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Leicester
City Council

Railway Station Character Area

Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

Evidence Document



Contents

1. Introduction.....	4	2.11. Connecting Leicester Improvements	32
1.1. Development Context	4	2.12. Active Frontages.....	34
1.2. Townscape Appraisal & Character	5	2.13. Key Views & Legibility	36
1.3. Overarching Policy	6	2.14. Architecture, Materiality, Details	38
1.4. Townscape Character Management	7	2.15. Planning Activity	40
1.5. The Scope	8	3. Townscape Diagnosis.....	42
1.6. The Structure	8	3.1. Constraints & Opportunities.....	42
2. Townscape Analysis	10	4. Guiding the Future	48
2.1. Location & Context	10	4.1. Establishing a Vision.....	48
2.2. History & Evolution of Railway Station.....	12	4.2. Main Future Development Objectives.....	49
2.3. Heritage & Townscape Assets.....	14	4.3. Future Development.....	51
2.4. Urban Grain & Enclosure	18	4.4. Proposed Heights	54
2.5. Height & Massing.....	20	Glossary.....	56
2.6. Land Uses	22		
2.7. Community Infrastructure & Influence.....	24		
2.8. Housing & Tenure.....	25		
2.9. Open Spaces & Public Realm	26		
2.10. Movement & Connectivity	27		

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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.

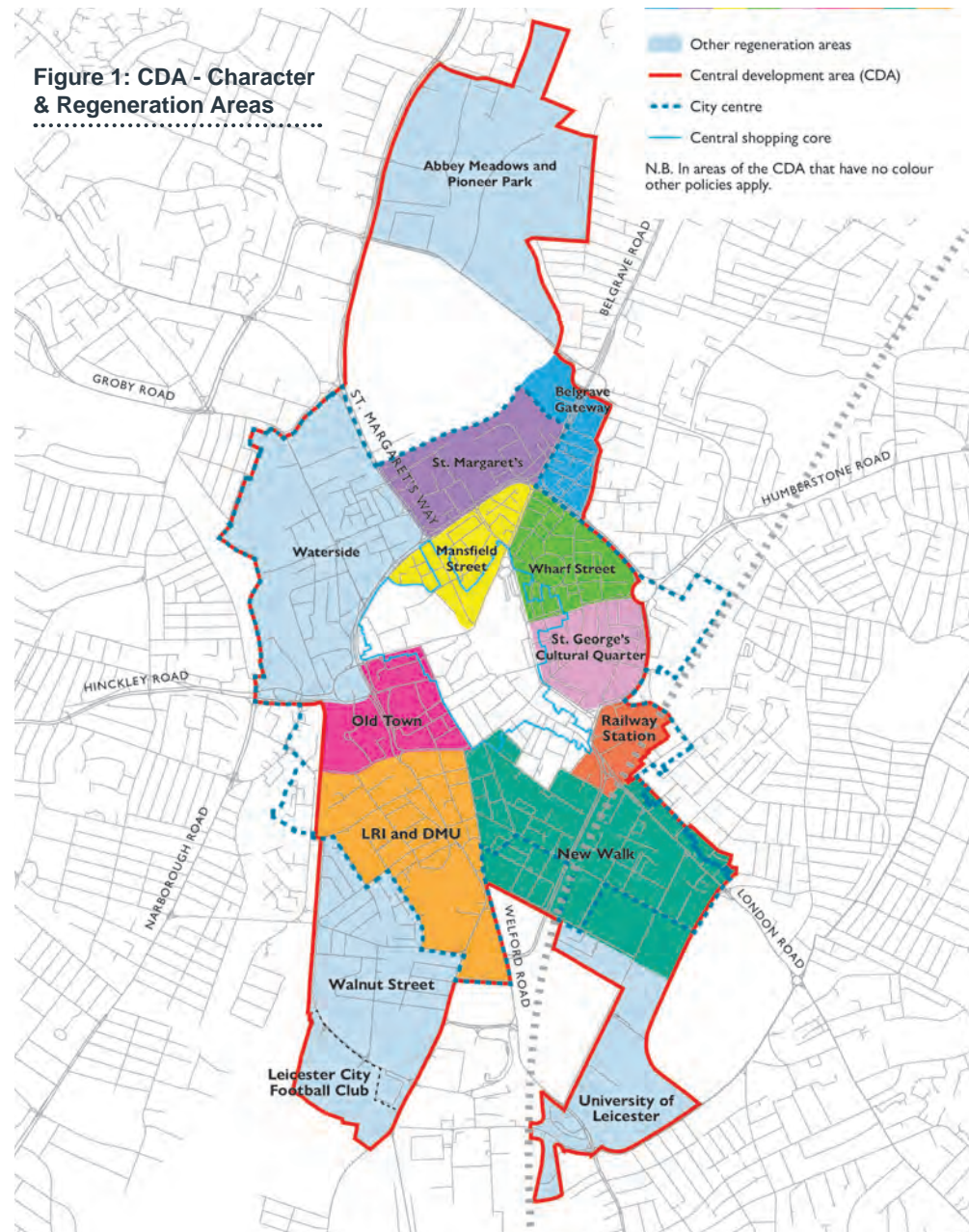
LCC has divided the CDA into 14 distinct areas, including 9 character areas and 5 other regeneration areas, to recognise the individual context of each area and for future policy to be based on the area's defining characteristics. These are:

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.



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

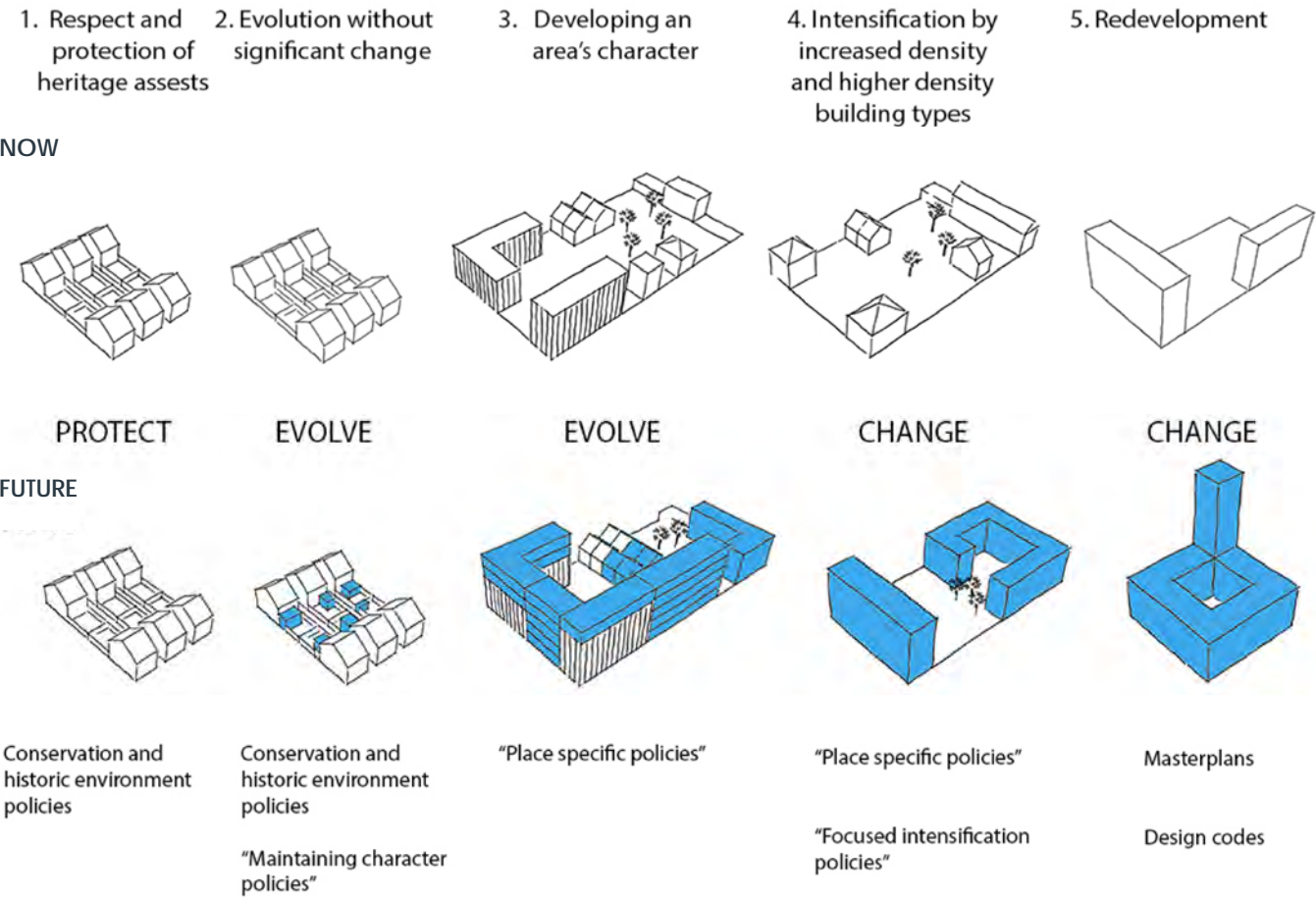
To inform and guide policy, it is helpful to understand the level and scope of change that the specified character areas are likely to undergo during the plan period and beyond. Some of the character areas will predominantly include heritage assets, with few development opportunities, requiring protection 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



Figure 3: Railway Station Character Area within the Greater Context

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The Railway Station character area is located within the CDA, being part of Leicester's city centre (located at its west edge). Being the city's primary gateway (due to the Railway Station location), all vital connections with the rest of the country are provided through it (towards Sheffield, Leeds, Birmingham, London and Peterborough). As the city's major arrival point, the character area facilitates multiple flows for business, commuting, leisure and recreation purposes. The Railway Station itself caters for around 17,000 passengers a day or 5.4 million passengers a year. There is therefore a great need to ensure that the character area truly acts as a modern, efficient and appropriate gateway into the city, providing the connectivity, legibility and services into the city centre and beyond.

Adjacent to St. George's Cultural Quarter and New Walk character areas, it further accommodates residential, commercial and office uses (besides its predominant function as the Railway Station's location). The Clock Tower, Leicester's civic heart, can be reached within a 5 minutes walk, whereas Nelson Mandela and Victoria parks are reachable within less than a 10 minutes walk. Likewise the two main bus stations, Haymarket and St. Margaret's can be additionally reached within a 10 and 15 minutes walk.

