and its associated fortifications and enclosures are part of the ancient town, although have adapted to changes continuously.

In the 1960's the area around Southgates and St. Nicholas's Square was cleared in order to construct the underpass and ring road. Hence, the urban grain is more fragmented adjacent to the ring road. The Holiday Inn and the car park are isolated on the roundabout.

KEY
■ Urban Blocks
■ Fragmented Urban Blocks
⌐_⌐ Character Area Boundary

Figure 21: Street & Block Pattern
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

Successful places incorporate a good sense of enclosure and definition, enabling places to be experienced as structured. They usually have a strong building line in combination with well-defined, well-connected and well-designed perimeter blocks, boundaries, streets and public spaces. Strong frontages, local markers and gateways are further elements of the townscape, contributing to the familiarity of a place, its story, character and distinctiveness, which forge a sense of belonging and pride.

Generally, all of the streets are well enclosed with strong and consistent building lines characteristic of the historic street pattern and urban grain.

The frontages along the ring road have consistent building lines but there is no consistency of height and the dominance of the vehicle over place-making remains given the width and amount of carriageway required. There are isolated plots of development between the historic route of Southgates and the ring road.

The northern edge of Castle Gardens adds enclosure through its formal boundaries and mature tree planting. Jubilee Square is well enclosed and to its west edge planting has been used to add enclosure and shelter the space from the ring road.

KEY
— Strong Frontages
— Good Enclosure
— Weak Enclosure
■ Buildings & Built Structures
*As strong frontages are only defined heritage assets and buildings making a positive contribution.
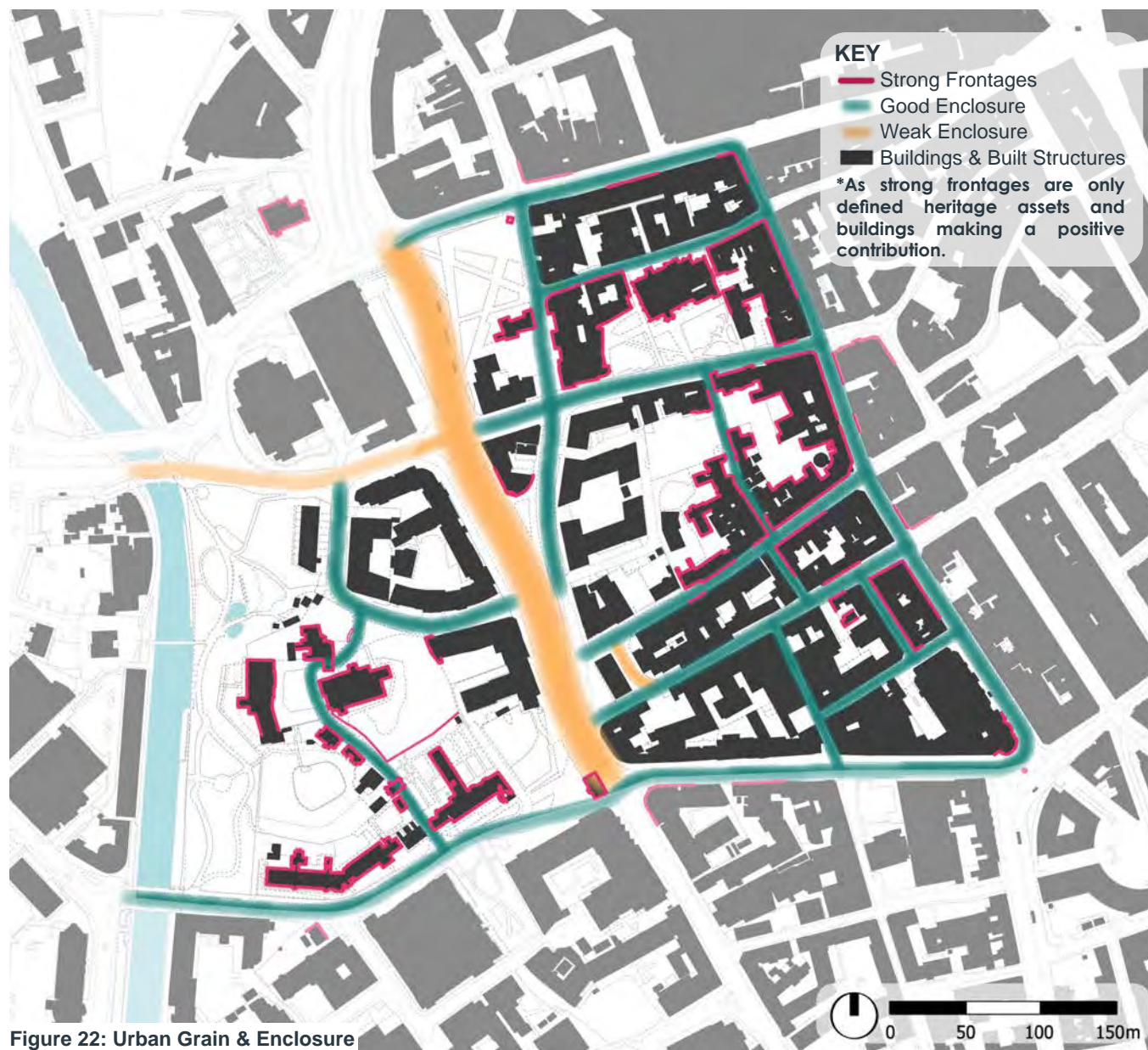
0   50   100   150m

Figure 22: Urban Grain & Enclosure
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

2.5. Height & Massing

Context

Five main height categories have been defined, in accordance with the 'Tall Development in Leicester' evidence base document, where any building/ built structure above 24 metres is considered as 'tall' and any above 45 metres as 'super tall'. Buildings/ built structures between 21 and 24 metres, although not perceived as tall, fall within a transition zone between what is and is not tall. Such buildings will need to be considered with care. Furthermore, another category that has been identified is the 'tall in context' buildings/ built structures, including buildings/ built structures of any height that are relatively taller than those within their surroundings. To note 3m is broadly equivalent to one residential storey.

The existing heights in the Old Town Area predominately consists of buildings that are less than 21m with many below 9m. Along key pedestrian connections such as High Street, Pocklingtons Walk and Newarke Street there are buildings that have a height between 9 to 21m. The spire of St Martin's Cathedral towers above the ambient height of Old Town. The cathedral's spire and tower is designated as a tall building in this context, at a height of 61m. The spire of St. Mary de Castro, due to structural instability was removed in 2014. Today the remaining tower is still visible (24m).

KEY
- 0 - 9m.
- 9 - 21m.
- 21 - 24m.
- 24 - 45m.
- Above 45m.
- Tall in Context
- Character Area Boundary

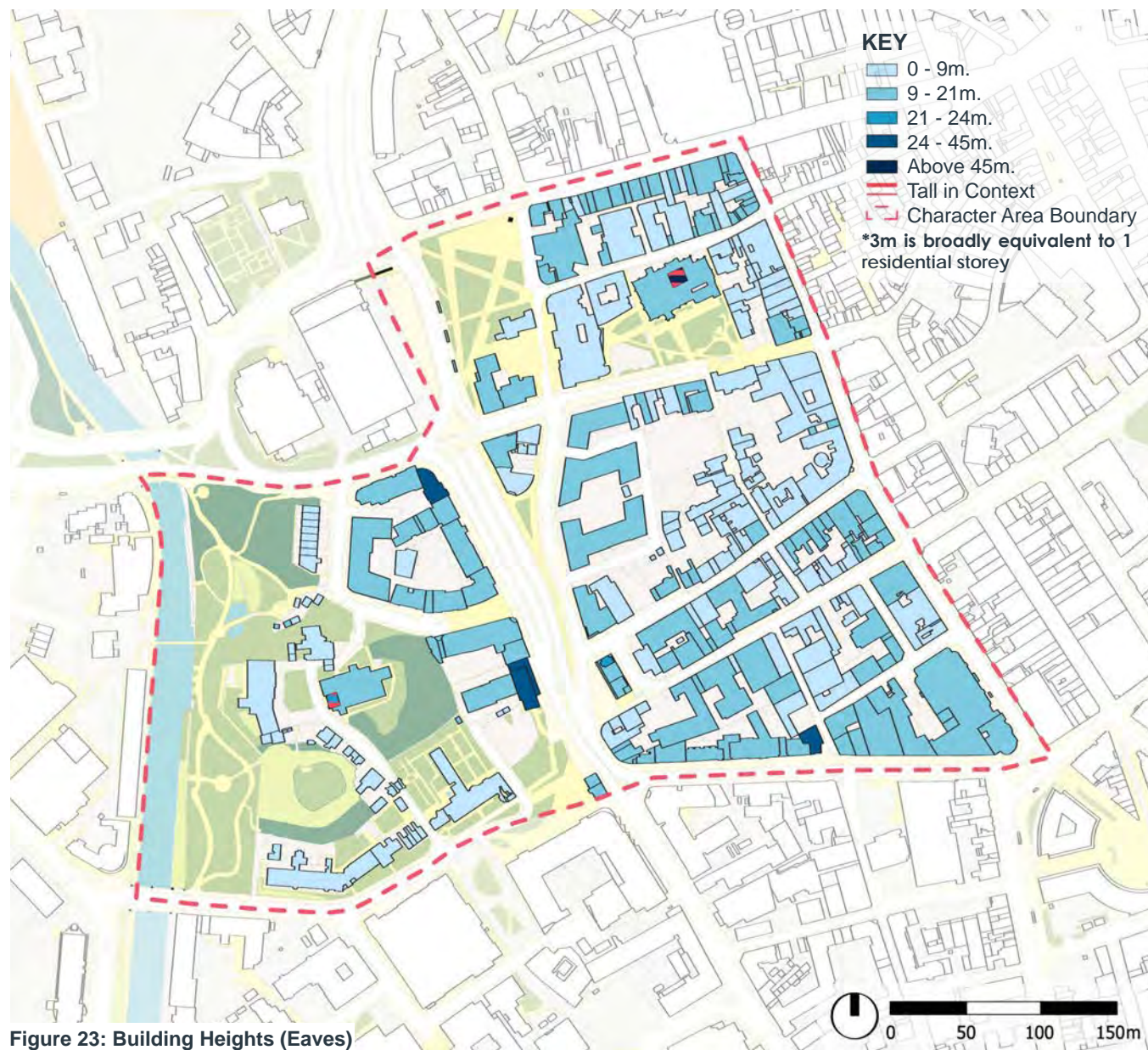***3m is broadly equivalent to 1 residential storey**

Figure 23: Building Heights (Eaves)
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

There is a consistency of scale of the eaves heights to many of the frontages along the narrow and historic streets, especially within the Greyfriars Conservation Area.

There are a couple of buildings which stand out as being significantly above the general ambient height of the area;

- the iQ student accommodation on Newarke Street with some elements above 24m
- Edith Murphy House (De Montfort University) on the ring road above 24m

These two buildings, in particularly have a detrimental impact on the legibility of the area and reinforce the severance of the ring road.

- Unite student accommodation adjacent to St. Nicholas Circle at 30m

Planning History

There has been limited new development in the Old Town character area due to the unavailability of sites.

The Lumis Living student accommodation building on Southgates is one of the largest recent developments and has a comparatively higher height, at maximum height of 19m, than the ambient height of Old Town. However, the elements of the Lumis Living student accommodation buildings that are 19m are adjacent to the ring road and the impact on heritage assets is not as significant.

Recent approvals include:

- **20160613** Land to Rear of 10-14 New Street, Demolition of outbuilding; construction of four houses (1 x 2 bed and 3 x 3 bed) at a maximum height of 11.3m.
- **20170967** Land to Rear of 10-14 New Street, Construction of two houses (2 x 3 bed) at a maximum height of 8m.
- **20180604** at 39-41 Castle Street - Demolition of existing two storey office building and redevelopment of the site to provide a building ranging from 9.7m to 15.5m comprising 20 cluster flats (122 student bedrooms) and 3 x 1 bed student studio flats.

- **20190958** at 59 Friar Lane - Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a building ranging from 12.15m to 15.15m comprising 90 student bedrooms.
- **20201133** at 9-11 Marble Street - Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a building of maximum height 18.3m comprising 48 student bedrooms and 13 x 1 bed studio flats.

2.6. Land Uses

There are a variety of uses within Old Town. However, the main uses include retail, office and residential. Some of the uses are located amongst specific streets and locations within the character area. For example, retail uses are unsurprisingly predominately located along key shopping streets such High Street and Loseby Lane.

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

There are many residential uses within Old Town. With the character area's close proximity to the DMU campus, many of these residential uses consist of student accommodation, including buildings such as Lumis Student Living on Southgates, Liberty Court on Castle Street and the IQ Student accommodation building on Newarke Street.

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

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

KEY
- Places of Worship
- Community Services
- Educational Uses
- Vacant Sites
- Car Parking Uses
- Utilities
- Leisure Uses
- Office Uses
- Commercial & Retail Uses
- Industrial Uses
- Residential Uses
- Character Area Boundary
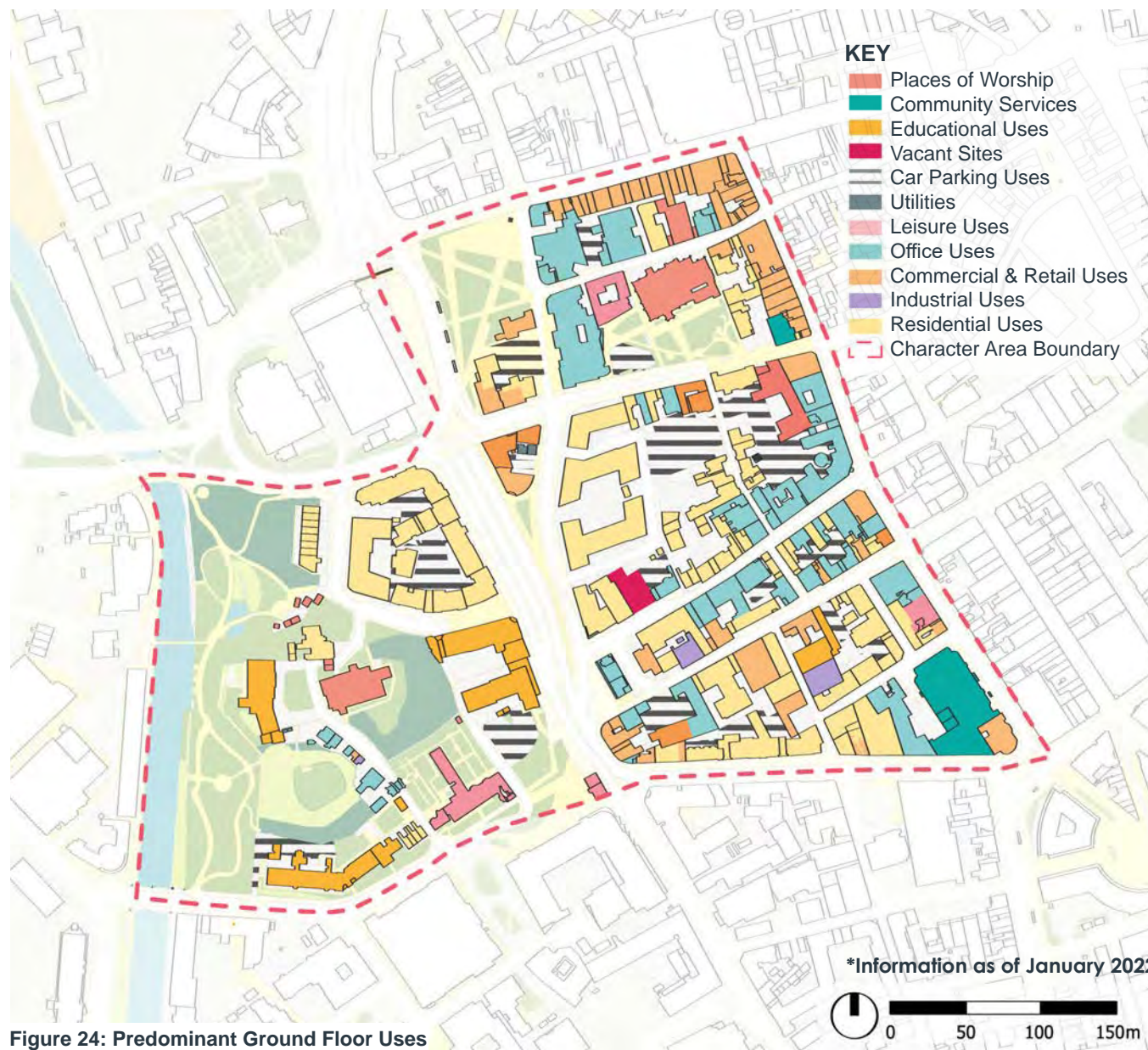
*Information as of January 2022

0   50   100   150m

Figure 24: Predominant Ground Floor Uses

© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).
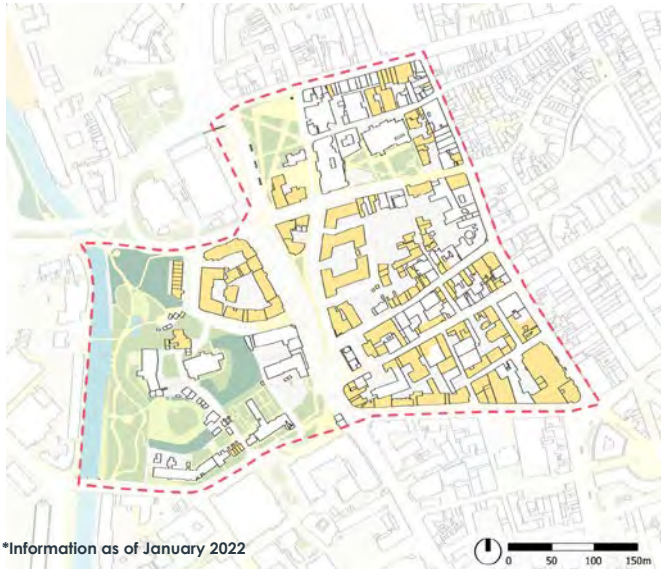
Figure 25: Residential

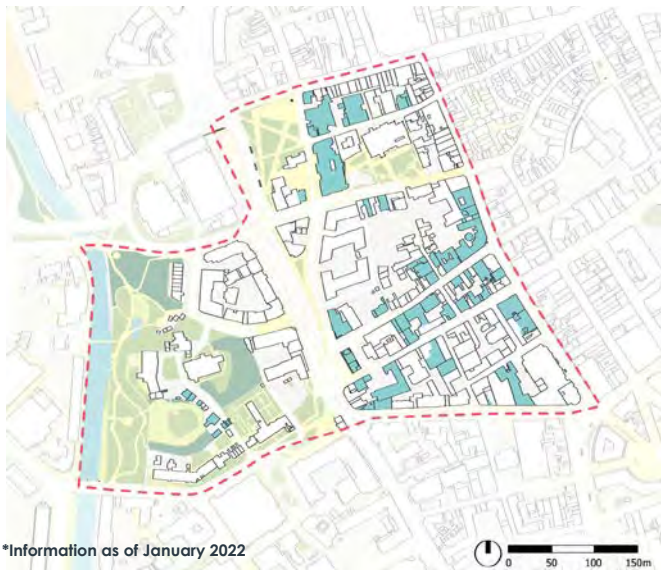**Figure 27: Industrial**

Figure 29: Leisure

Figure 26: Office

Figure 28: Commercial & Retail

Places of Worship
Community Services
Hotels, Motels etc.
Educational Uses
Vacant Sites
Car Parking Uses
Utilities
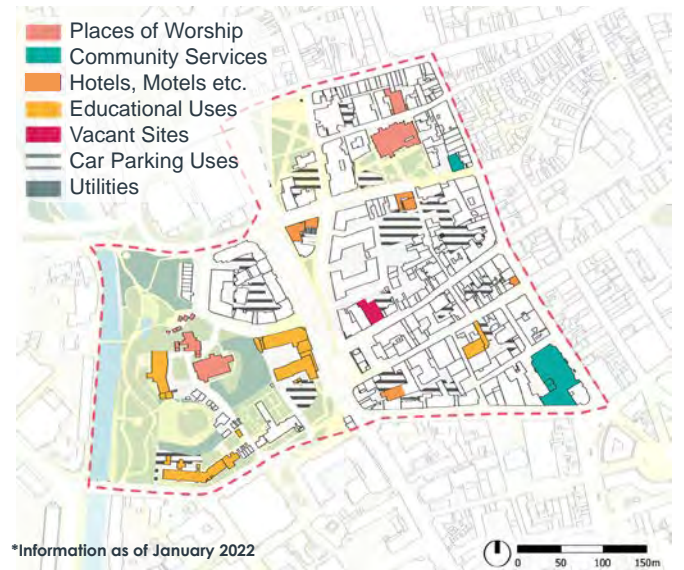
Figure 30: Miscellaneous

2.7. Community Infrastructure & Influence

Within the character area there are a large number of facilities, buildings and services that are destinations for city residents and visitors to the city from other places. These include the museums, major heritage attractions, places of worship, De Montfort University, leisure uses and the commercial and retail offer throughout the area. It is also a destination to experience the cohesive heritage of Leicester and its historic past, having a variety of public spaces. Many of these facilities would also be used by residents living within Old Town.

Outside the area, nearby community facilities include the sports and play facilities on Bede Park, Castlemead Secondary School and the Health Centres on Mill Lane and Bowling Green Street.

Figure 31: Community Infrastructure
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).
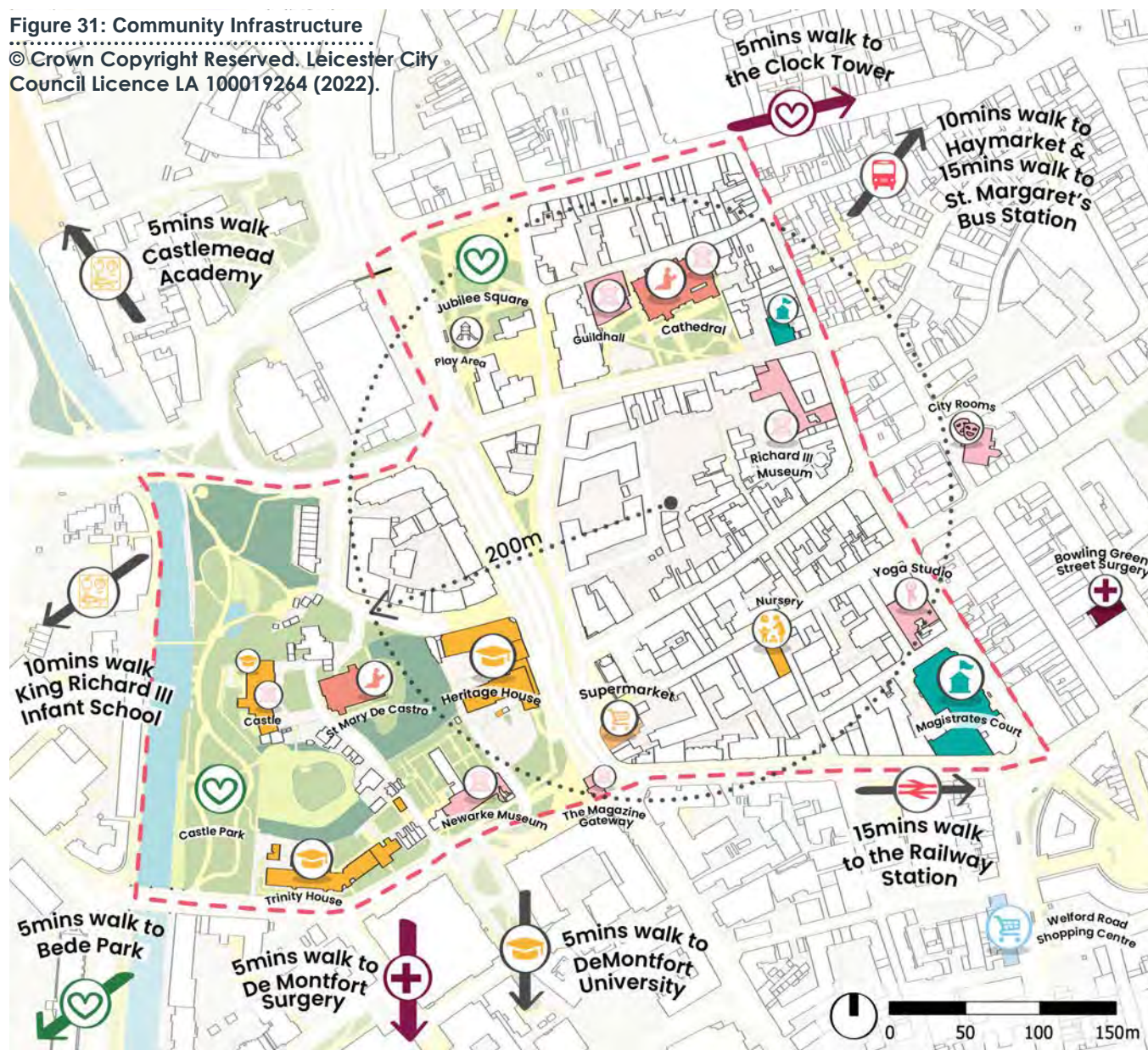
KEY
- Places of Worship
- Community Services
- Educational Uses
- Leisure Uses
- Character Area Boundary

2.8. Housing & Tenure

Looking at the Old Town character area the residential coverage is relatively large if above ground uses are considered. The housing is predominantly flats, with some larger managed rental accommodation within the purpose-built buildings. The housing is primarily for students to the west of the character area to mid-scale managed accommodation (again for students) to the former development sites in the east of the area. Recent planning approvals continue this pattern of housing supply.

There are pockets of family housing in the area, with some occupied as individual dwellings by a small number of families and couples committed to Old Town as their home. Most are houses of multiple occupation for the rental market and in recent times, when properties have become available, particularly in the Greyfriars Conservation Area, this has increased.

KEY
- Residential Institutions
- HMO (5 occupiers and above)
- Flats
- Terraced Houses
- Semi-Detached Houses
- Supportive Residential Uses
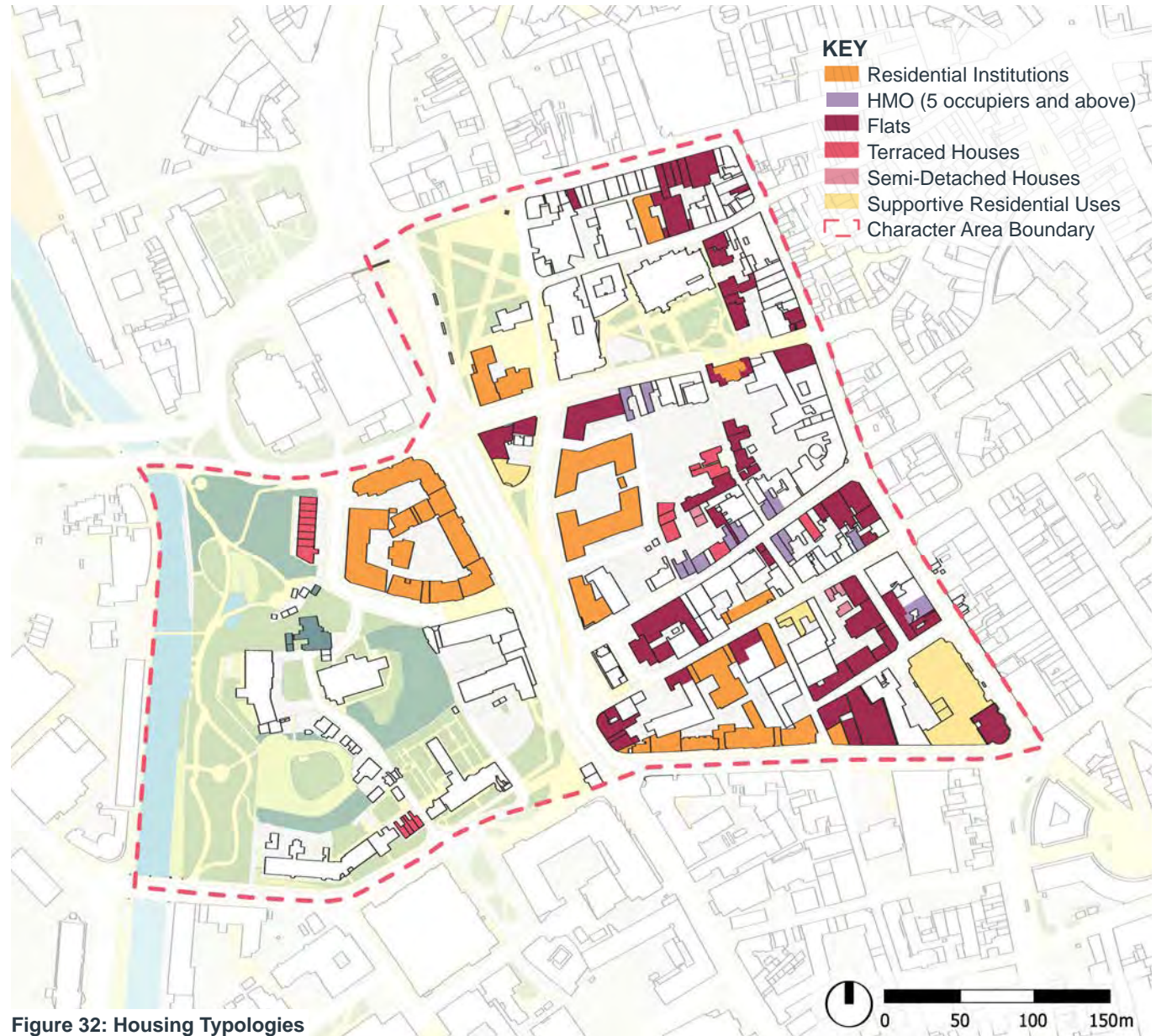- Character Area Boundary

0   50   100   150m

Figure 32: Housing Typologies
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

2.9. Open Spaces & Public Realm

There are three main spaces within the area itself, all with a very different type of character. Castle Gardens is within the Castle Conservation Area, given its historic importance, and could be described as a quiet and well-landscaped open space for relaxation and meeting. This is very similar to Cathedral Gardens, although it is much smaller in scale. Jubilee Square is a more urban public space, and is often used as a venue for festivals and outdoor events and it is also a popular meeting place.

Within a 5 minute walk is Nelson Mandela Park and Bede Park, a neighbourhood park to the west of the River Soar, ideal for play and sports.

The larger city parks, Abbey and Victoria Parks are within a 20 minute walk.