Railway Station character area is bordered by Swain Street (north-east), St. George's Way (north-west), East Street (west), S Albion Street (south), London Road (south-east) and Conduit Street (south-east).

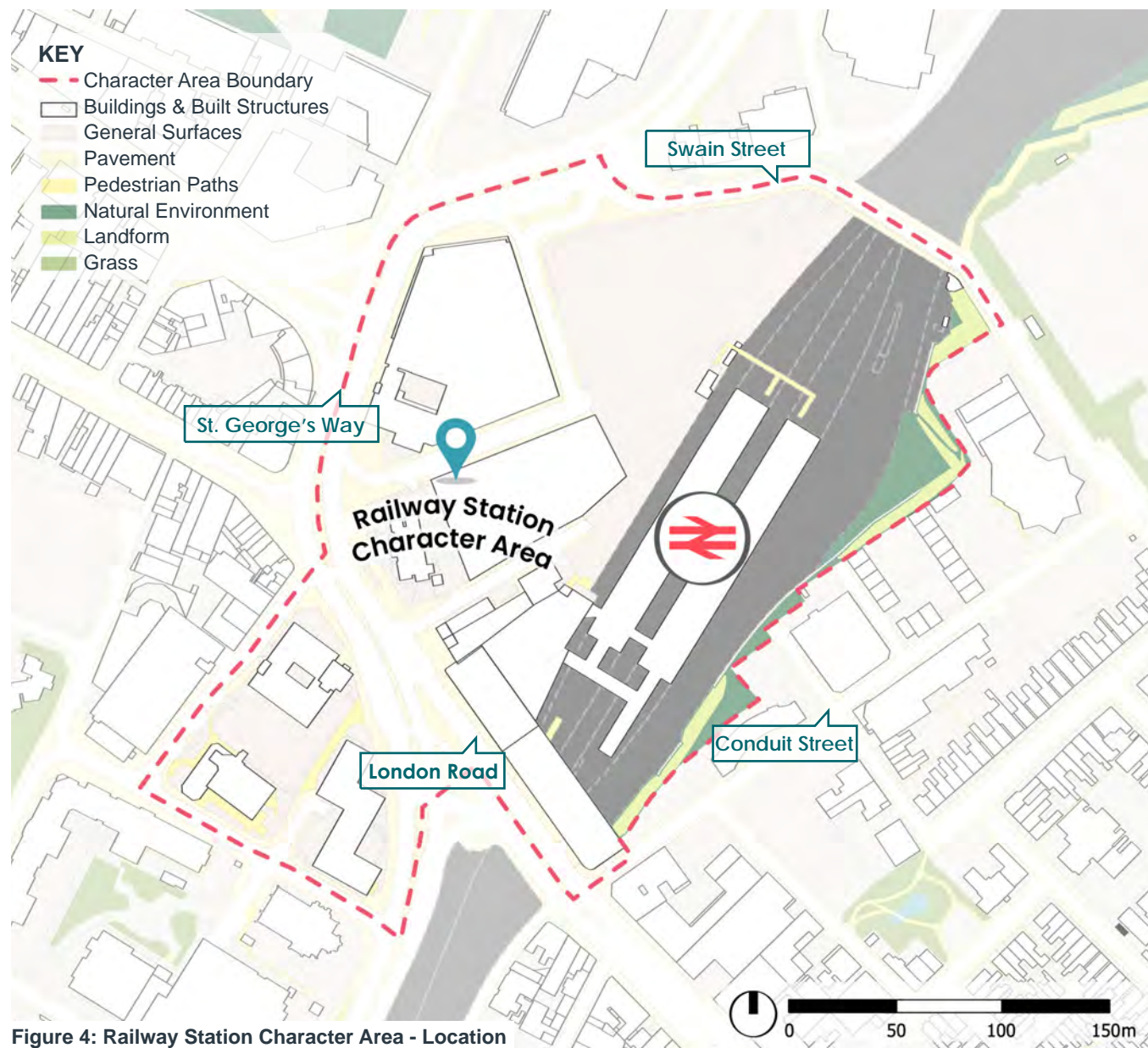


Figure 4: Railway Station Character Area - Location


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2.2. History & Evolution of Railway Station

Much of the history of this character area is based on the railway and the station. Before the railway line and the first station were built much of the area was predominantly fields and open space.



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 Railway Station character area has been marked for further clarity. 

1828

The following plan (figure 5) shows London Road as the most prominent street, identified in red, as it remains today. Either side of the land that is now the station is Northampton Street, which no longer exists, and Conduit Street which still exists.



Figure 5: 1828

1844

The Midlands Railway Act (1836) led to the building in 1840 of Leicester's first mainline railway station on Campbell Street, as can be seen on the plan (identified in red). This connected Leicester to Derby, Nottingham and Rugby, and later provided direct access to London.

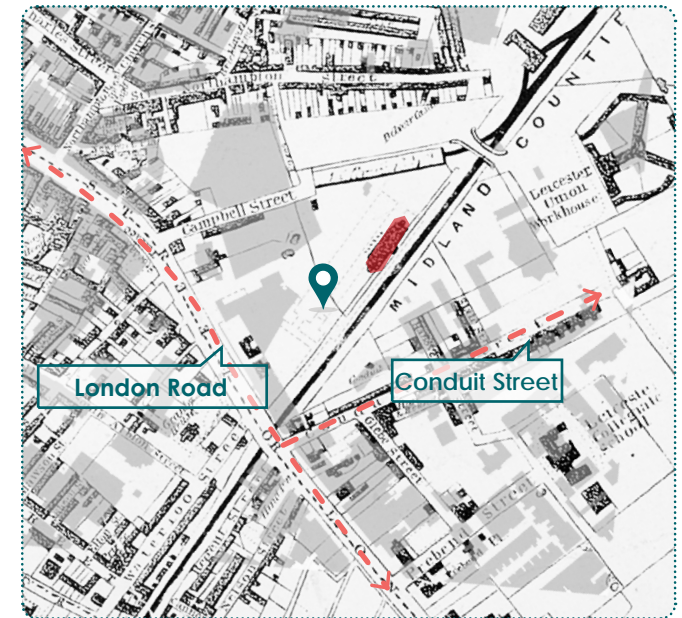


Figure 6: 1844

1903-04

Much of the character area was built out by the beginning of the 20th century. The station was surrounded by terraced housing to the south, along Conduit Street. The remaining buildings in the area were related to the function of the station. In June 1892 the new booking office (identified in teal) and parcel office (identified in red) opened, moving the entire ticket operation from Campbell Street to the London Road Porte Cochère. The new station building was completed in 1895.



Figure 7: 1903 - 1904

1950s/60s

Much of the morphology of the character area remained the same into the mid-late 20th century. There was the addition of the new sorting office located on Campbell Street as identified in red. St Georges Tower was constructed in 1960.

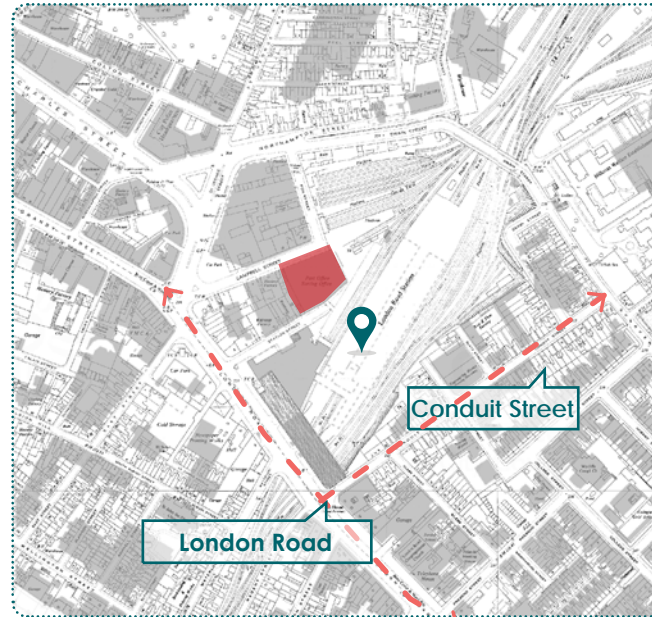


Figure 8: Late 1950's

1970s

There was some slum housing located on Conduit Street, and in the slum clearance plan dated from June 1974 parts of the Conduit Street are identified as having a confirmed clearance order at that time. Elizabeth House was constructed in 1976.



Figure 9: Slum Clearance Plans from Leicester City Council Planning Office archives. The Plan is dated from June 1974 and by that time most of the slum clearance illustrated in the plan had already taken place, or if not, had been cancelled and improvements undertaken instead.

2.3. Heritage & Townscape Assets

The Porte Cochère, shown in images A & B, is of Grade II listed status. The only three other recognised heritage assets in the character area are the locally listed Swain Street road bridge over the railway line, the Grade II listed gate to the former Midland Railway Station and the telephone boxes on London Road.

There are two key views into and out of the character area. The first is the view along Granby Street looking towards the station. As a key route from the city centre to the station, the turret of the Porte Cochère acts as an important landmark. There is also the view from the station towards the top of Granby Street, where there are two Grade II listed buildings that frame the entrance to the street, which is beneficial for wayfinding towards the city centre. The view of the full extent of the Porte Cochère from New Walk is also significant as is the view and vista of city wide significance from London Road.

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 former sorting office built in the late 1940s/early 50s (C) has a strong building line, is well proportioned and offers a positive contribution to the townscape of the area, although active frontages are limited (figure 10). Additionally, the Parcel Yard building directly adjacent to the station building (D) also provides an active frontage and makes a positive contribution to the area (figure 10).