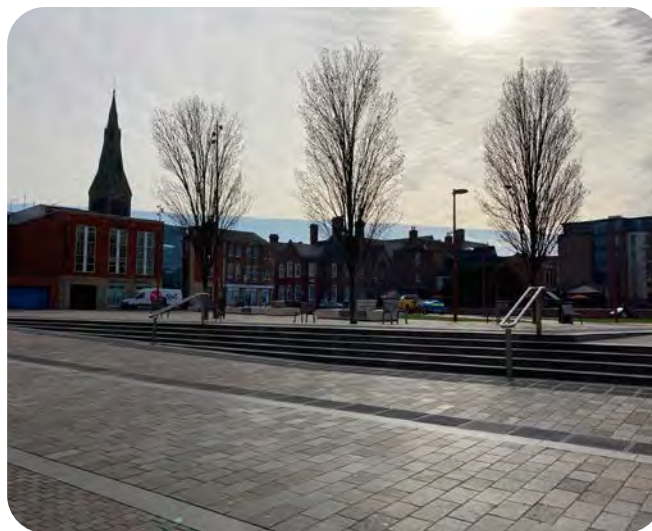**Figure 33: Castle Gardens**

Figure 34: Cathedral Gardens

Figure 35: Jubilee Square

Figure 36: Bede Park

2.10. Movement & Connectivity

Street Hierarchy

The street typologies or street character types are taken from the Leicester Street Design Guide (2019) and are representative of the street types found within the city centre. It is useful to understand where priority has been given to vehicle movement, through the higher order streets (arterial road, centre connector) and those which are lower order streets (neighbourhood streets, pedestrian priority zones etc.), which prioritise their place-function, while meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. '*Streets make up the greatest part of the public realm*' (Manual for Streets (DfT 2007)) and better designed streets therefore contribute significantly to the quality of the built environment and play a key role in the creation of sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities.

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

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

KEY
- Main Arterial Road
- Centre Connector Road
- Centre Link
- Centre Calmed Street
- Neighbourhood Street
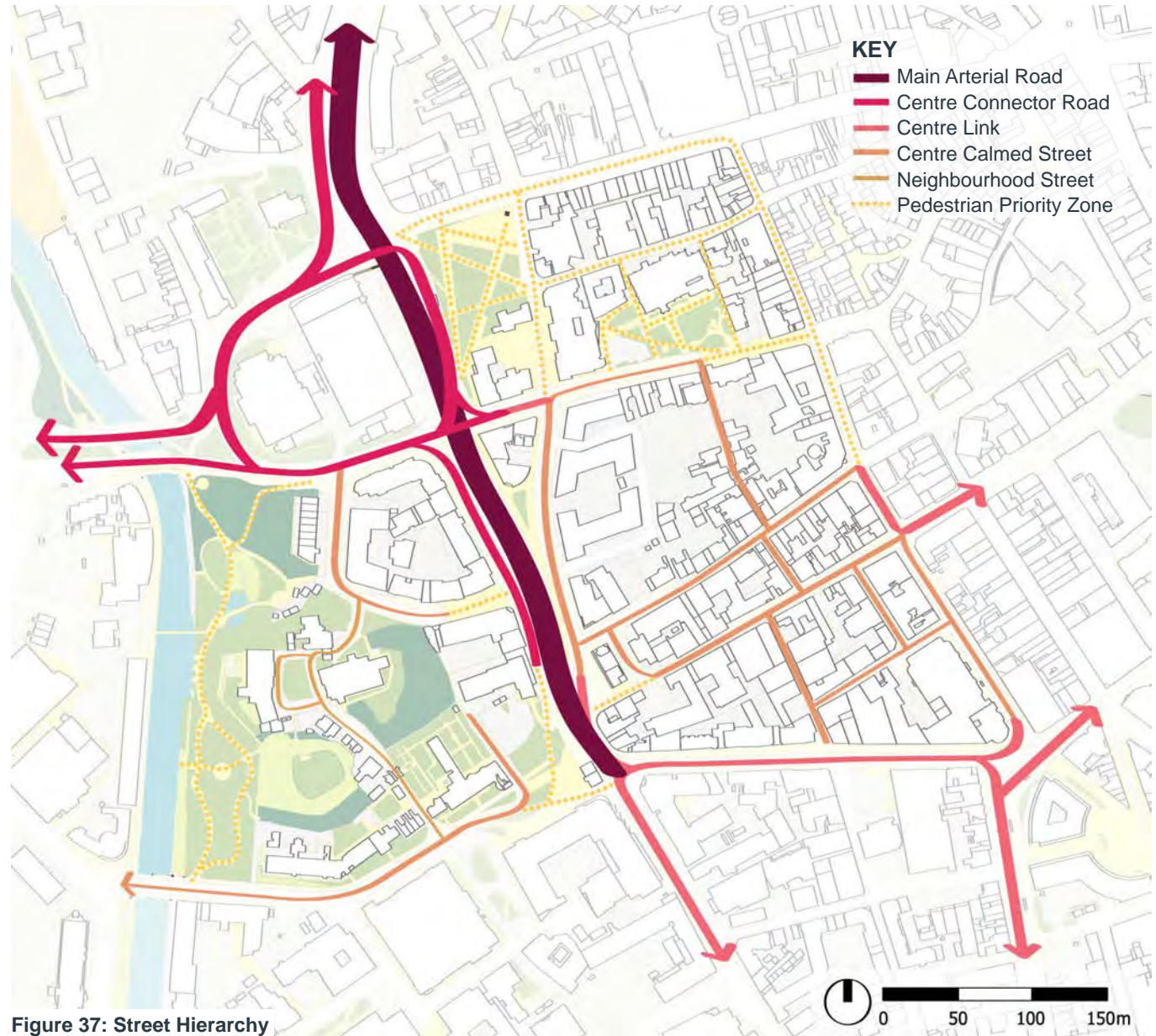- Pedestrian Priority Zone

Figure 37: Street Hierarchy
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

0   50   100   150m

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

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

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

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

Main Arterial, Southgates Underpass
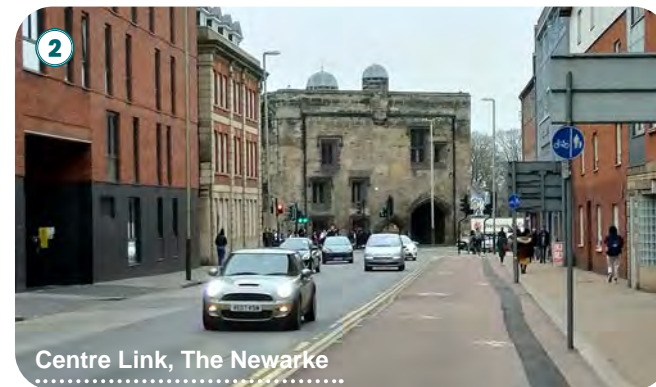
Centre Link, The Newarke
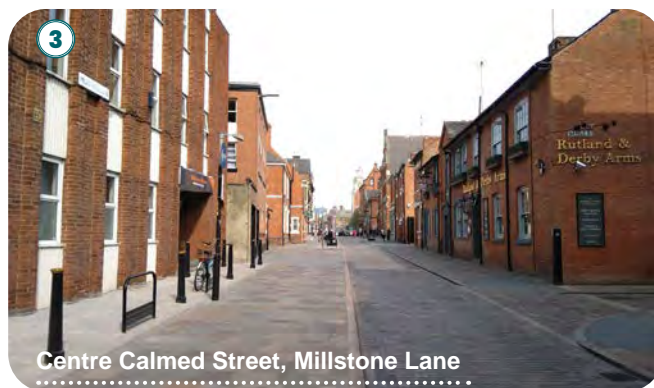
Centre Calmed Street, Millstone Lane

Pedestrian Priority Zone, Applegate

Neighbourhood Street, Castle View
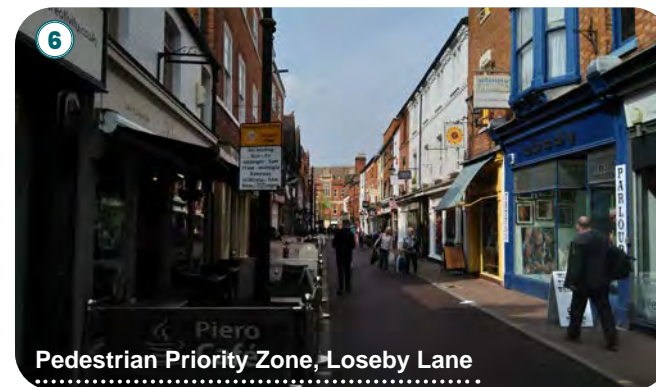
Pedestrian Priority Zone, Loseby Lane

Parking Areas & Streets Configuration

The network of streets in Old Town character area could be considered to be at two extremes, with the vehicle dominated ring road severing the east and west of the area and the traffic calmed neighbourhood streets and pedestrian only zones with characterise most of the area.

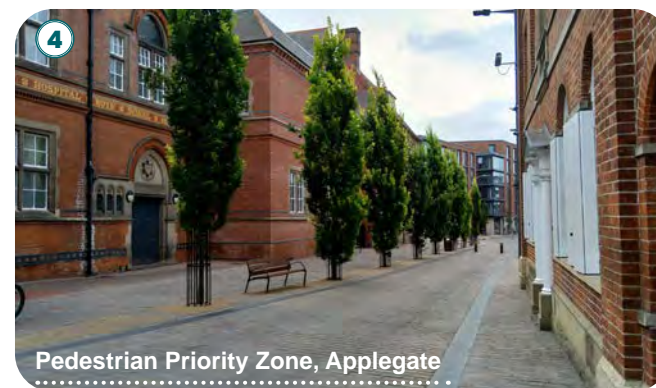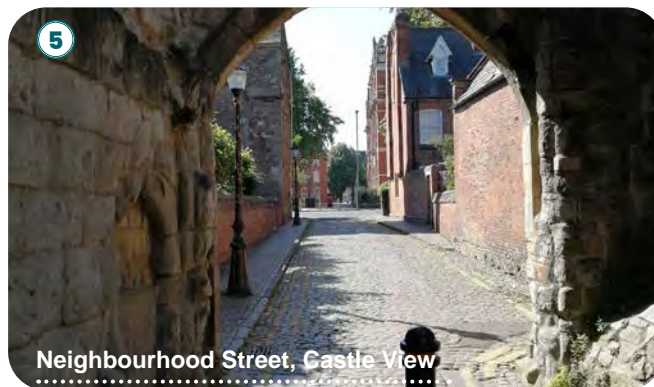The street configuration, apart from the ring road, follows the historic street pattern and narrow streets with increased space allocated to pedestrians and cyclists requires one way vehicle movements. Some streets do provide a small number of on street parking bays.

Other car parking areas are mostly surface car parks and, with the exception of a couple of areas, are generally within perimeter blocks and behind the street frontages so having minimal impact on the townspace. The car parking area to the south of Edith Murphy House and its access off The Newarke has the most detrimental impact, effecting the setting of Newarke House Museum, and the design of the public space in this area, which could be expanded and improved.

KEY
- P Car Park Areas
- One Way Streets
- Two Way Streets
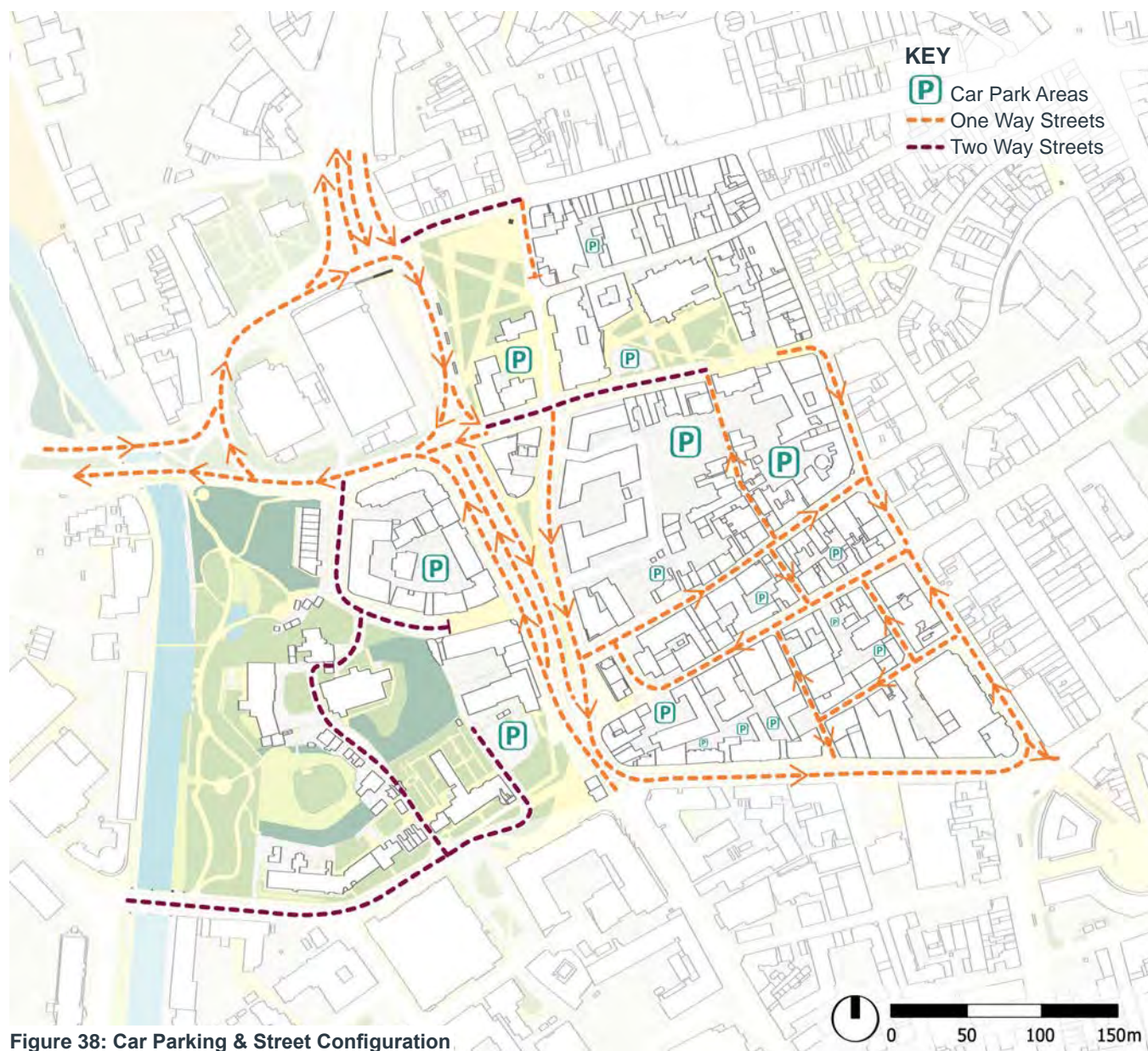
Figure 38: Car Parking & Street Configuration
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

Public Transport

The character area is well served by buses along the primary streets on its periphery and centrally on the ring road.

The Haymarket bus station is within a 10 minute walk and St. Margaret's bus station is within a 15 minute walk.

The Railway Station is within a 15 minute walk.

KEY
— Public Transport Route
🚌 Bus Stop

Figure 39: Public Transport
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

0   50   100   150m

Cycle & Pedestrian Movement

Cycling routes are taken from the Leicester Cycling Map, including cycling infrastructure relevant to the city centre, on road cycle lanes, off road routes, bus lanes where cycling is permitted, pedestrian streets and recommended on road routes. Future cycling infrastructure that is guaranteed to be delivered is also identified. The main pedestrian connections are identified through a combination of local knowledge, observation, previous research undertaken by Leicester City Council and Space Syntax ™ online information.

The character area has undergone improvements to the public realm in recent years and as a result there is a significant number of pedestrian priority zones, such as High Street to the north as part of the retail core and former Heritage Action zone area in Greyfriars Conservation Area. The area to the east of the ring road is generally well connected for pedestrians supported by pedestrian and cycle friendly streets.

However, the ring road is a barrier to connectivity for pedestrians between the east of Old Town to the west. Improvements in recent years have been focused to address this.

The main pedestrian gateways into the area from the west are Newarke and West Bridge and Pocklingtons Walk from the south. A number of connections are available from the east.

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

KEY
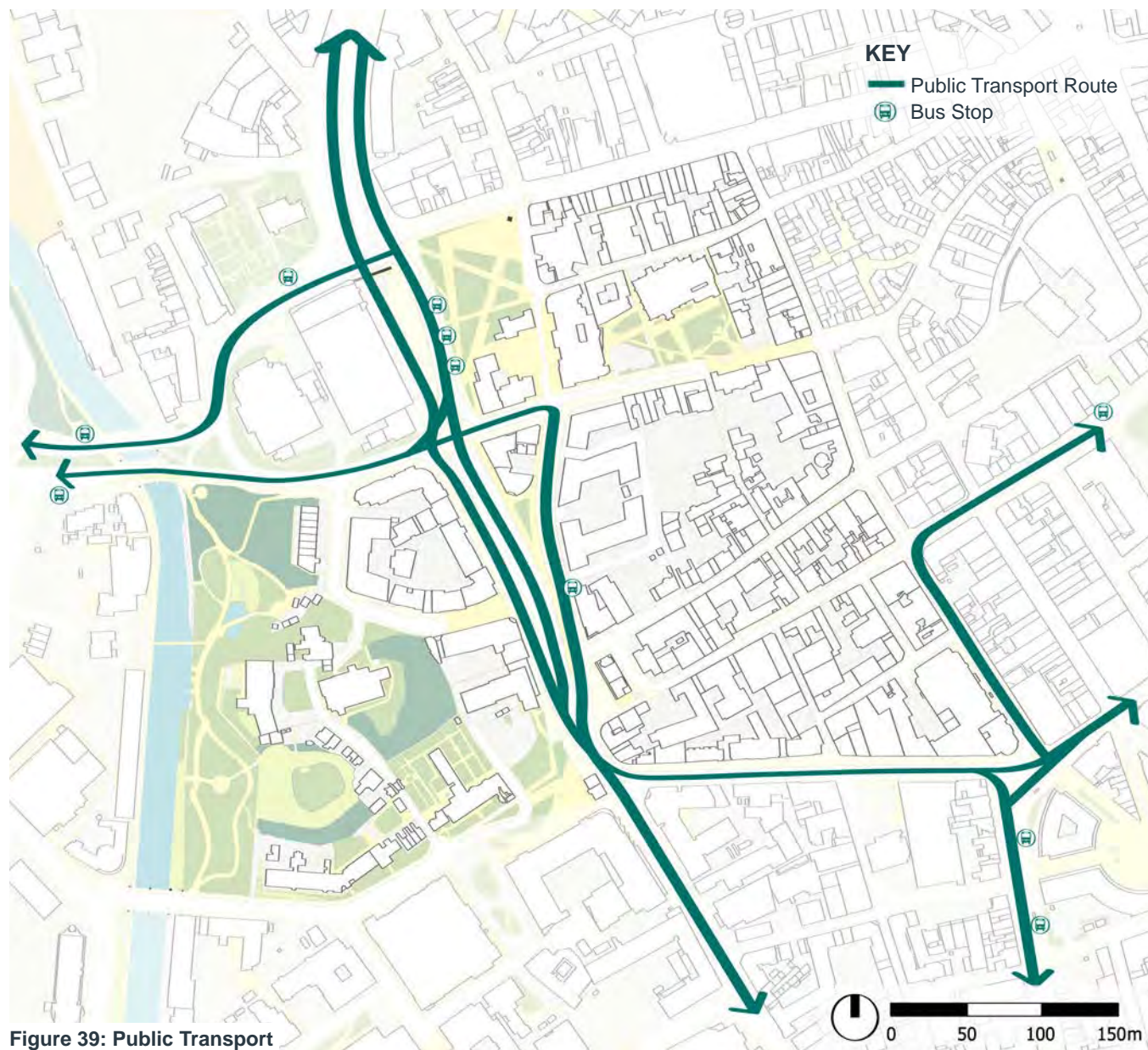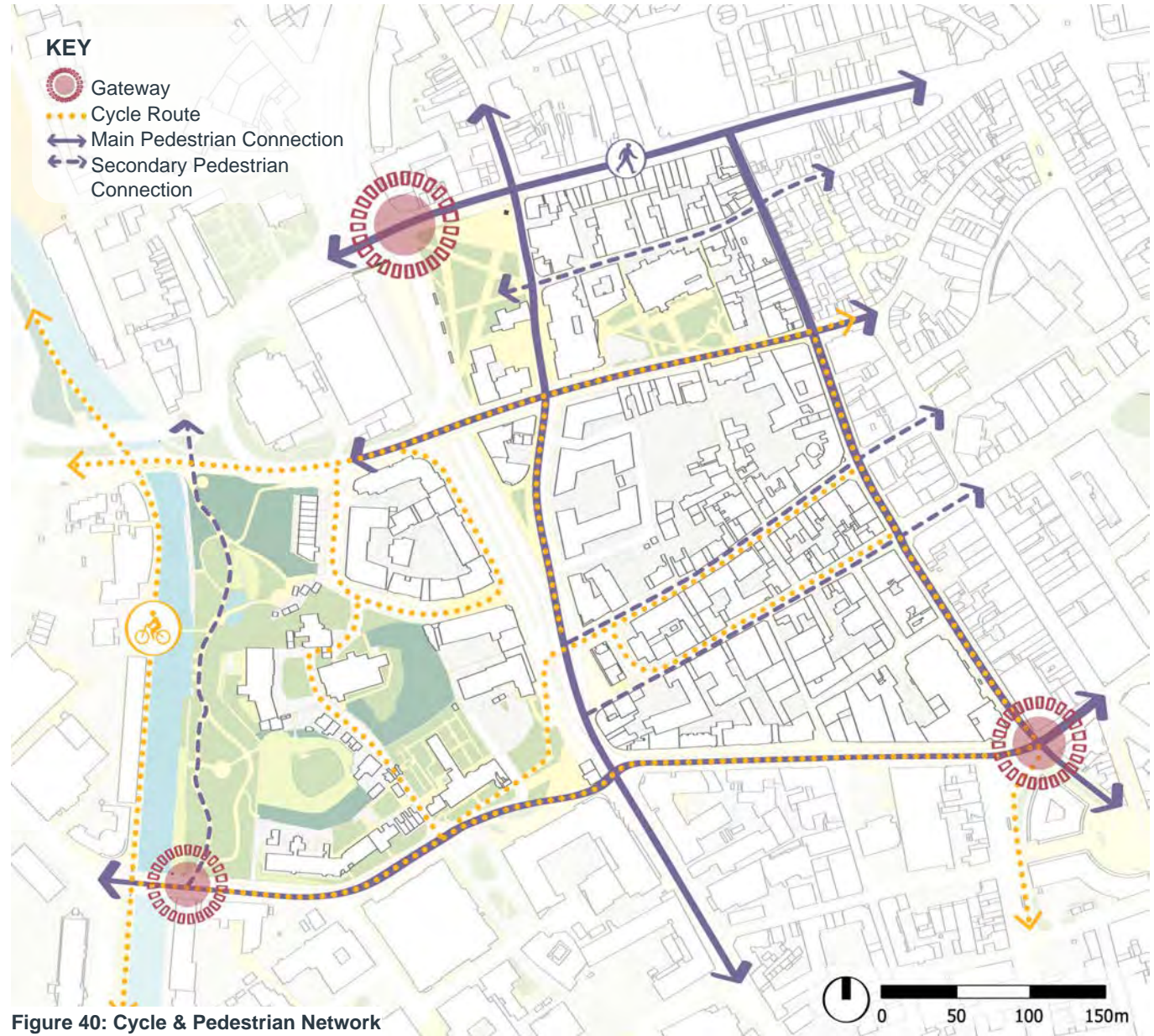- Gateway
- Cycle Route
- Main Pedestrian Connection
- Secondary Pedestrian Connection

Figure 40: Cycle & Pedestrian Network
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

2.11. Connecting Leicester Improvements

Connecting Leicester is a vision to create and provide a connected, accessible, safe and family friendly city centre. The City Mayor is committed to creating a thriving heart of the city that takes away barriers and greatly improves the connections between key places within the city, including the 'hidden gems' as part of Leicester's story, and shopping, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities. Connecting Leicester is a series of key projects bringing together special buildings and places, reducing the dominance of roads and helping to create an attractive, pedestrian friendly environment.

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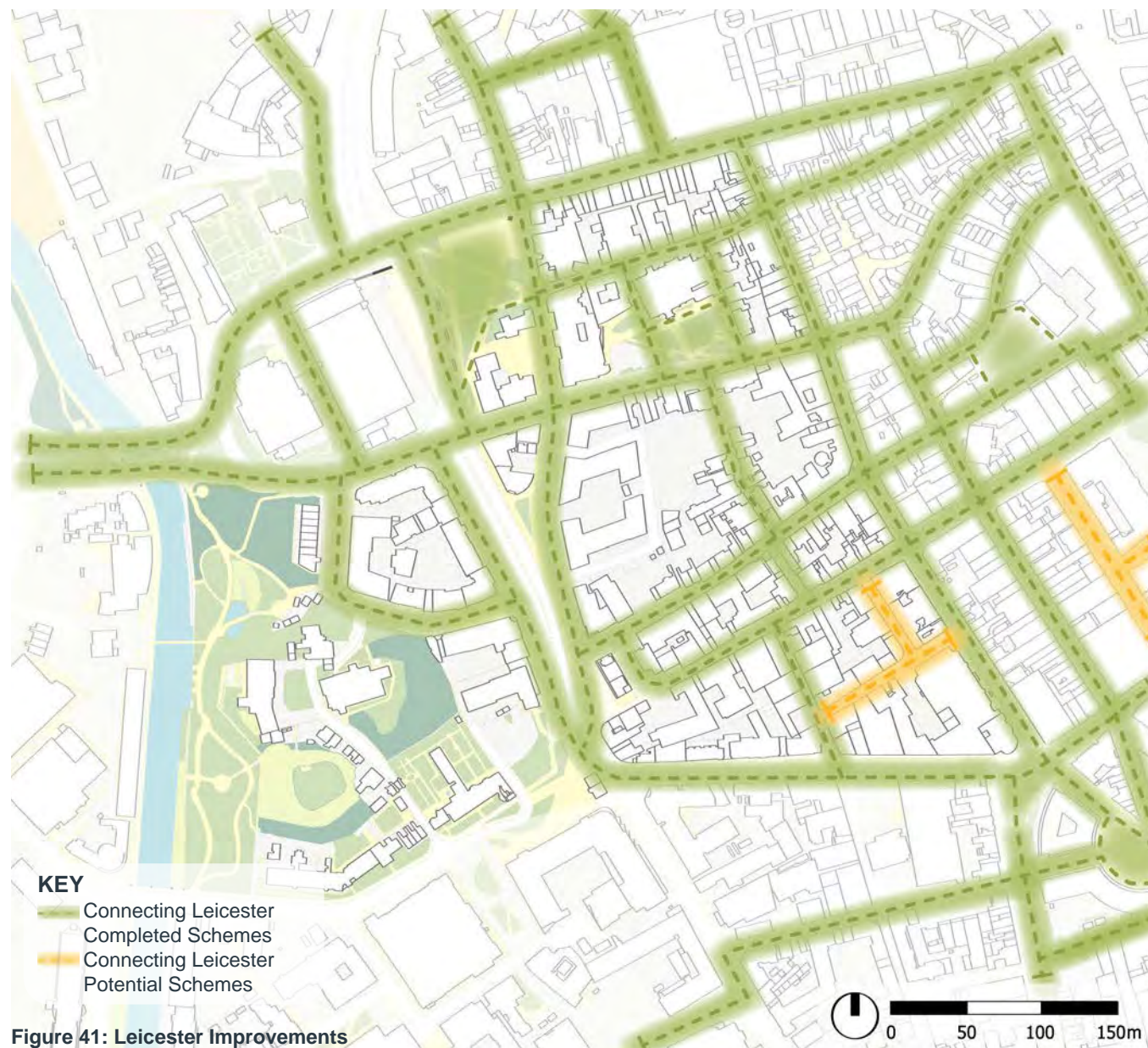

KEY

— Connecting Leicester Completed Schemes

— Connecting Leicester Potential Schemes

Figure 41: Leicester Improvements

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

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

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

Figure 42: Jubilee Square Before Connecting Leicester Improvements (BBC)

Figure 43: Jubilee Square After Connecting Leicester Improvements

Figure 44: St. Martins/Peacock Lane Before Connecting Leicester Improvements (LCC)

Figure 45: St. Martins/Peacock Lane After Connecting Leicester Improvements

Figure 46: Millstone Lane Before Connecting Leicester Improvements

Figure 47: Millstone Lane After Connecting Leicester Improvements

2.12. Active Frontages

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

There is a good concentration of active frontages within the Old Town character area. The portion of the Old Town that is within the Greyfriars and Market Street Conservation Areas is especially active with frontages providing good surveillance on to the public realm. The most active frontages are found on the primarily retail dominant streets of High Street, Carts Lane and Loseby Lane. A significant amount of activity is provided by pedestrians moving through the area and enjoying the high quality public spaces.

KEY
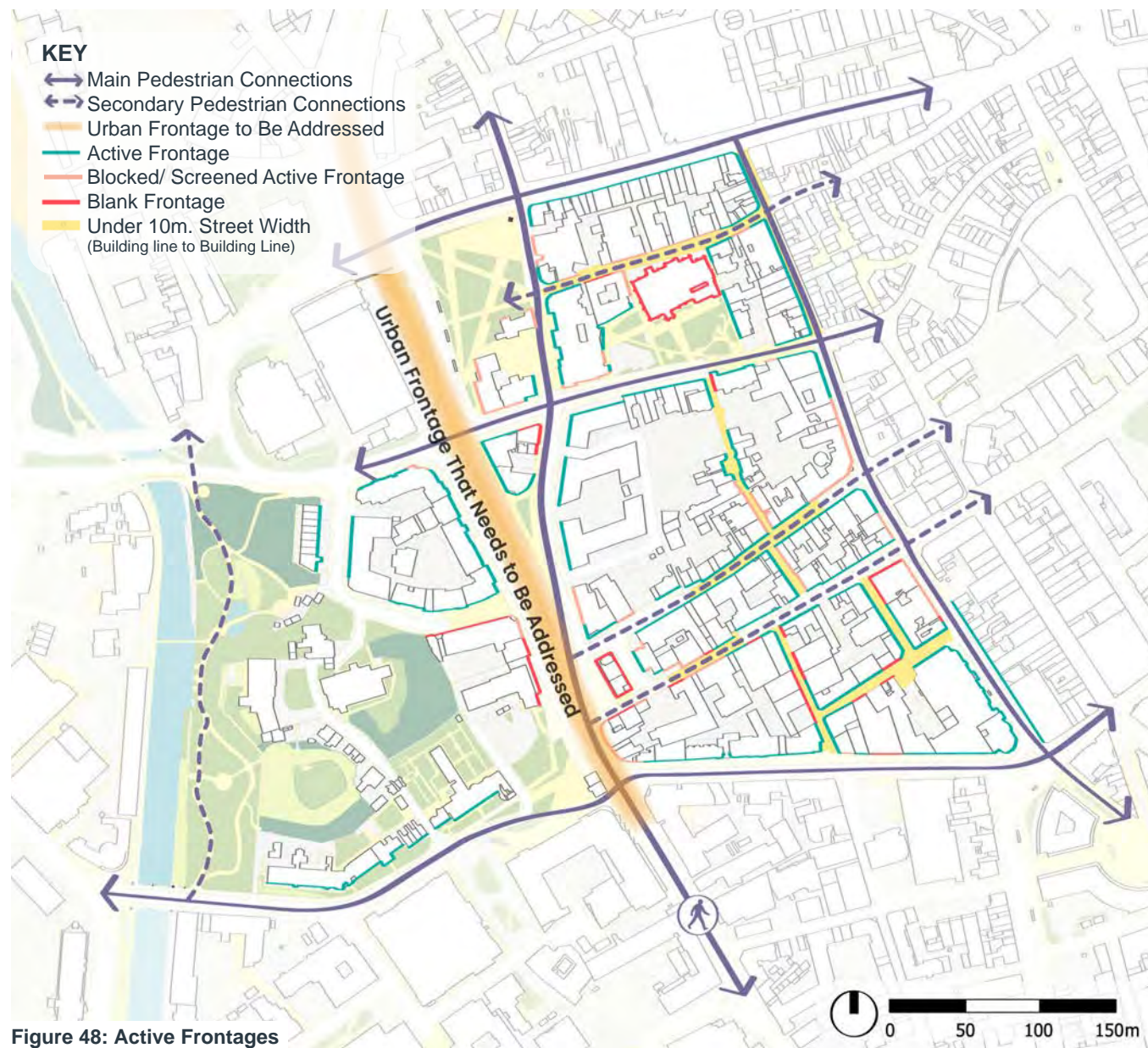↔ Main Pedestrian Connections
↔ Secondary Pedestrian Connections
— Urban Frontage to Be Addressed
— Active Frontage
— Blocked/ Screened Active Frontage
— Blank Frontage
— Under 10m. Street Width
(Building line to Building Line)

Figure 48: Active Frontages

Southgates House has a very poor relationship with the street. The ground floor is dominated by an under-croft car port and a redundant pedestrianised underpass. However, recent public realm improvements have helped but can not overcome the shortcomings of the building itself.