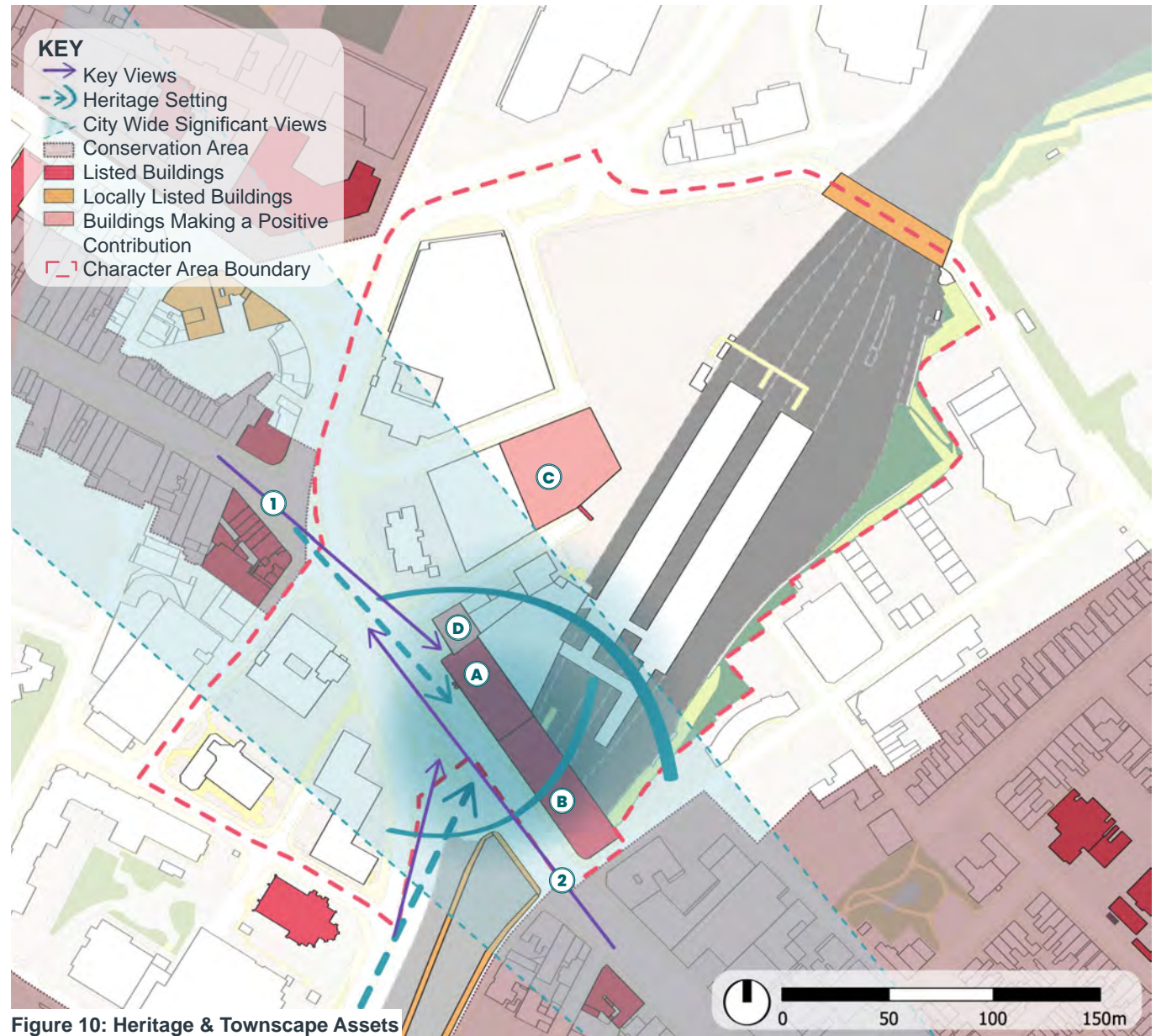


Figure 10: Heritage & Townscape Assets

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View from Granby Street towards Railway Station



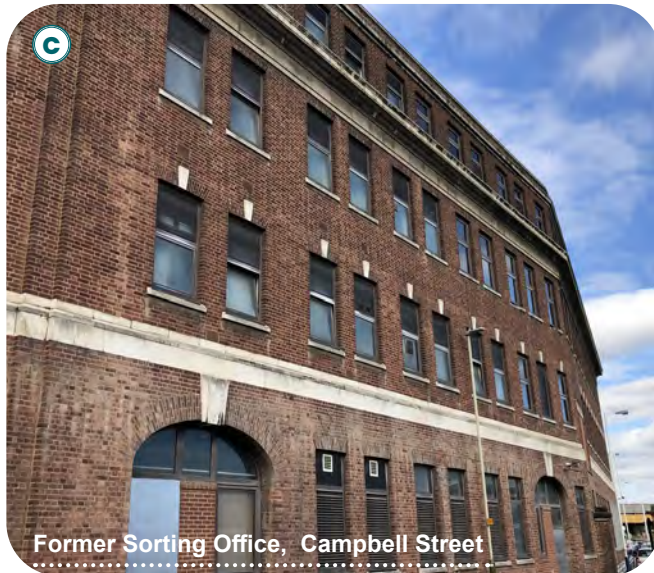
Railway Station Porte Cochère with Distinctive Octagonal Turret



Railway Station Porte Cochère



View from Railway Station towards Granby Street



Former Sorting Office, Campbell Street



Parcel Yard building, London Road

* Please see Heritage & Townscape Assets Plan (figure 10) for the location of the following key building frontages.



Figure 11: The BT Building, Now St. George's Tower, 2007 (Leicester Then & Now)



Figure 12: London Road Showing the Presbyterian Church of St. Stephen & the Midland Railway Station, 1892/93 (Images of England, Central Leicester)



Figure 13: The former Campbell Street Station Demolished in 1892 (Leicestershire Record Office)



Figure 14: Photograph Taken Post 1894
(Historic England Archive Ref: cc79_00499)



Figure 15:
Campbell Street,
Railway Station
& the Former
Sorting Office
(Leicester, 1953
(Britain from
Above))



CHEAP TRIPS from LEICESTER

Depart	To	Return Fares Third Class	Depart	To	Return Fare Third Class
Each Monday. (except August 2nd).					
6.5 a.m.	Blackpool (North)	10/6	August Monday (continued).		
Each Monday and Friday. (except August 2nd).					
EXPRESS SERVICE.					
8.52 a.m.	King's Lynn	7/6	9.21 a.m.	Loughborough 1/3, Nottingham 2/6, Newark 4/6, Lincoln	6/-
	Hunstanton	8/-	10.10 a.m.	Castle Donington (Motor Cycle Races)	2/6
	Sheringham	9/6	10.55 a.m.	Hunstanton	5/6
	Cromer	9/6	11.0 a.m.	Southport	7/-
	Norwich	9/6	11.25 a.m.	Holt 6/-, Sheringham 6/6, Cromer	6/6
Return (London 3.40 p.m., Norwich 3.45 p.m.)			11.25 a.m.	London (St. Pancras)	5/6
Each Thursday and Saturday.					
8.55 a.m.	9.37 a.m. London (St. Pancras)	11/-	12.40 p.m.	Hinckley 1/3, Nuneaton 1/6, Saltley 3/-, Birmingham	3/-
Each Saturday.					
1.25 p.m.	2.15 p.m. Birmingham	3/-	August Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.		
Each Sunday.					
9C40 a.m.	London	5/6	12.25 p.m.	Derby and Nottingham road (Derby Races) 1st class 4/6, 3rd class 3/-	
10.50 a.m., 11.10 a.m., 12.35 p.m., 2.50 p.m. London	5/6, Hampton Court	6/6	Tuesday, 3rd August.		
O—During August only.					
Sunday, 1st August.					
10.10 a.m.	Long Eaton 2/-, Stapleford 2/-, Ilkeston 2/6, Langley Mill 3/-, Alfreton 3/-, Clay Cross 3/6, Chesterfield 3/6, Sheffield 4/-, Rotherham 4/6, Normanton 5/6, Leeds 5/6, Bradford	5/6, 7/6	6.0 a.m.	Rhyl 10/-, Colwyn Bay 10/6, Llandudno	11/-, 8/-
10.30 a.m.	Blackpool (North)	7/6	6.30 a.m.	Hunstanton	8/-
10.30 a.m.	Worcester 4/6, Cheltenham 4/6, Lydney 6/-, Chepstow 6/6, Newport 7/6, Cardiff	8/-	10.45 a.m.	11.0 a.m. Windsor and Eton, including tour of Castle, River Trip and Tea	11/3
10.45 a.m.	Chester 5/6, Rhyl 7/-, Colwyn Bay 7/6, Llandudno	8/-	11.0 a.m.	Matlock Bath 3/6, Matlock 3/6, Darley Dale 3/6, Rowsley 3/6, Bakewell 4/-, Monsal Dale 4/-, Millers Dale 4/-, Buxton... 4/6	
11.45 a.m.	Alton Towers (including admission), Leek or Rudyard Lake	4/6	12.20 p.m.	Hunstanton	5/6
3.55 p.m.	Kingstown 14/6, Dublin 15/-, Mallow 24/-, Cork 25/-, Killarney	26/-	12.25 p.m.	London (St. Pancras)	5/6
August Monday.					
4.48 a.m.	Blackpool (North)	10/6	Wednesday, 4th August.		
6.10 a.m.	Rhyl 10/-, Colwyn Bay 10/6, Llandudno	11/-	6.30 a.m.	Skegness	8/-
8.20 a.m.	6.38 a.m. Matlock Bath 4/6, Matlock 5/-, Darley Dale 5/-, Rowsley 5/-, Bakewell 5/6		7.20 a.m.	Portsmouth 11/6; including admission to Dockyard	12/6
8.38 a.m.	Hassop 5/6, Great Longstone 6/-, Monsal Dale	6/-	11.10 a.m.	Blackpool (North)	7/6
7.5 a.m.	Skegness	8/-	Thursday, 5th August.		
7.29 a.m.	Alsop 6/-, Alton 5/6, Ashbourne 5/6, Hartington 7/-, Rudyard Lake 7/-, Cliffe Park 7/-, Rushton 7/-, Thorpe Cloud 6/-, Tissington 6/-, Parsley Hay	7/-	11.5 a.m.	Chester 5/6, Rhyl 7/-, Colwyn Bay 7/6, Llandudno	8/-
8.0 a.m.	London (St. Pancras)	11/-	10.50 a.m.	2.32 p.m. London	5/6
9.6 a.m.	Hinckley 1/6, Nuneaton 2/-, Birmingham 4/-		11.35 a.m.	Matlock Bath 3/6, Matlock 3/6, Darley Dale 3/6, Rowsley 3/6, Bakewell 4/-, Monsal Dale 4/-, Millers Dale 4/-, Buxton... 4/6	
9.55 a.m.	Eoleshill 5/-, Coventry 3/6, Kenilworth 3/6, Warwick 4/-, Leamington	5/-	Sunday, 8th August.		
August Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.					
Evening Excursions.					
Sunday, 1st August					
4.0 p.m. Newport (Salop) for Lilleshall Hall					
Wednesday, 4th August.					
4.55 p.m. Matlock Bath or Matlock					
Thursday, 5th August.					
4.55 p.m. Hathernage					
Sunday, 8th August.					
4.45 p.m. Bedford					
A—July 31st excepted.					

Leicester Corporation Buses will meet late return excursions on arrival at 10.15 p.m. Children 1/2

Figure 16: Pre-War LMS Excursions
Advertisement in the Leicester Mercury
(Transport Memories of Leicestershire)

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 block for the station is large for an urban block, which is increased if the built fabric to Conduit Street is included. The railway line obviously affects east to west movement but there are no connections between other plots, for example the plot between Station Street and Campbell Street could be broken down further. The current surface car park also lacks connections.

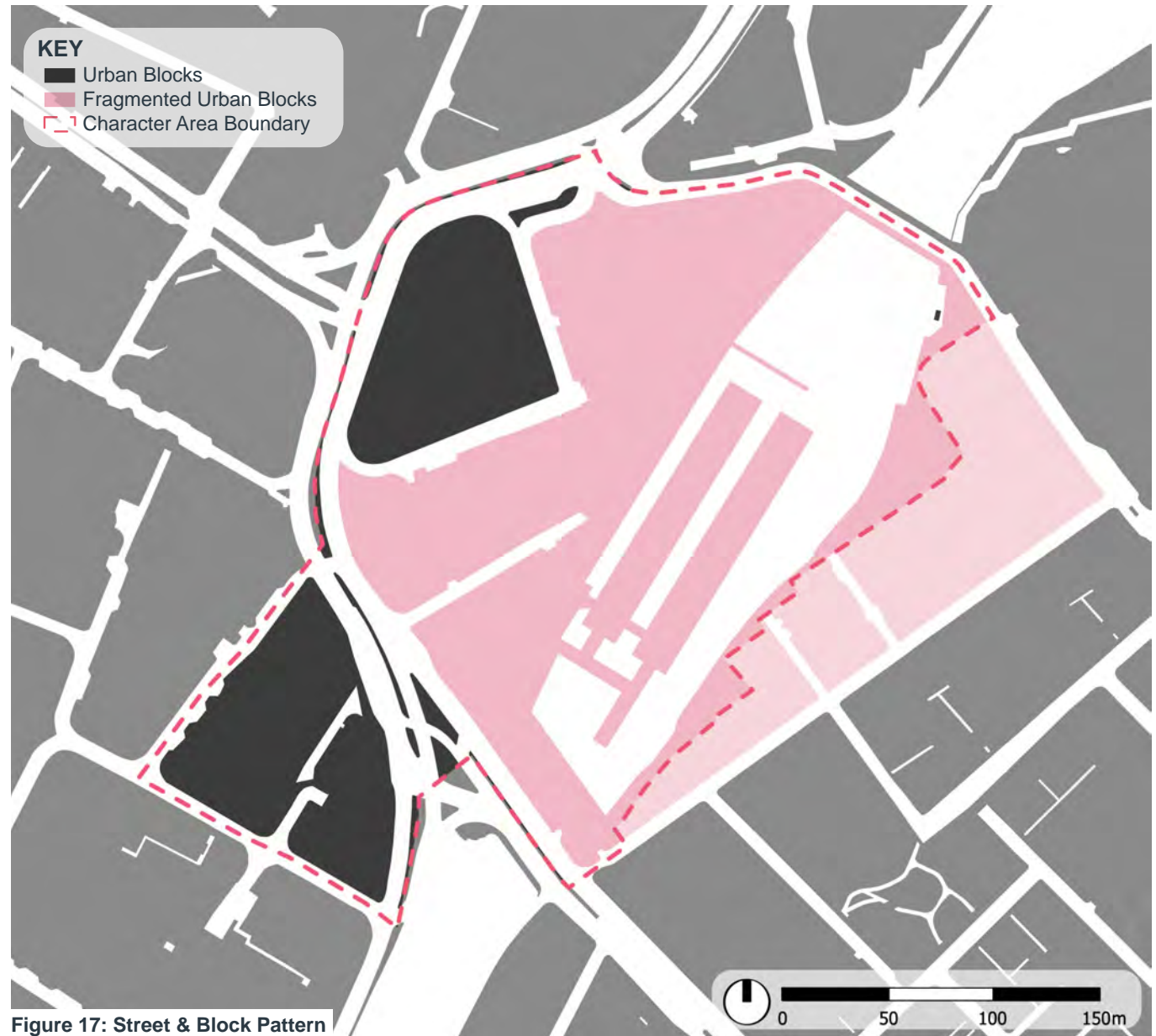


Figure 17: Street & Block Pattern

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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.

London Road is a street providing good enclosure, with consistent building heights and building line. This is reinforced in the south of the area with the Railway Station Porte Cochère but becomes weaker as London Road meets Waterloo Way. At this point the frontages of the adjacent buildings are fragmented and not cohesive, as they are primarily individual buildings located within the centre of plots, as a result of their construction over various time periods. The space is vehicle dominated until the enclosure and framing of Granby Street is experienced.

In the office area to the south -west, East Street and South Albion Street are also poorly enclosed as a result of individual buildings located within plots with no consistency of building line or frontages addressing the street pattern.

A consistent and well defined building line provides good enclosure to Campbell Street.



Figure 18: Urban Grain & Enclosure

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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.

Much of the Railway Station character area is above the average ambient height of the city, with the exception of the station itself. As would be expected for a key transport node within the city centre there is a cluster of taller development with some of the tallest buildings in the city within the area.

Both St. Georges Tower (A) at 79m and Elizabeth House (B), at 46m, would be considered tall buildings within their context and super tall within the Leicester context.

The office buildings to the south west of the area are also tall, with St. John's House on Albion Street tall within its context (C) and elements of Arnhem House (D) above 24m.

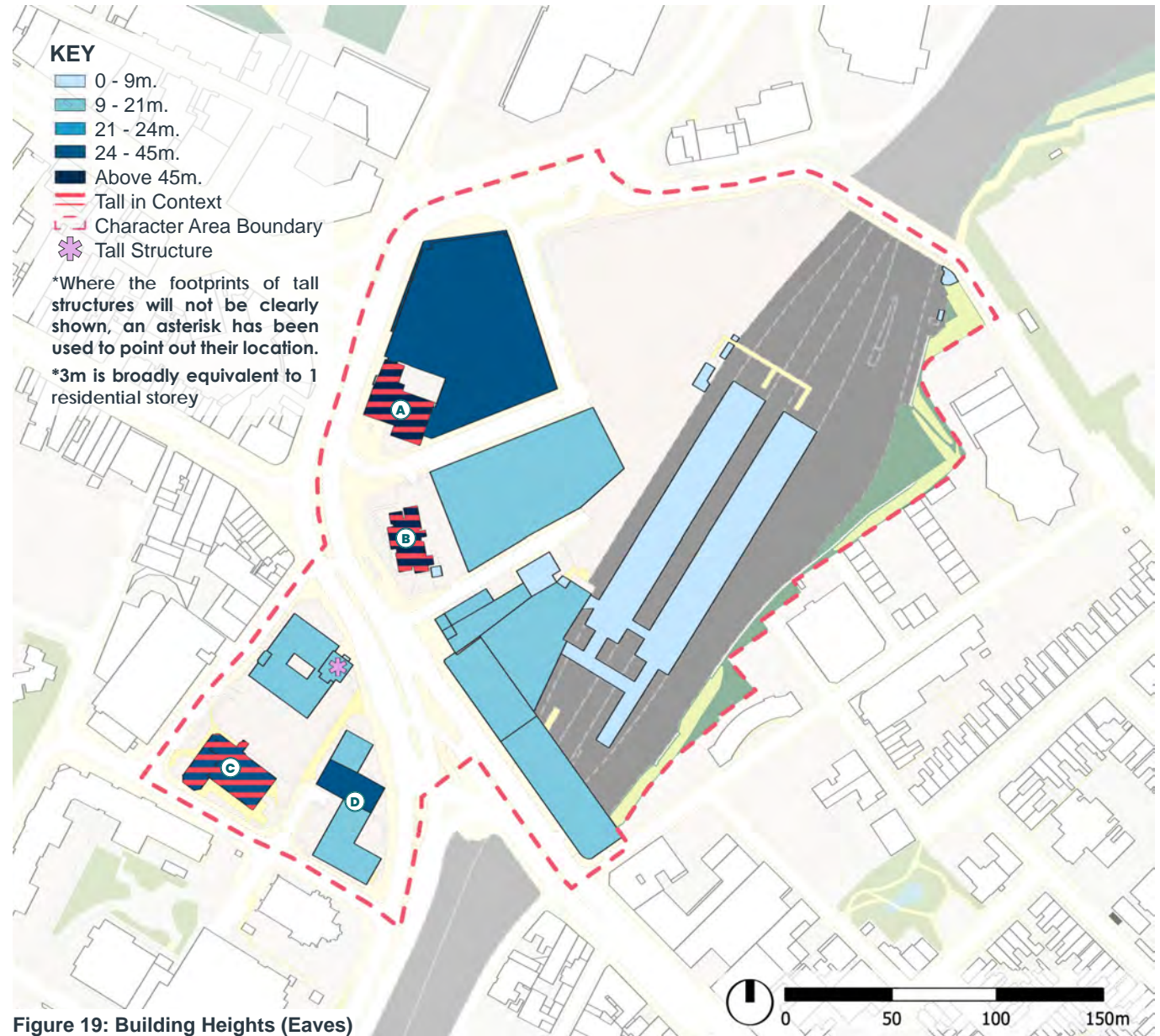


Figure 19: Building Heights (Eaves)

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Planning History

There has been some interest in office development for the area. There are no recent approvals for major residential developments.

2.6. Land Uses

Given the limited size of the Railway Station character area and the dominant function being the railway line and associated activities there is little variety in land uses here. The predominant use is office.