There are some streets that could have windows and frontages opened up by replacing frosted glass with clear glass or reduced screening, for example, the Magistrates Court on Pocklingtons Walk. Blocked or screened frontages are due to occupants (particularly in offices) that wish to "turn their back" on the streets.

The images provide examples of both successful frontages and frontages that are poor at providing activity and surveillance within the Old Town character area.

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

- 2. Glassworks Student building along Newarke Street. Ground floor window sizes are inconsistent, often small and they are covered with curtains by the occupants, thus limiting an active frontage, although it is quite a hostile environment and the building line is close to the footway.

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

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

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

- 6. A further good example of active space is Loseby Lane. Not only do the ground floors have a good relationship with the street, cafés and restaurants have outdoor seating, providing further activity and vibrancy.

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

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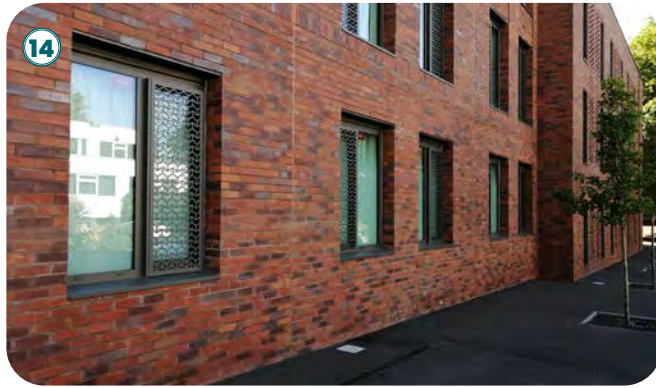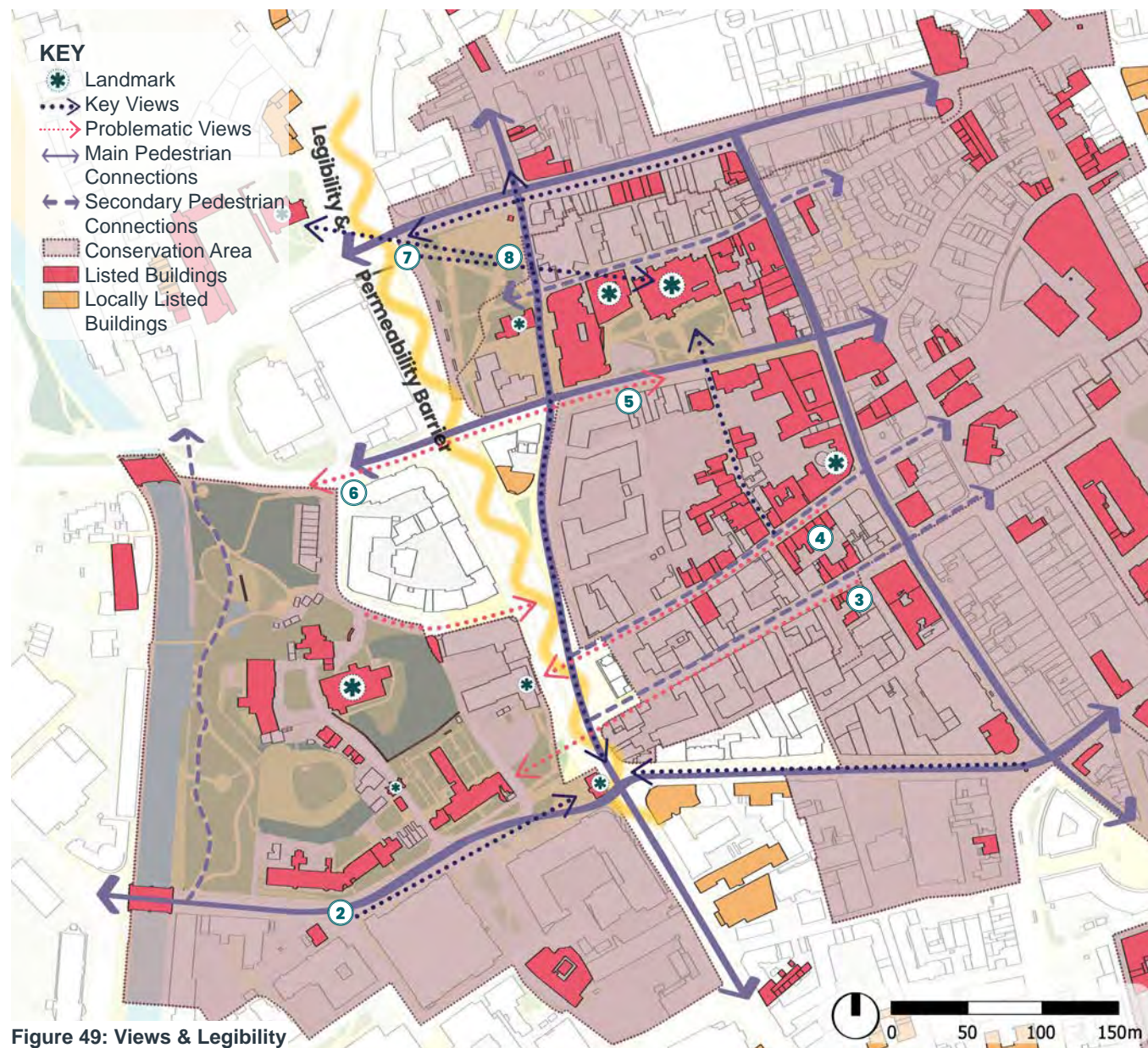
2.13. Key Views & Legibility

The Old Town character area has numerous landmarks, places of interest and a distinct character contributing to a very legible place. To the west of the area the listed Newarke and West Bridges, and the natural barrier of the River Soar, provide clear gateways adjacent to the distinctive Castle Gardens. To the east, the character of Market Street and Greyfriars Conservation Area, with its well-connected and well-enclosed streets and cohesive tight urban grain, provides an easily understood townscape.

Public spaces and associated landmark buildings, both local and of a city scale, are numerous, including the Cathedral and Cathedral Gardens, the Castle, Castle Motte and Castle Gardens, St. Mary de Castro Church, Trinity House and Newarke Houses and the Magazine Gateway. Both framed views and glimpses of spires, key buildings and spaces are experienced throughout the area.

The ring road inevitably severs the cohesiveness of the heritage and unique character of the area, and whilst improvements have been made, this legacy still has an impact on how the area is navigated and understood. Some built development has also exacerbated this issue. The legibility of east-west connections across the ring road in the south are helped by the Magazine Gateway terminating views from Pocklingtons Walk (1) and The Newarke (2). Improvements to the public realm and crossing for pedestrians and cyclist have been completed in this location. The view from Millstone Lane is poorly terminated (3). Although glimpses of Newarke Houses can be seen across the ring road and Friar Lane, the view is

KEY
- ✳ Landmark
- ••••➤ Key Views
- ·····➤ Problematic Views
- ↔ Main Pedestrian Connections
- ← ➤ Secondary Pedestrian Connections
- ⸬⸬ Conservation Area
- ▰ Listed Buildings
- ▰ Locally Listed Buildings

Figure 49: Views & Legibility

© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

terminated by Edith Murphy House on the De Montfort University campus (4). As a modern landmark, Edith Murphy House has blocked past views of the tower of St. Mary de Castro behind it.

To the north, views looking west from Peacock Lane show the dense tree canopy of the edge of Castle Gardens (5) but the unremarkable buildings in the foreground dominate the view. Looking across the ring road from Castle Gardens, the Cathedral spire and the tree canopy of the Cathedral Gardens can be seen (6).

In views looking west from Guidhall Lane and High Street, Jubilee Square significantly contributes to the legibility of the area as a main public space and with the views it affords to landmark buildings, including the Cathedral (7), Jewry Wall and towards St. Nicholas Church (8).

2.14. Architecture, Materiality, Details

Architecture

Given the historical and heritage importance of the Old Town character area, there are a variety of architectural styles representative of their era. To the west, there is a complex variety of building materials and styles, whilst to the east, there are some examples of medieval Leicester remaining. However, Georgian and Victorian architecture dominates, with variances in style and detailing.

Materiality

Brick is commonplace as a versatile material and is used both as a facing material and for decoration, such as rubbed brick panels, window heads and moulded brick eaves courses. Bricks are used on most of the post 18th century buildings. Bricks that can be found in New Street and Friar Lane tend to be smaller than modern and Victorian bricks, of a softer red hue and often with blue hues blended in.

Stone is also used and Portland limestone, popular as a building material in the 1920s and 1930s, is used for decoration at the former County Council offices on Grey Friars/Friar Lane. Stonework also dresses and decorates many buildings, adding horizontal and vertical rhythms to, and visual

Red Brick
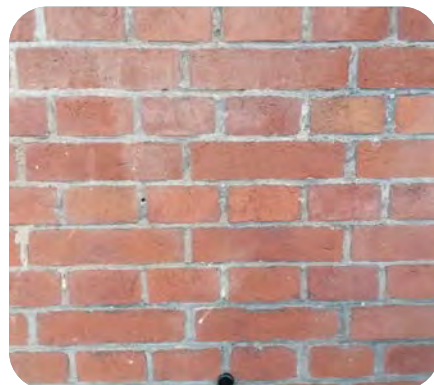
Darker Tones
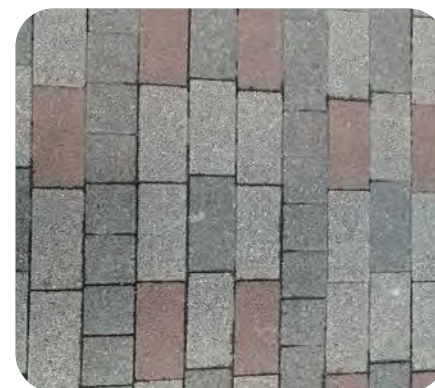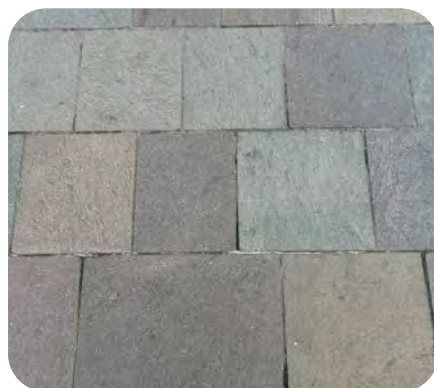
Stucco
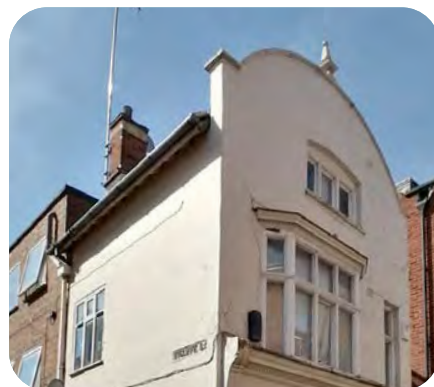
contrast with, brick façades. It is also a common feature in the Castle Conservation Area.

Welsh slate is the most common material for roofs but several buildings are roofed with Swithland stone slates

Decorative metal is used on older buildings and in recent developments as window features.

Details

There is a richness of stone and brick detailing across the different architectural styles, with modern buildings taking cues. Windows, entrances and doorways and eaves are often decoratively expressed.

Most timber windows retain their original glazing bars, ensuring that building façades retain their original form and patterns. The external wooden shutters in Castle View represent some of the very few such features remaining in Leicester and are important parts of the history and architecture of these buildings.

Traditional & Contemp. Brick Detailing

Windows

Stone Detailing

2.15. Planning Activity

It is essential to understand the growth and development potential of the character area and the likely rate and scale of change for the plan period, assisting in establishing priorities and the required level of townscape management. As a result, the area's planning activity, the amount of large plots under one or few ownerships and sites with possible redevelopment potential, also referred to as 'soft sites', have been considered. Moreover, sites in LCC ownership are identified, although their inclusion does not necessarily suggest development/ redevelopment potential.

As would be expected, there are limited development opportunities within the Old Town character area and planning activity is low. The few remaining development sites have now received planning approval for redevelopment.

Whilst residential growth through new development is limited, there is an existing community living in the area and it can be considered a mixed use neighbourhood with a large residential coverage appropriate for a mix of people. There is increased interest in Old Town as a place to live and opportunities to retain the small number of family homes and increase them where possible, resisting their use as houses of multiple occupation and changes from two/three bed houses to flats, should be considered. The managing of change of use from small offices to residential will also be important. Additionally, the need to ensure a balance between the resident and student population is maintained.