At ground floor the railway station has an element of retail and commercial uses, whereas the former sorting office displays both parking and industrial uses. Elizabeth tower accommodates residential uses and 1 St. George's Way refers to a 79metres tower that contains various elements of land uses, including educational, residential, leisure, hotel and office uses.

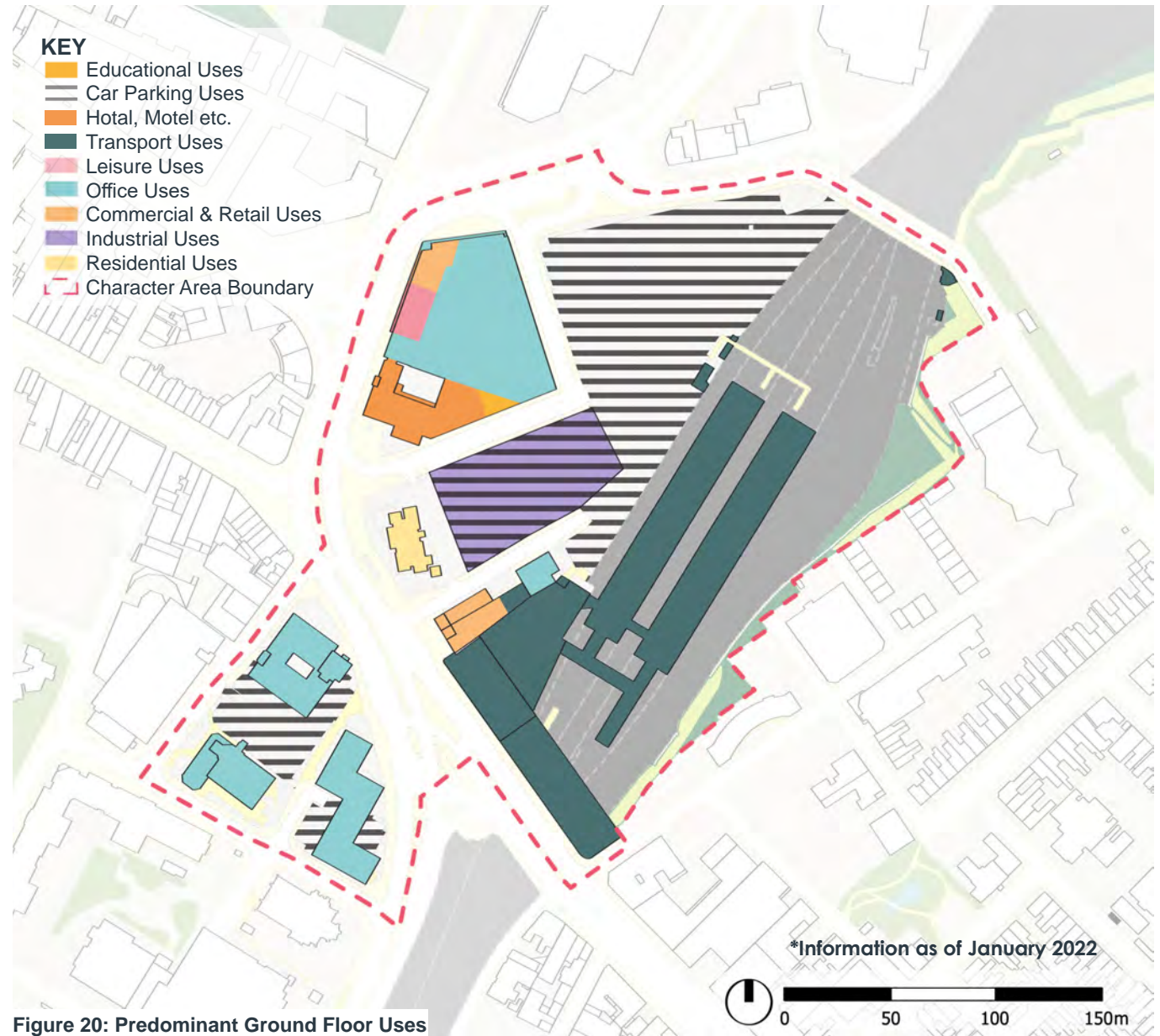


Figure 20: Predominant Ground Floor Uses

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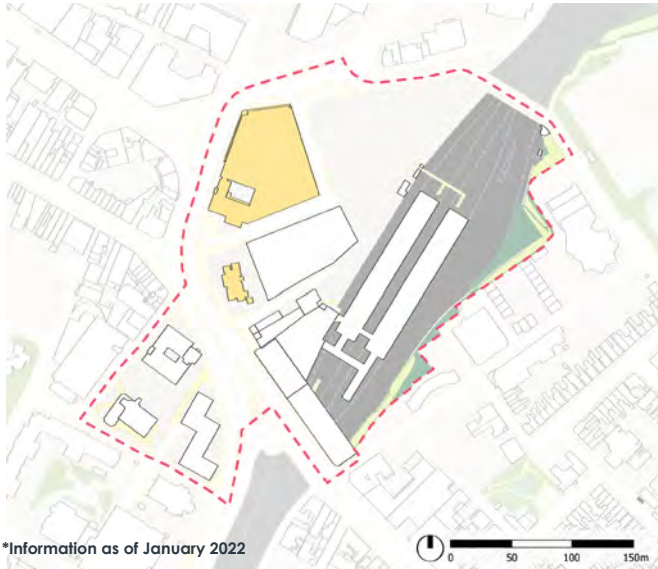


Figure 21: Residential
.....



Figure 23: Industrial
.....

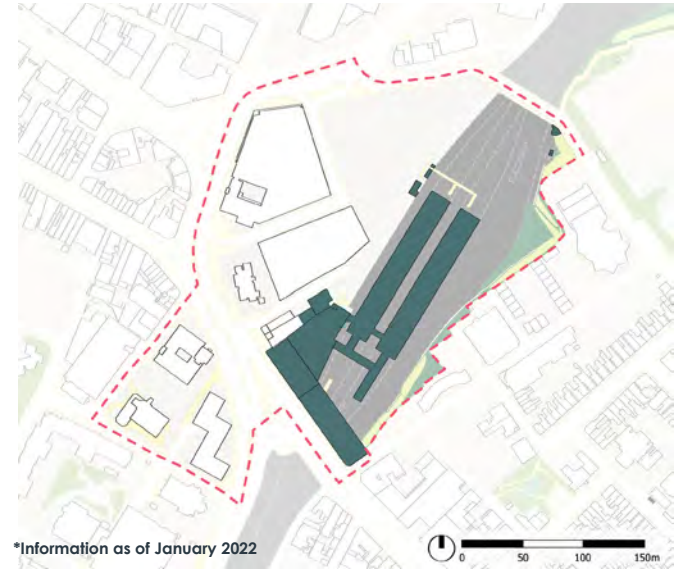


Figure 25: Transport
.....

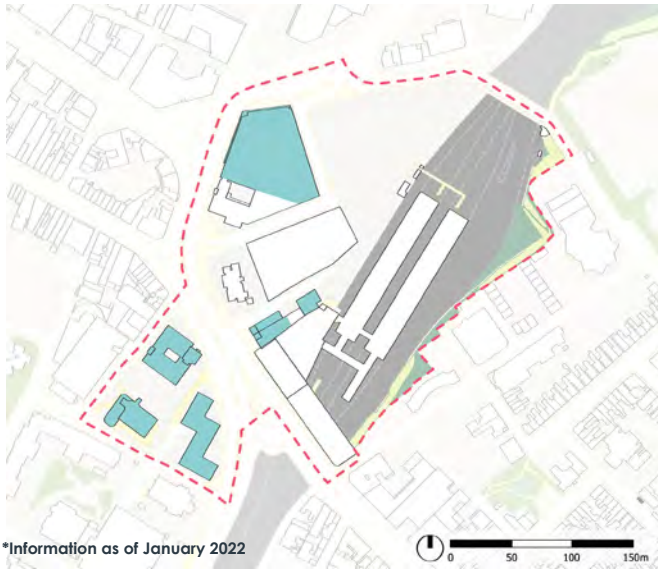


Figure 22: Office
.....



Figure 24: Education
.....

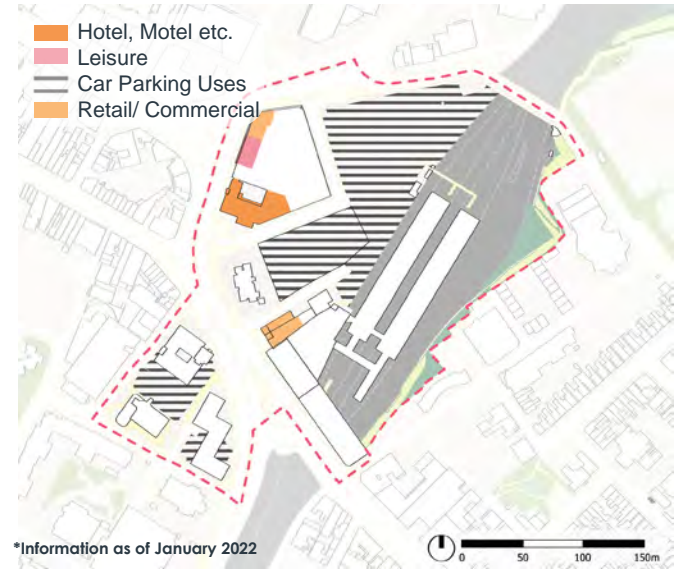


Figure 26: Miscellaneous
.....

2.7. Community Infrastructure & Influence

Within the character area there are no community facilities. There are some leisure uses which serve city residents and the footfall from people using the railway station. The character area is a small area, however.

Outside the area, Victoria Park is 10 minutes walk away and the city centre is adjacent with the Clock Tower within a 5 minute walk. Also directly adjacent is London Road offering a wide variety of facilities, including a supermarket and other shops facilities, for both surrounding neighbourhoods and city residents within a comfortable walking distance. The Leicester Islamic Centre is nearby on Conduit Street and St. Peter's Health Centre on Sparkenhoe Street.