KEY
- LCC Ownership
- Approved Schemes
- Current Planning Applications
- Character Area Boundary
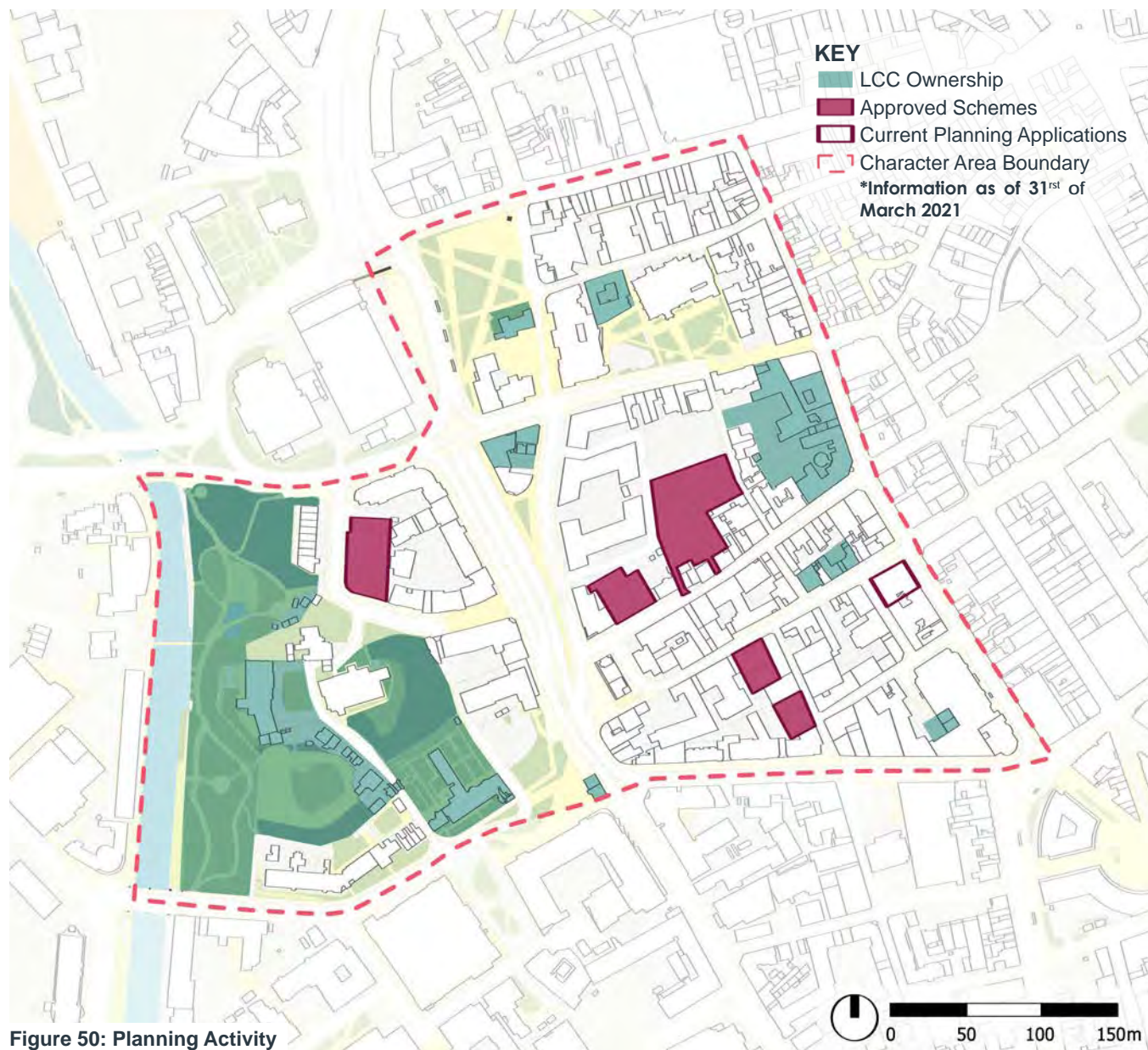
*Information as of 31st of March 2021

Figure 50: Planning Activity

© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

3

Townscape Diagnosis

3. Townscape Diagnosis

3.1. Constraints & Opportunities

The detailed townscape analysis of the Old Town character area, set out above, considers all of its composing elements, peculiarities and unique characteristics. This chapter critically evaluates this analysis, defining the main existing development constraints and future opportunities presented within the area.

At this point it should be stated that much has already been achieved in the development of Old Town with several key projects successfully delivered, with major improvements to the public realm (Peacock Lane, various streets south of the Cathedral and new public spaces at Cathedral Gardens and Jubilee Square). Acknowledging what has already been achieved and recognising current challenges and opportunities will lead to cohesive and successful growth and future development. Thus, moving forward and in accordance with both the NPPF and the National Design Guide, it has to be understood that any potential growth and future development requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to respect and protect the area's current assets, together with the enhancement and further evolution of an attractive, successful and sustainable place with a distinctive identity.

It is recognised that the area has a few challenges to overcome, but at the same time many, great assets to preserve and enhance and further potential to explore.

Constraints

In creating a holistic, comprehensive and coordinated approach to the area's future growth the following constraints (figure 50) should be taken into account:

- Old Town character area is an area with heritage and townscape assets that should be cherished and preserved within any future development. The west of the character area falls under the Castle Conservation Area, the east of the character area falls under the Greyfriars Conservation Area, the south-east of the area is within the Market Street Conservation Area and the north of Old Town falls within the High Street Conservation Area. The area's significant heritage value is reflected by the numerous nationally designated and locally listed heritage assets. Furthermore, the Old Town character area contains one of the city-wide significant views of townscape and heritage value. The view originates from Jubilee Square and looks west towards St Nicholas Church and Jewry Wall.

- Southgates/ Vaughan Way divides Old Town character area into two halves, severing a number of connections between the two parts of the character area, creating a barrier between them and causing fragmentation between the east and west of the area.

- The east-west connection along Peacock Lane and St. Nicholas Circle has been improved and cycling infrastructure has been provided; however, it is not very well-overlooked.

- Furthermore, the ring road severs the cohesiveness of the historic built environment and unique character of the area, and whilst improvements have been made, this legacy still has an impact on how the area is navigated and understood. Some built development has also exacerbated this issue.

- The frontage of Southgates/ Vaughan Way needs to be properly identified and addressed, responding both to the ring road and the surrounding development, providing appropriate enclosure and definition for any future and existing development recognising the amenity needs and quality of accommodation needed.

- The frontages along the ring road have consistent building lines but there is no consistency of height and the vehicle dominance over place-making remains evident.

- The parking area to the south of Edith Murphy House and its access off The Newarke has a detrimental impact the setting of the Newarke Houses Museum and the public space in this area, which could be expanded and improved.

- Other issues that should be taken into account are the noise and traffic disruption, mainly coming from the ring road and existing active frontages that should be retained and further enhanced.

KEY

- 🔴 Problematic Space
- ◖ Problematic Legibility View
- Ⓟ Car Park Areas
- ⋯⋯ Noise & Traffic Disruption
- ▦ Visual Barrier
- ⋯⋯ Streets of Weak Enclosure
- ▬ Blank Façades
- ▬ Frontages to Be Retained
- ▬ Weak Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections
- ◁ Significant Views
- ▬ Under 10m. Street Width
  (Building line to Building Line)
- 〰 Weak & Unidentified Frontage
- ▢ Fragmented Urban Blocks
- ▤ Arch. Survey Needed
- ▬ Listed Buildings
- ▬ Locally Listed Buildings
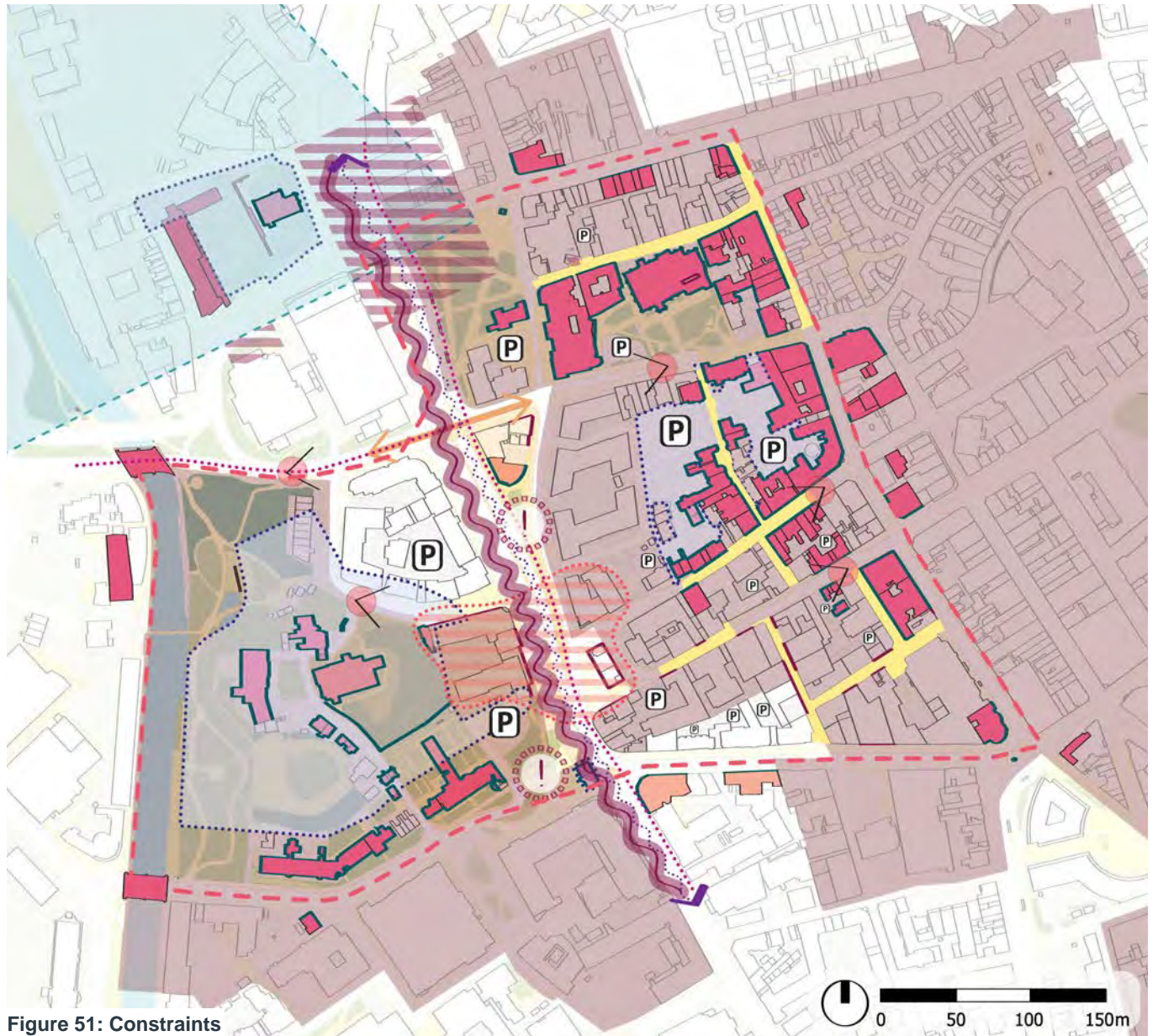- ▬ Conservation Area
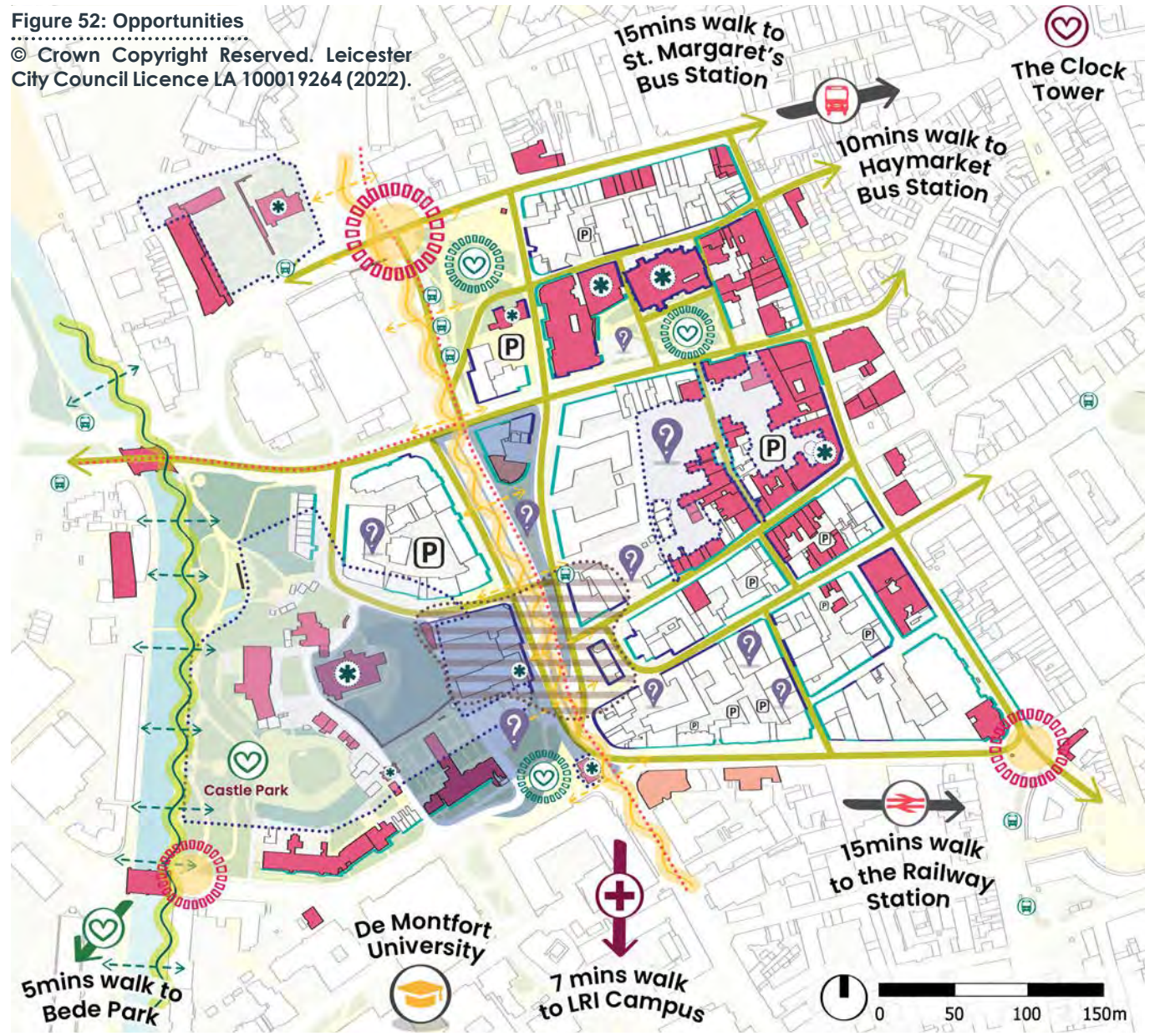- ▦ Scheduled Ancient Monument

Figure 51: Constraints
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

Opportunities

The following points present development opportunities and assets that, if properly utilised, will enhance, upgrade and contribute to the area's current success and further aspiring regeneration:

- The Old Town character area is located in the south-west of the city centre, being one of Leicester's most distinctive and recognisable places. Located within a 5 minute walking distance from the Clock Tower and 12 minute walk from the Railway Station, makes it an ideal place to work, live and visit.

- Old Town has a high concentration of heritage and townscape assets significantly contributing to the area's ongoing identity of heritage and townscape richness, variety and diversity. There is a consistent townscape to the east, with further variations to the wider area, ranging from the enclave of the Castle Yard and St. Mary de Castro to larger University buildings.

- Being a very legible place, Old Town is built around perimeter blocks and well-enclosed and well-defined streets. Strong and consistent building lines are characteristic of the historic street pattern and urban grain.

- The adjacent figure illustrates the sites, albeit few, that could present future development and place-making opportunities. The concentration of important buildings and existing landmarks highlight the area's value and heritage.

- The area has undergone considerable public realm improvements and as a result there is a significant number of pedestrian priority zones, such as High Street and former Heritage Action zone area in Greyfriars Conservation Area. Improvements to the cycling network have also been undertaken. However, the existing gateways could be also further enhanced, leading and guiding pedestrians through the area and upgrading the area's legibility and permeability.

- Figure 51 identifies existing active frontages that are understood as development assets, but also locations which present active frontages or pedestrian-friendly façade-treatment opportunity areas. Screens and obscured glazing removal, together with development that properly addresses and engages with the street-level would enhance the overall streetscape.

- The mix of uses, mostly fine-grain, in the area works well and is an essential part of the area's richness. Future development should protect and enhance the mix of uses, allowing them to continue to successfully co-exist.

- There is a range of public spaces that provide a variety of activities and encourage social interaction and contribute significantly to the area's heritage and townscape character.

- There may be future opportunities to reduce the visual barrier between the east and west of character area by opening up the views of the heritage assets in the west from Friar Lane and Millstone Lane.

- The Old Town character area is well-served by services and facilities that support both the overall city and the Old Town neighbourhood itself. There are visitors attractions, educational facilities, buildings and services that are destinations for city residents and visitors to the city from other places. It is also a destination to experience the cohesive heritage of Leicester and its historic past.

- There is an opportunity to reconfigure the space between Edith Murphy House and the Magazine to create a more legible, and larger, arrival space to the south entrance of the character area.

- There is increased interest in Old Town as a place to live and opportunities to retain the small number of family homes and increase them where possible, resisting their use as houses of multiple occupation, should be considered.

KEY

✳ Existing Landmarks

◉ Gateways

🚌 Bus Stops

📍 Place-Making Development Opportunities

💟 Neighbourhood's Heart

〰 Potential to Redefine Development Frontage & Ring Road

〰 Enhanced River Relationship

— Improved Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections (Connecting Leicester Delivered & Planned)

– – Potential for New Connection

···· Opportunities for Better Enclosure

— Active Frontage Opportunities

— Existing Active Frontages

▨ Opportunity to Reduce Visual Barrier Between Heritage

▨ Opportunity to Redefine Urban Blocks

▨ Schedule Ancient Monument

█ Listed Buildings

█ Locally Listed Buildings

Figure 52: Opportunities
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

15mins walk to St. Margaret's Bus Station

10mins walk to Haymarket Bus Station

The Clock Tower

5mins walk to Bede Park

De Montfort University

7 mins walk to LRI Campus

15mins walk to the Railway Station

Castle Park

0   50   100   150m

Character Area Townscape Management

The Old Town character area falls within *3. Respect and Protection of Heritage Assets* and *2. Evolution without Significant Change.* where conservation and historic environment policies will be used to guide future development (see page 7 - Townscape Character Management).

1. Respect and protection of heritage assets

2. Evolution without significant change

NOW

PROTECT   EVOLVE

FUTURE

Conservation and historic environment policies

Conservation and historic environment policies

"Maintaining character policies"

KEY

1. Respect & Protection of Heritage Assets
2. Evolution without Significant Change
3. Development an Area's Character
4. Intensification by Increased Density & Higher Density Building Types
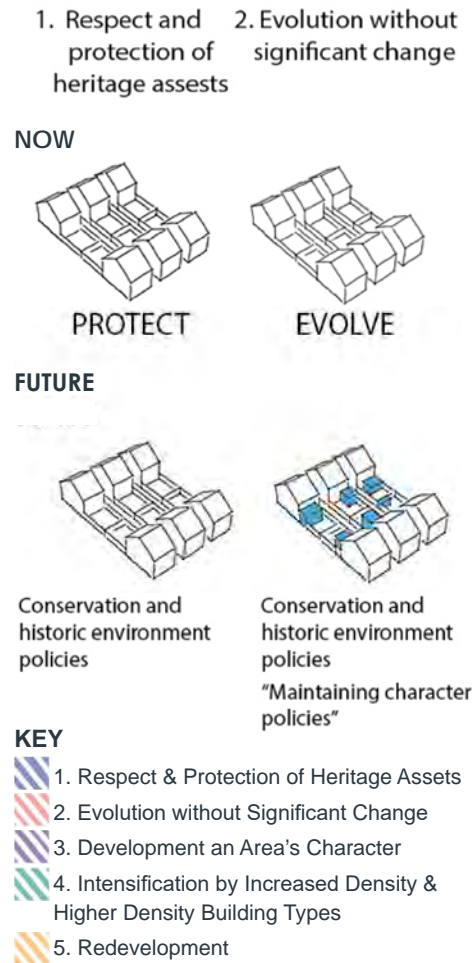5. Redevelopment

Figure 53: Character Areas Development & Management Plan

4

Guiding the Future

4. Guiding the Future

4.1. Establishing a Vision

Chapter 4 establishes a holistic vision for the character area's future development, setting the main future development objectives and parameters through which development will take place, be structured and come to life.

The Old Town area needs to be managed positively and pro-actively, enhancing and protecting its unique identity. Taking into account the aforementioned elements of the townscape appraisal, Old Town character area is envisaged as:

> A **vibrant historic core** with concentrated **heritage richness** that narrates **Leicester's story.**
>
> A unique **tourist destination** with **multiple "hearts"** and attractions visually and physically reconnecting the heritage/ cultural gems of east and west.
>
> A place for **high quality family** homes where mix and owner occupiers are encouraged, **offering a balance of uses.**

Figure 54 illustrates Old Town character area's vision for its future growth and development, where the area's place-making and character development are placed at the centre of the process.

Figure 54: Old Town Chaarcter Area Vision

4.2. Main Future Development Objectives

1 ◄ **Character & Identity**

2 ◄ **Cohesive, Vibrant & Inclusive Neighbourhoods**

**3** ◄ **Diversity**

4 ◄ **Ease of Movement**

Development should enhance the character, identity and sense of place by considering the built, natural and historic context, responding to it ecologically, socially and aesthetically. All development should contribute to the unique character of the area by protecting and enhancing existing heritage assets, achieving creative re-use , while ensuring that they will continue to make a significant contribution to the area as it undergoes change. All development should celebrate the Character Area's local distinctiveness and create memorable places that are visually attractive and offer a unique experience to its users.

Ensure everyone's health, safety and quality of life creating buildings, streets and spaces that encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to meet and mix. All development should use the appropriate built form, layout, scale and mixture of uses and tenures to create a welcoming and attractive place for people to live work and visit. There should not be any differentiation between the quality of market and affordable housing.
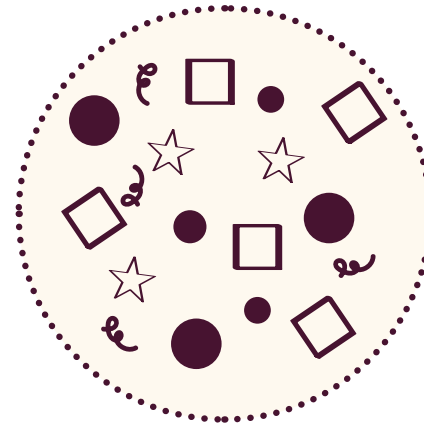
Within each Character Area variety, choice and design sensory richness should be provided in keeping with local distinctiveness. Development should promote and create mixed-use communities through providing a diverse range of facilities, activities and residential typologies with good access to public transport.
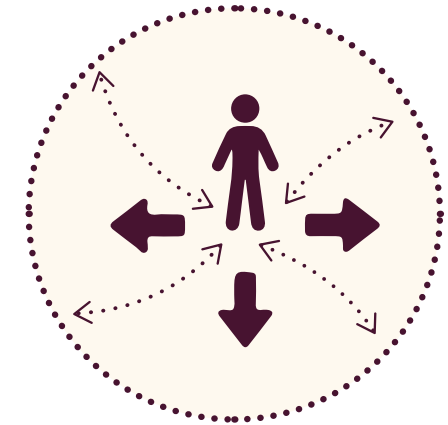
Ensure, improve and promote ease of movement, accessibility and connectivity within the Character Area and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The use of creative and innovative solutions for reducing car-dominated streetscapes should be considered to promote safe and welcoming pedestrian and cycle movement. This is to allow direct and convenient access to existing and new local services, facilities and open spaces. Active frontages and doors on streets, especially along main and secondary pedestrian connections will maximise natural surveillance over the public realm.

5 ◄ Legibility & Permeability

6 ◄ Public Realm & Landscape

7 ◄ Adaptability & Flexibility

8 ◄ Lifespan
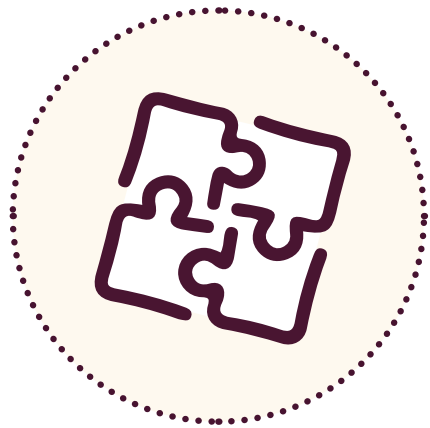
Ensure that each Character Area can be properly understood and easily navigated. There should be a positive relationship between the fronts and backs of buildings and structures, together with clearly defined public and private spaces, well-defined block and street pattern and distinctive townscape markers. Future development should enhance and create a clear and permeable hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces to provide safe and convenient ease of movement by all users.
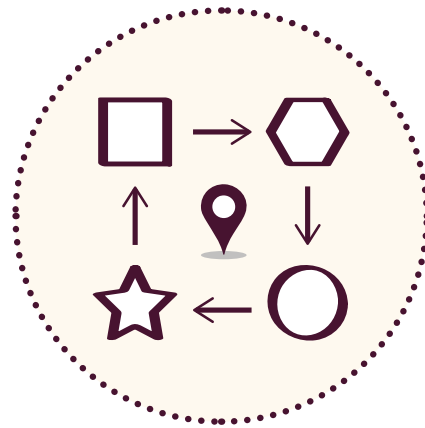
Create a high-quality public realm with well-managed and maintained areas that incorporate natural features and new green infrastructure. Development and future changes within the Character Area should deliver attractive and well-located public realm and landscape features that contribute to a greater cohesion of the streetscape. Places for people to rest, meet and gather, together with the insertion of trees, landscaping and planting will encourage inclusivity and social integration, enhancing people's quality of life and a place's perception.

Anticipate the need for change to buildings and outdoor spaces so that they function well today, last for the future and can adapt to changing needs. This includes accommodating the changing dynamics of family life, the needs of older people, the ways residential and workspaces are used, environmental changes and future expansion of the development.

Development should be robust, easy to use and to look after. Materials should be chosen in accordance with their function and context, with the ability to be maintained over time and age well.

4.3. Future Development

Old Town character area's limited growth potential and minimal change will shape the city centre's dynamics, which need to be in accordance with the aforementioned vision and main development objectives. Specifically:

KEY

- ✳ Existing Landmarks
- ⬤ Gateways
- 🚌 Bus Stops
- 〰 Redefine the Development Frontage in Relation to the Ring Road, Minimising the Edge Barrier
- ▥ Proposed Improvements to Main Network
- ▬ Main and Enhanced Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections
- ▬ ▬ Secondary and Enhanced Pedestrian Connections
- ⋯⋯ Active Frontages Priority Areas/ Façade Animation
- ▬ Built Continuous Frontage - Repair Urban Grain
- ♡ Enhanced/ Proposed Civic Public Space - Neighbourhood's Heart
- ▬ ▬ New Visual Connections
- 〰 Redefined Water Relation
- ▬ Redefined Urban Blocks
- ▬ Potential Development Sites
- ▤ Area with Potential to Visually Unify Heritage
- ⋮⋮ Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- ▬ Listed, Locally Listed & Positive Contribution Buildings
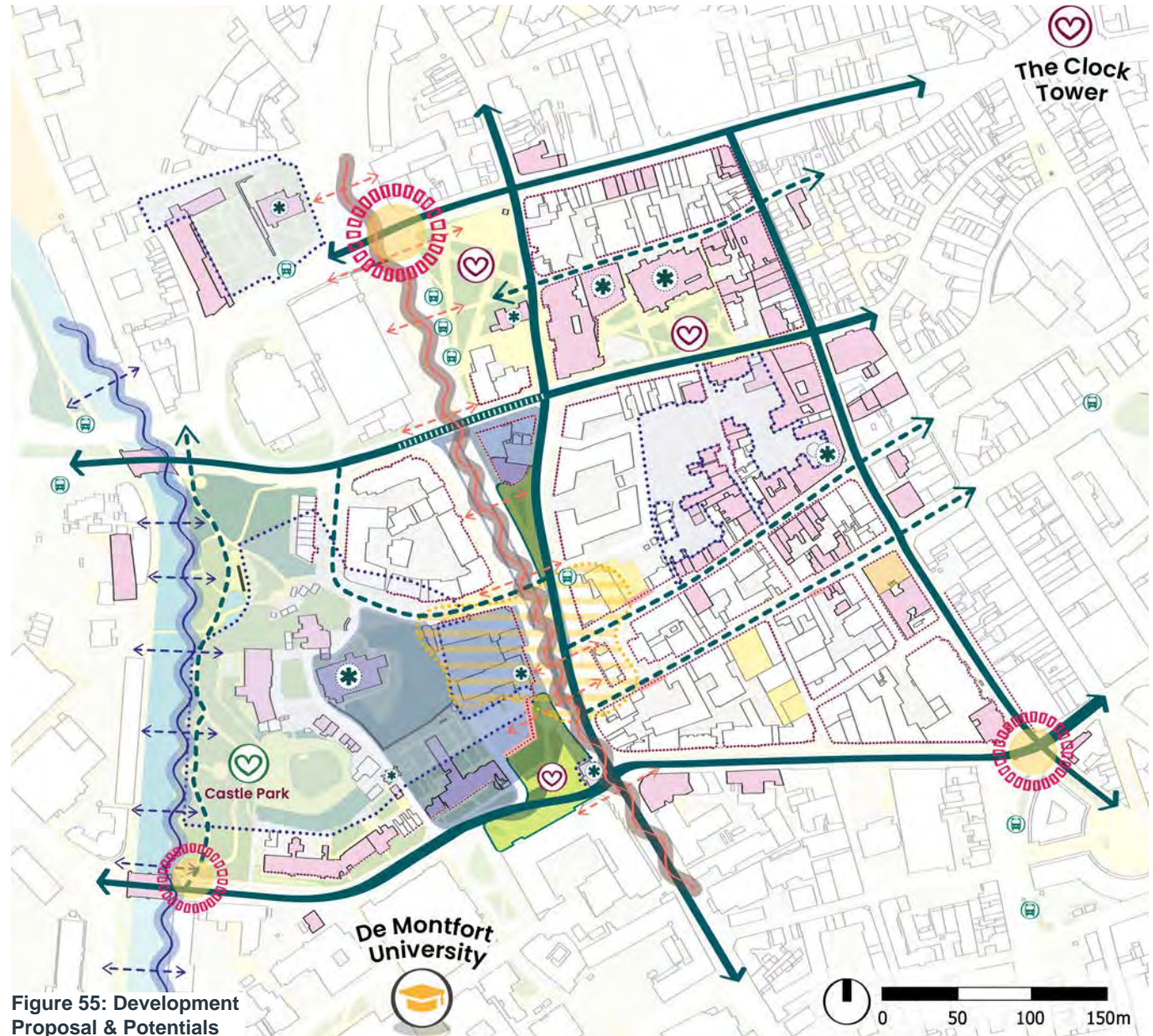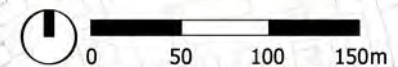

Figure 55: Development Proposal & Potentials
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

- Old Town character area will undergo evolution without significant change guided by national and local heritage policies. Heritage and townscape assets (listed, locally listed and landmark buildings, positive contribution spaces and registered parks and gardens) will be retained and enhanced, continuing to make a significant contribution to the area's ongoing identity of heritage and townscape richness, variety and diversity, whilst enhancing the area's legibility as dominant 'markers' and frontages. Specific area policies and a coordinated and comprehensive approach to guide development will ensure that Old Town will preserve and enhance existing assets, whilst addressing current challenges and utilising present development opportunities. Potential development sites should not be considered in isolation to the area's main, wider objectives.

- The poor east-west pedestrian and cycle connection, along St. Nicholas Circle, are proposed to be further enhanced to provide active frontages to create safe routes, as illustrated in figure 55. All proposed main and secondary connections are linking the existing and proposed gateways, which are to provide a welcoming, vibrant and pleasant experience. Other areas have also been identified in need of streetscape improvements.