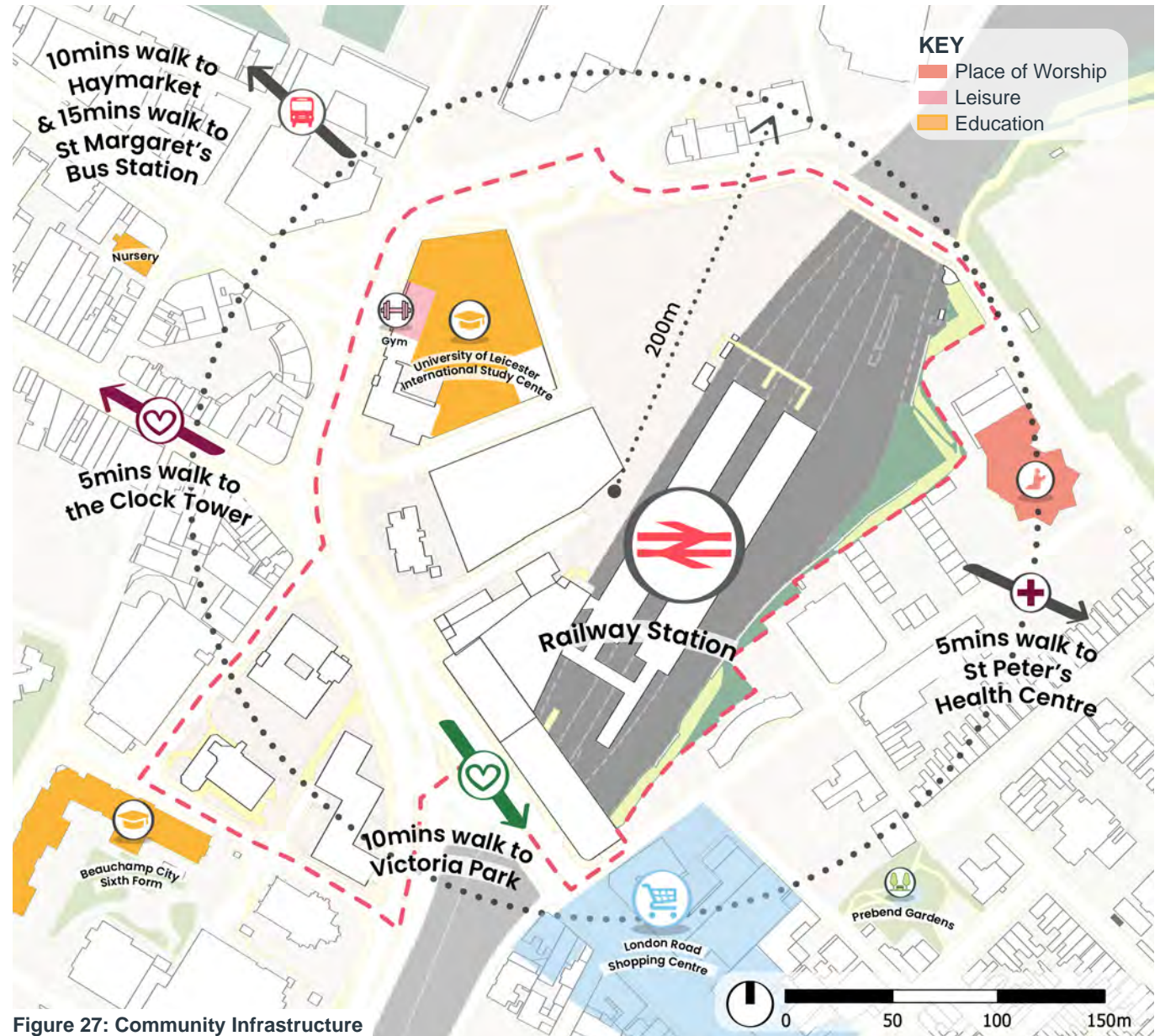


Figure 27: Community Infrastructure

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2.8. Housing & Tenure

The housing typology, as expected, is mostly flats with Elizabeth House a dedicated residential block and flats within the mixed use block of 1 St. George's Way.

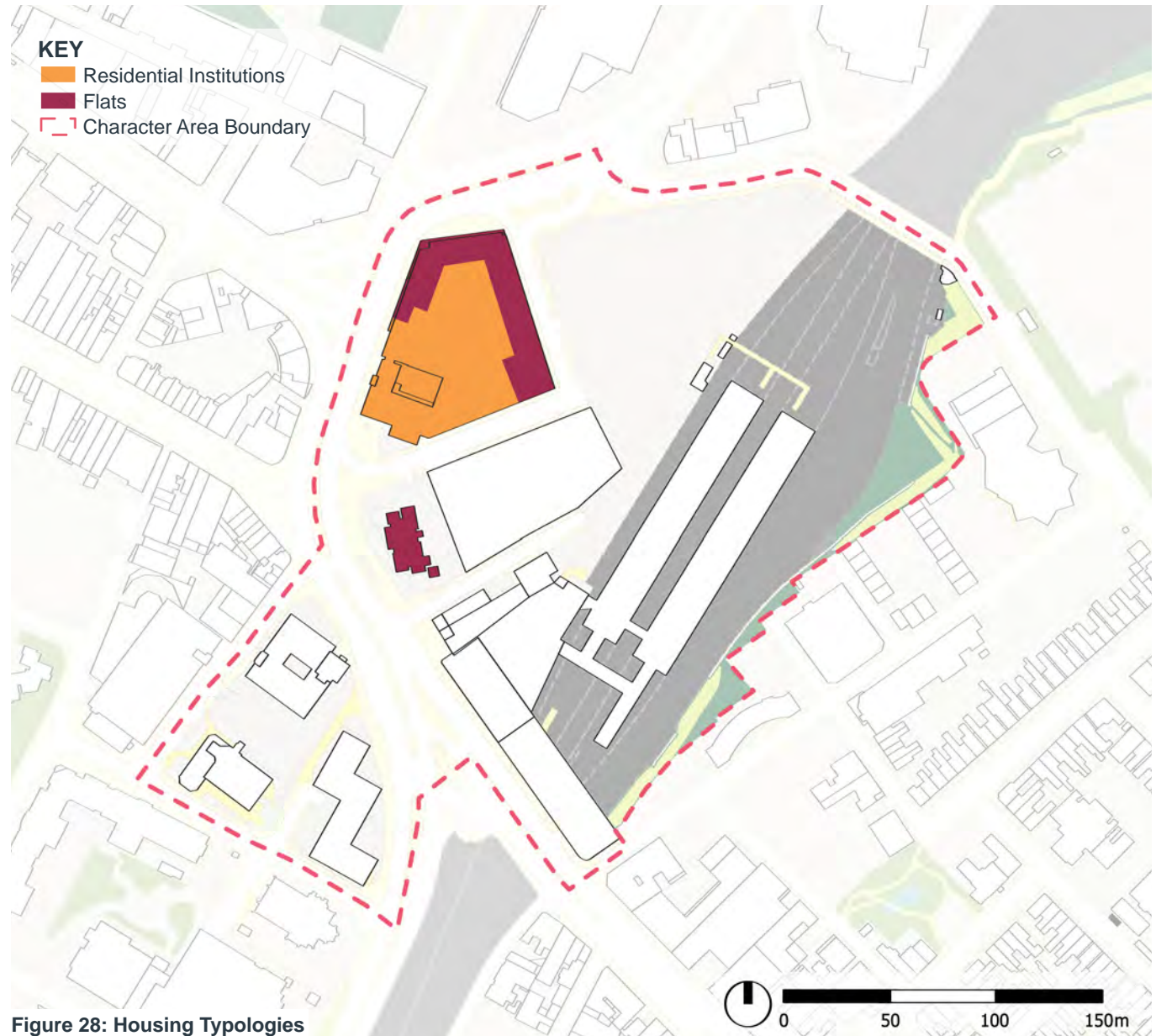


Figure 28: Housing Typologies

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2.9. Open Spaces & Public Realm

There are no significant public spaces within the character area. Given the footfall and activity associated with the railway station this must put pressure on adjacent streets and the communal areas within the station building. A public space could improve the setting and legibility of the station itself.

Within a 5 minute walk of the station are some of the city centre public spaces, including Orton Square, St. George's Churchyard, Town Hall Square and New Walk.

Further afield, within a 10 minute walk, are Victoria Park, Spinney Hill Park and Nelson Mandela Park.



Figure 29: Current Public Realm - Railway Station Character Area

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. They are also important for place making as different street character types enable people to find their way around and easily understand a place.

There are few streets within the Railway Station character area. St. Georges Way connecting to London Road and Waterloo Way are the main arterial routes on the western and southern boundary of the character area. St. George's Way is a wide street with considerable vehicle, pedestrian, and cycle movement. Campbell Street into Fox Street represents a centre link as it carries through traffic and feeds the Campbell Street and station car parks. Station Street sees very little vehicle movement as a neighbourhood street.

East Street and South Albion Street are also centre links.

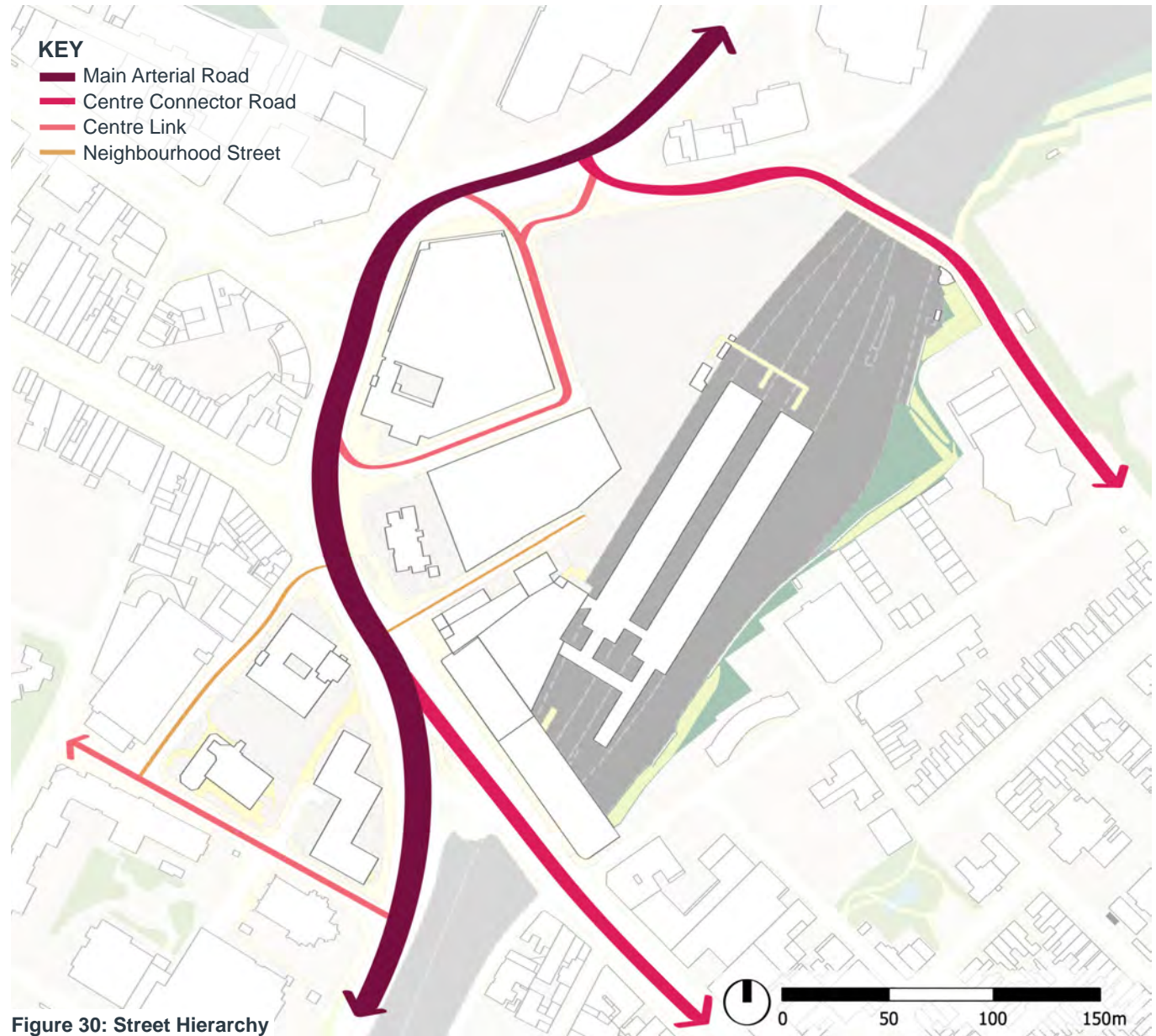


Figure 30: Street Hierarchy

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Parking Areas & Streets Configuration

The Railway Station character area is surrounded by a number of major roads with St. Georges Way to the north-west and London Road to the south.

A challenge for the station area is the movement of taxis and vehicles entering and leaving the Porte Cochère of the station from and onto London Road. There are also conflicts arising through many different requirements for different users in a very small area. Options for improvement are being considered by the Council.



Figure 31: St. George's Way, from St. George Street



Figure 32: St. George's Way from East Street



Figure 33: East Street



Figure 34: Fox Street

The recent London Road Connecting Leicester improvements have improved pedestrian and cycle connections along London Road and from the station towards the city centre.

The surface car park to the railway station has a detrimental impact on legibility and place-making and parking could be provided in a different form on a smaller footprint.

Car parking to the ground floors of the office buildings to the south-west and additional surface car parks create blank frontages and poor interfaces with the adjacent streets.

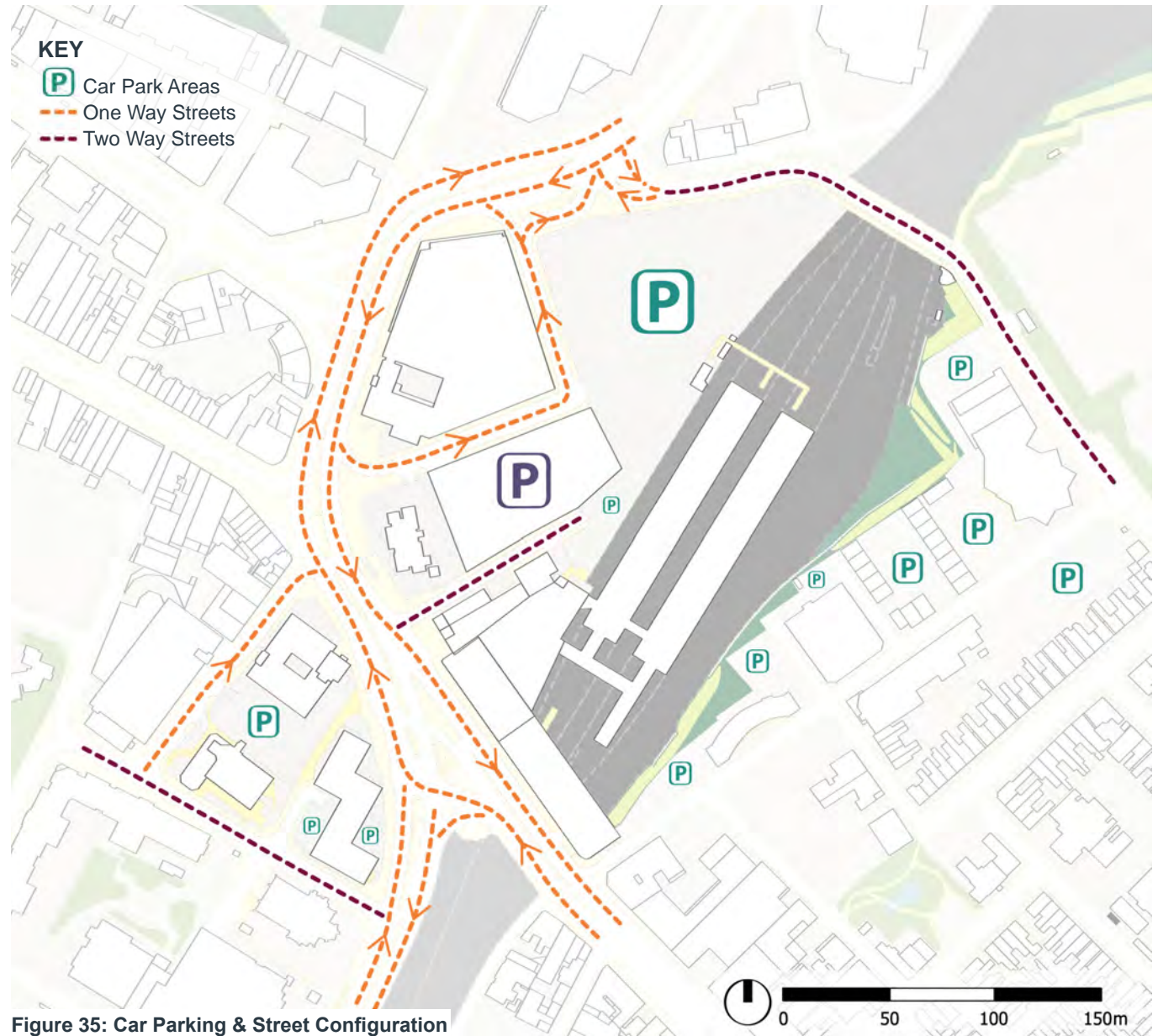


Figure 35: Car Parking & Street Configuration

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Public Transport

There are many bus routes running along the perimeter of the character area. The two main bus stations, St. Margaret's and Haymarket, are within 15 minutes and 10 minutes walk.

Proposals to link the Bus Stations to the Railway Station with an electric bus are being considered.

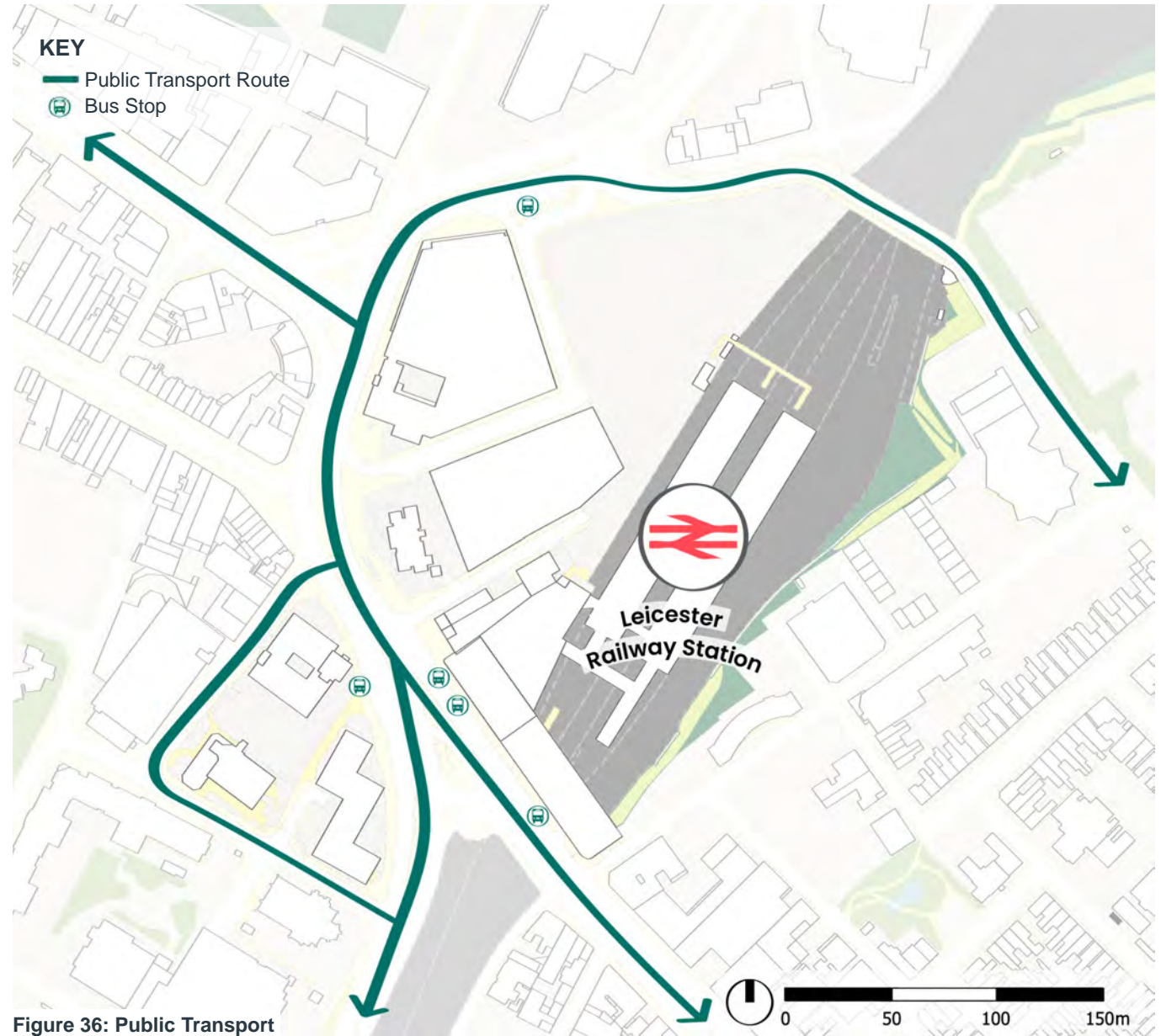


Figure 36: Public Transport

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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.