- When development opportunities allow, reduce the visual barrier between the east and west of the character area by opening up the views of the heritage assets in the west from Friar Lane and Millstone Lane.

- Development should allow for and support the ongoing provision of a mix of uses, including residential, that will co-exist as an essential part of the area's character and contribution to the city centre. A place to live, work and visit is aspired.

- Reconfigure the space between Edith Murphy House and the Magazine to create a more legible, and larger, arrival space to the south entrance to the character area.

- Consider further opportunities to minimise the barrier effect of the ring road which severs the cohesiveness of the historic built environment and unique character of the area. Consider appropriate enclosure and definition of development fronting the ring road to provide cohesiveness but avoid the 'canyon effect'.

- Ensure any future development along the ring road is well-designed and well-defined, addressing the need for activity and surveillance and providing a quality living environment, whilst minimising the effect of the ring road as a barrier.

- Proposed development will be expected to present active frontages, especially along established pedestrian connections (according to figure 55) to maximise natural surveillance over the public realm. It is expected that particular attention will need to be given to ground floors, where there is a need to balance privacy with surveillance and provide appropriate design solutions. Areas have been specified where new active frontages and façade animation are needed. The frequency of doors will also assist in establishing the appropriate level of activity and interaction within a street.

- New development will be expected to improve connectivity, accessibility and ease of movement both within and outside the character area, reducing car usage and enhancing existing connections, providing hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces and improving the streetscape.

- Encourage and support a mix of housing types and tenures, but in particular family homes and owner occupiers, and manage student accommodation and houses of multiple occupation.

- New development will be expected, in design terms, to repair fragmented or problematic urban grain and the street-level status of the area, reinstating perimeter blocks and recreating well-defined and enclosed streets.

- Provision of new green infrastructure will be expected, which makes a significant contribution to the character of a place and how it feels. This is needed, particularly in building dominated urban environments, where the relief of trees, landscaping and planting provision is important. Explore opportunities to improve people's physical and visual connection to the Mile Straight on its east side.

4.4. Proposed Heights

The proposed building heights are based on the townscape appraisal and development guidance undertaken in the previous chapters, followed, where required, by more detailed site testing. All heights shown are defined in metres. To note 3m is broadly equivalent to 1 residential storey. Notwithstanding the proposed heights, each proposal will need to be considered in relation to its context.

Where there is an existing tall building within the character area, it should not be assumed that a replacement tall building on that site would be acceptable. The proposed building heights reflect the Council's up to date view. Taller buildings will only be permitted where exceptional design quality can be demonstrated including a positive ground floor relationship to the street and the surrounding context, including the setting of heritage assets. They should comply with the Local Plan Tall Development Policy and Tall Development SPD.

It is proposed that all of the area, apart from a couple of locations, will be 15 metres and below, broadly equivalent to 5 residential storeys. This respects the scale of the existing buildings and heritage assets within the Conservation Areas and the uniformity of height evident across the character area which makes a significant contribution to the areas identity, particularly to the east. The narrow streets that predominate require heights to be kept low.

This proposed height also respects the setting, character and intimate enclosure of the public spaces, including Cathedral Gardens and Castle Park.

There are also townscape markers and buildings in the area, including the Cathedral that make a significant contribution to the legibility of the area, with their prominence enhanced by the low prevailing height.

The existing tall developments in the area could be considered to have a detrimental impact on the character of the area, being adjacent to narrow streets and blocking views adding to the visual severance between the east and west of the area.

KEY
- --- Important Views
- W Avoid the Canyon Effect
- --- Narrow Streets
- Views Connecting Legibility
- 0 - 15m.
- 15 - 21m.
- Potential for above 24m. - Illustrative Location
- Existing Tall Buildings
- Listed & Locally Listed Buildings
- Character Area Boundary

*3m is broadly equivalent to 1 residential storey

Important Views Concerning Legibility

Avoid the Canyon Effect

Narrow Streets Keep Heights Low

Figure 56: Proposed Heights

© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

Glossary

- **Accessibility:** The ease of reaching destinations. In a highly accessible location, a person, regardless of age, ability, or income, can reach many activities or destinations quickly, whereas people in places with low accessibility can reach fewer places in the same amount of time. The accessibility of an area can be a measure of travel speed and travel distance to the number of places to be reached prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

- **Active frontage:** The interface between buildings and streets, where there is an active visual engagement and interaction between the public realm/ those on the street and the premises facing the street (ground and upper floors of the buildings), usually characterised by multiple entrances and windows. This quality is assisted where the front facade of buildings, including the main entrance, faces and opens towards the street. Ground floors may accommodate uses such as cafes, shops or restaurants. However, for a frontage to be active, it does not necessarily need to be a retail use, nor have continuous windows. A building's upper floor windows and balconies may also contribute to the level of active frontage.

- **Adaptability:** The capacity of a building or space to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions and accommodate new or changed uses.

- **Ambient height:** The predominant height of an area is referred to as the 'ambient' or 'prevailing' building height.

- **Blank frontage/ wall:** A wall which has very few or no windows/ doors, providing no visual interaction with the public realm.

- **Boundary treatment:** The elements that define the extent of plots and differentiate between public and private space. Soft boundary treatments can be hedgerows and planting, whereas hard boundary treatments can include fences and walls.

- **Brick plinth:** A special shaped brick, which is used for aesthetic detail, allowing change in depth to brickwork, normally at the base of the building. Typically used for window cills, corbelling details, capping and kerbs.

- **Building cluster:** When several elements with similar characteristics are grouped in an area, making a distinct or prominent contribution to the townscape. For example, a cluster of tall buildings is formed when multiple tall buildings are grouped and placed together within a specific city area.

- **Building massing:** Refers to the overall configuration of a building in three dimensions. The height, volume and overall shape of a building as well as its surface appearance.

- **Building scale:** The size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts or details of the building, particularly in relation to the scale of a person. Scale refers to the apparent size, not the actual size.

- **Built form:** Refers to the function, shape and configuration of buildings as well as their relationship to streets and open spaces.

- **Character:** It is what defines a place. It represents a variety of physical and non-physical features and qualities factors that help us distinguish the identity of one area from another based on its uniqueness and distinctiveness.

- **Comprehensive development:** Development delivered on several interrelated sites over varying timescales that is guided by a long-term plan for the whole area and describes how the land is expected to be developed and how land uses may change over time. It incorporates the identification and creation of a shared vision, usually planned by local leadership/ government in partnership.

- **Connectivity:** The number of connecting routes within a particular area, often measured by counting the number of intersection equivalents per unit of area. An area may be measured for its 'connectivity' for different travel modes – vehicle, cyclist or pedestrian. An area with high connectivity has an open street network that provides multiple routes to and from destinations.

- **Cul-de-sac:** A street with only one inlet/outlet connected to the wider street network. A closed cul-de-sac provides no possible passage except through the single road entry. An open cul-de-sac allows cyclists, pedestrians or other non- automotive traffic to pass through connecting paths at the cul-de-sac head.

- **Definition:** Ensure that the height and width of buildings or landscape features and the gaps between them relate to the width of the street and space in front of them and those on the other side.

- **Enclosure:** Enclosure refers to the extent to which buildings, walls, trees and other vertical items frame streets and public spaces. The way public spaces are framed by vertical elements in relative proportion to the width of the space can vary providing different character and sense of enclosure a person can experience.

- **Façade:** The external face of a building or group of buildings that face the public realm. Usually refers to the principal wall of a building that is facing the street and is visible from the public realm. It is the face of the building and helps inform passers-by about the building and the activities within.

- **Façade's animation:** The support of sustained activity on the street through visual details, engaging uses and amenities.

- **Figure ground plan:** A plan which shows only building footprints, rendered in black, with the ground plane left white, providing an abstract representation of the development density and the extent that buildings define public spaces. A figure-ground plan is a two-dimensional map of an urban space that shows the relationship between built and unbuilt space. It is used in analysis of urban design and planning.

- **Fine grain:** Grain refers to the pattern of property lines, plots, streets and lanes. It is the general shape and direction of building footprints. Fine grain refers to the higher intensity of smaller plots or streets.

- **Fragmentation:** In the urban context, it refers to the process or state where the urban fabric is broken into fragments, being visually and physically disconnected.

- **Gateway:** A signature building, landscape or space to mark an entrance or arrival to an area. The gathering point or place which acts a transition between different areas and/ or spaces.

- **Groundscraper:** A large building of both significant mass and scale which extends horizontally. It sprawls along the ground, rather than soaring into the sky.

- **Height transition:** the gradual change in height between buildings within a community.

- **Healthy street:** A street defined by its response to 10 evidence-based indicators that create a human-centred framework, embedding public health in transport, public realm and planning. These 10 indicators must be prioritised and balanced to improve social, economic and environmental sustainability through how streets are designed and managed. Thus, 'healthy' is a street where everyone feels welcome, that is easy to cross, that offers shade and shelter, that provides places to stop and rest, that is not too noisy, where people choose to walk and cycle, where people feel safe, that offers things to see and do, where people feel extra relaxed and with clean air (good air quality), (Lucy Saunders, adopted by TfL).

- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.

- **Human scale:** Elements and features with a scale that relate well in size to an individual human being and makes people feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed.

- **Inclusive (neighbourhood):** A neighbourhood where all buildings and their surrounding spaces can be accessed and used by everyone (all ages, backgrounds and abilities).

- **Landmark:** An 'object' that provides 'external points of orientation, usually an easily identifiable physical object in the urban landscape' (Lynch, 1960). Usually refers to a tall or taller structure/ built element with great visibility and a significant impact on its surroundings but can also be a building or structure that stands out from the surrounding buildings. It offers distinctiveness to locations within the urban fabric, contributing to an area's character and making it memorable. Highly distinctive buildings, structures or landscapes that provide a sense of place and orientation.

- **Layout:** The arrangement of buildings, streets, uses and spaces in a development.

- **Left over space:** A space with no clear use, character and/ or purpose, usually formed by the residues between various plots. 'Left over' spaces are usually at risk of being neglected/ abandoned and it is best for them to be incorporated within a design.

- **Legibility:** The ease with which a person is able to see, understand and find their way around an area, building or development, reflecting the possibility of organizing an place/ environment within an imageable and coherent pattern. A 'legible' place is one that people find easy to navigate and move through.

- **Local distinctiveness:** The combination of features of a building or a place that give it a distinctive identity, features that define an area or development.

- **Landscape openness:** Landscape openness is determined by the number of elements above eye level, as slopes, tall vegetation such as woods, groves and wooded banks, buildings in towns and villages, houses and commercial buildings.

- **Local (character area) view:** A view identified in the detailed townscape analysis of each Character Area as significant to the urban fabric, contributing to the area's distinctiveness.

- **Marker:** A prominent feature or area of interest that can serve as a visual marker (focal point) and help a person to navigate through a place.

- **Mobile workforce:** A workforce comprising individuals who work outside of a physical office location. These professional workers are not limited to employees who work from home.

- **Overlooking:** Having a view from above into other people's private space. For example, a balcony on the rear extension of a house could easily look into the neighbour's garden.

- **Obscure glazing:** An umbrella term for any type of glass that obscures or distorts the view through the glass. There is not a single type of glass known as obscure glass, rather, obscure glass can be thought of as a category name for various other types of glass. There are different levels of obscurity in glass.

- **Outskirts:** The outer part of the city.

- **Perimeter block:** Development blocks where buildings front onto streets and spaces and back onto rear gardens. It is commonly used to achieve successful development through connected streets and well-defined frontages. It can work at a range of scales but should be large enough to fit adequate amenity space, parking, natural ventilation, use of the block for other purposes and to accommodate the site's topography; and small enough to allow a permeable and walkable street pattern. It enables a clear distinction to be made between public and private realms, as defined by the exterior and interior of blocks respectively and increases natural surveillance of the street.

- **Permeability:** The extent to which the urban structure permits, or restricts, movement of people or vehicles through an area, and the capacity of the area network to carry people or vehicles.

- **Place-making:** A term for the design of public spaces and the greater urban fabric, to create the physical conditions that residents find attractive, safe, neighbourly and legible. It is usually done in close consultation with the residents of a city or neighbourhood, resulting in places that have popular features for recreation, hobbies, socializing, interaction and personal reflection.

- **Positive contribution building:** Buildings that are not listed, locally listed or within Conservation Areas, however, they are important as part of the townscape of each Character Area. As such there is a general presumption against the demolition of these buildings.

- **Problematic view:** A view which is poorly terminated or defined and could be improved to make a better contribution to the townscape and place-making.

- **Rus in urbe:** An illusion of countryside created by a building or garden within a city. The phrase, which is Latin and means literally 'country in the city', was coined originally by the Spanish-born Latin epigrammatist Martial.

- **Sensory richness:** The human experience of the urban environment comes from different sensory channels i.e., sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The depth and breadth of these sensory experiences can be investigated under the general term, sensory "richness."

- **Screened frontage:** A frontage that is blocked by planting or physical objects, interrupting or making difficult the interaction between the public realm/ those on the street and the building premises facing the street (ground and upper floors of the buildings).

- **Sense of place:** A place with strong identity and character that is memorable and deeply felt by local residents and visitors. Sense of place is determined by personal experiences, social interactions, and identities.

- **Skyline:** The outline of land and buildings defined against the sky, the shape viewed near the horizon. It can be created by a city's overall structure, or by human intervention in a rural setting, or in nature that is formed where the sky meets buildings or the land.

- **Slender building:** A building, most notably a tall building, where its proportions of height to width creates a narrow or 'slender' built form.

- **Slum clearance:** Urban slums are regions accommodating people who lack the necessities to sustain a healthy and safe livelihood. Slum clearance refers to the removal for rehousing, by the state, of those people who previously lived in slum areas, to prepare the area for demolition and rebuilding.

- **Soft site:** A site with possible redevelopment potential.

- **Strategic vista:** A view of city-wide significance.

- **Street block/ Urban block:** The space within the street pattern of a city that is subdivided into land, usually containing several buildings.

- **Streetscape:** The visual character of a street space that results from the combination of street width, curvature, paving, street furniture, plantings and the surrounding built form and detail. The people and activities present in the street also contribute to the streetscape.

- **Street pattern:** Refers to the shape and distribution of streets which ultimately determines the shape of the city.

- **Strong frontage:** A frontage of heritage assets and/ or buildings making a positive contribution (as presented within each Character Area Evidence Base document). The building lines, characteristics and heights of these frontages are to inform the streetscape and for them to be retained as 'dominant features' in any street.

- **Tall development:** A building/ development which is significantly higher than the buildings/ developments in the surrounding area.

- **Three-dimensional, urban design framework:** An urban design vision for an area presented in three dimensions (length, width, height) with the use of 3D modelling.

- **Townscape elements:** The visual composition of buildings, spaces, views and features within a town that determine its distinctive character.

- **Urban grain:** The pattern of development in a settlement, the balance between open spaces and built forms, and the nature and extent of subdividing an area into smaller parcels or blocks.

- **View/ Vista of city-wide significance:** A view/ vista of city-wide significance meets a large number of important criteria, significant to the history, identity and place of Leicester.

- **View termination point:** A building or other feature which is placed at the end of a view down a street or square, to aid enclosure or provide a landmark.

- **Vista:** Direct and continuous views along straight streets or open spaces.

- **Visual impact:** The changes to the scenic attributes of the landscape/ townscape brought about by the introduction of visual contrasts (e.g., development) and the associated changes in the human visual experience of the landscape/ townscape.

- **Wayfinding:** All the ways in which people orient themselves in physical space, navigate from place to place and interpret their surroundings. It is a holistic concept with a focus on making all parts of the urban landscape easy to read and understand.

-

Leicester
City Council

115 Charles Street

Leicester LE1 1FZ