There is a national cycle route that runs along Granby Street up to London Road.

The connection between the station and the city centre via Granby Street is a main pedestrian route to and from the station. London Road acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement along this route, however, improvements through Connecting Leicester in 2009 removed the underpass and built the surface level super crossing that now exists. The station is entered by pedestrians in the north end of the Porte Cochère.

Connections between the station and the Cultural Quarter of the city are challenging with a hostile vehicle dominated environment, one crossing point, poorly overlooked streets and poor legibility. Reconnecting the railway station with the Cultural Quarter is an objective of the Council.

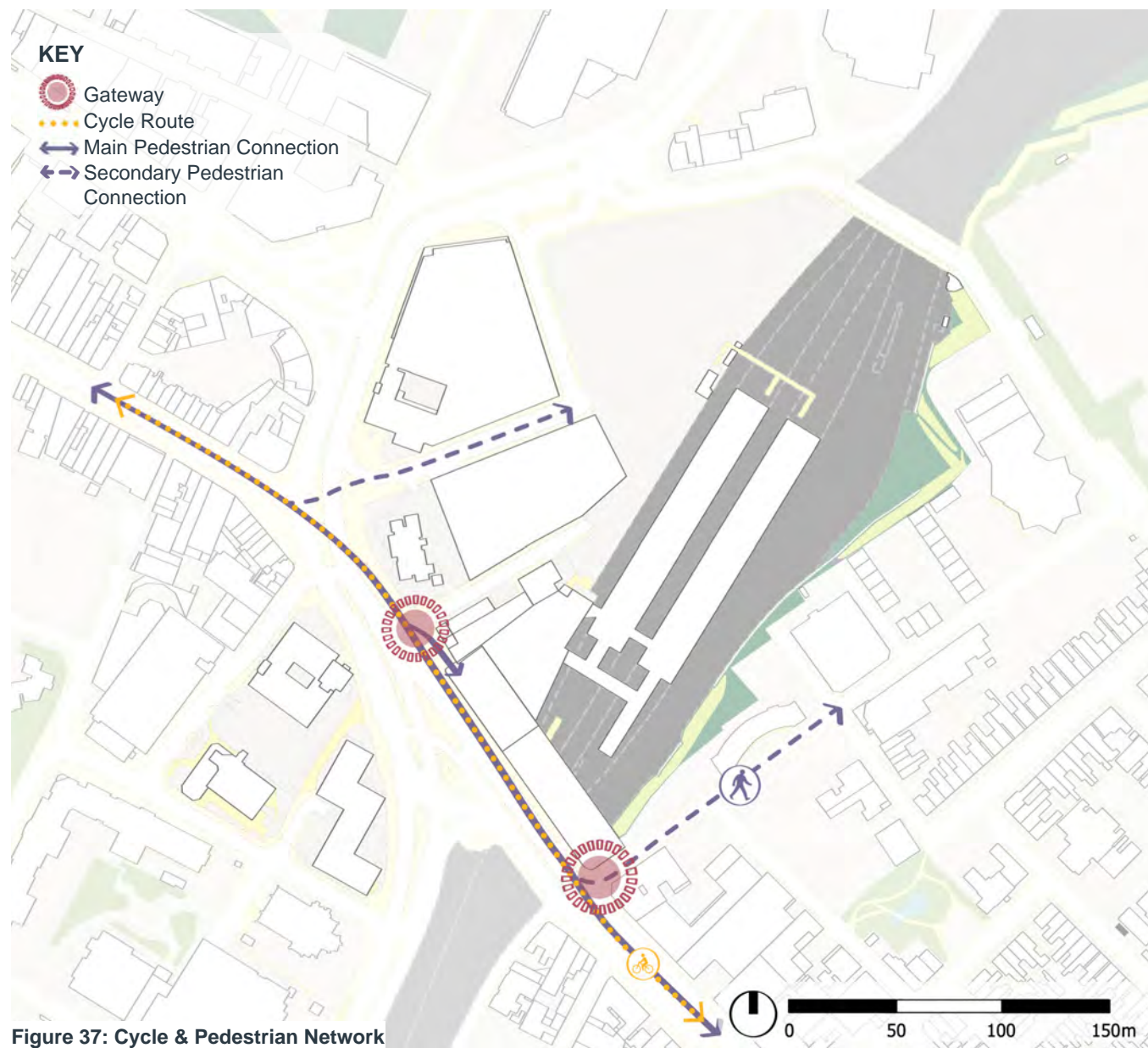


Figure 37: Cycle & Pedestrian Network

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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.

Significant Connecting Leicester schemes have been undertaken around the station, mostly focused along London Road, to create a safer and more attractive route for cyclists and pedestrians on London Road.

The outbound bus lane between Conduit Street and Evington Road has been permanently removed. New cycle lanes have been installed on both sides of the road.

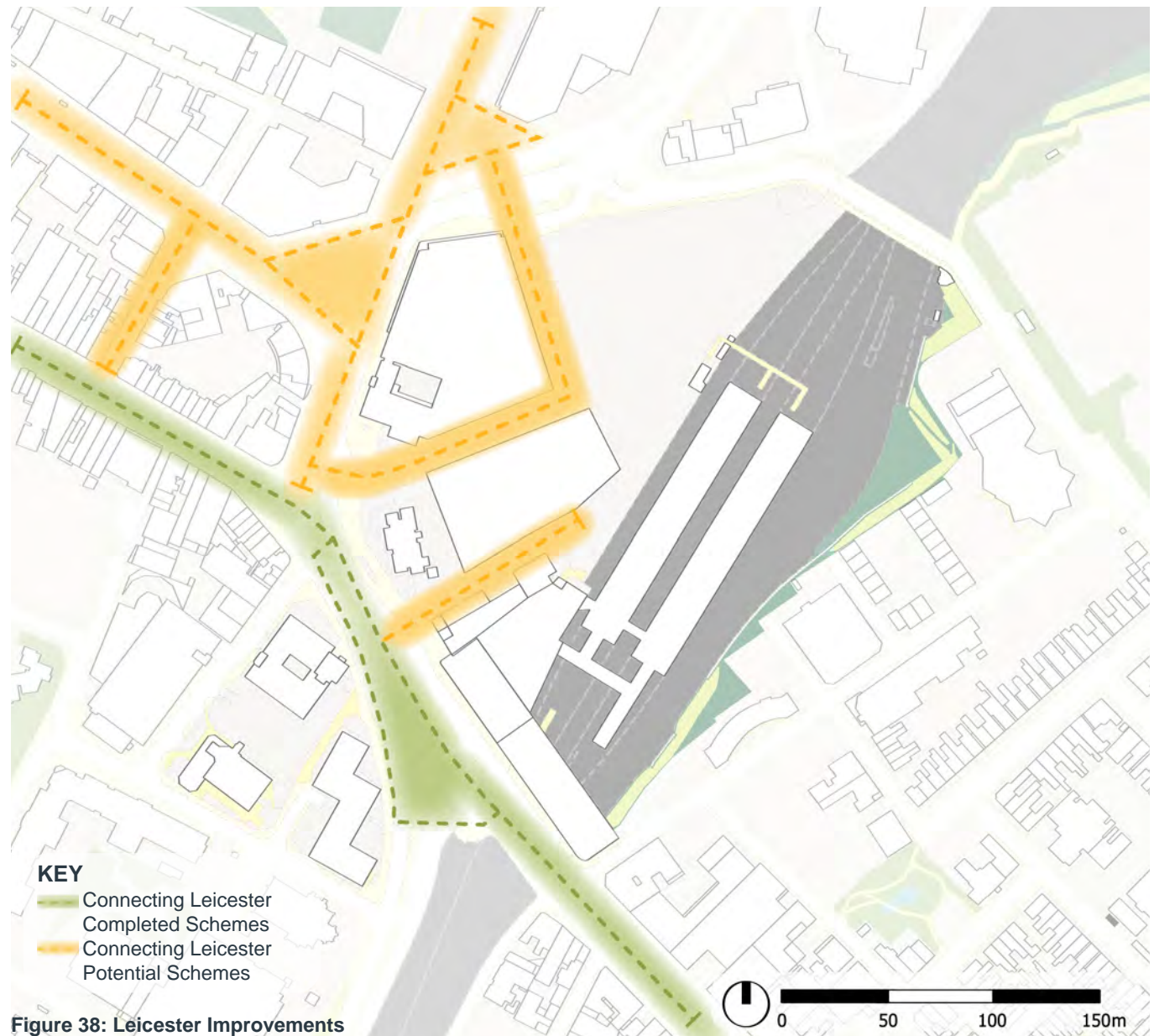


Figure 38: Leicester Improvements

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Images 1, 2 & 3 show the outside of the station before the Connecting Leicester works took place. There were challenges with this layout, with conflicts between cyclists, buses, cars and pedestrians. There had been accidents in the past which it is hoped will be avoided in the new layout.

Images 4, 5 & 6 show the implemented improvements, with clear delineation between road users, pedestrians and cyclists.



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 are some parts of the character area which have a very active frontage, for example the Porte Cochère to London Road. There are others, however, which do not, making some parts of the character area feel quite unsafe. Elizabeth House and the former Sorting Office both offer inactive frontages to Campbell Street and Fox Street, which is a main route into and out of the station car park. The former sorting office is currently vacant and the ground floor of St. Georges Heights to Campbell Street and to Fox Street is servicing and car parking access.

The location of ground floor and surface car parking to the office buildings in the south west of the area result in an area with predominantly blank frontages.

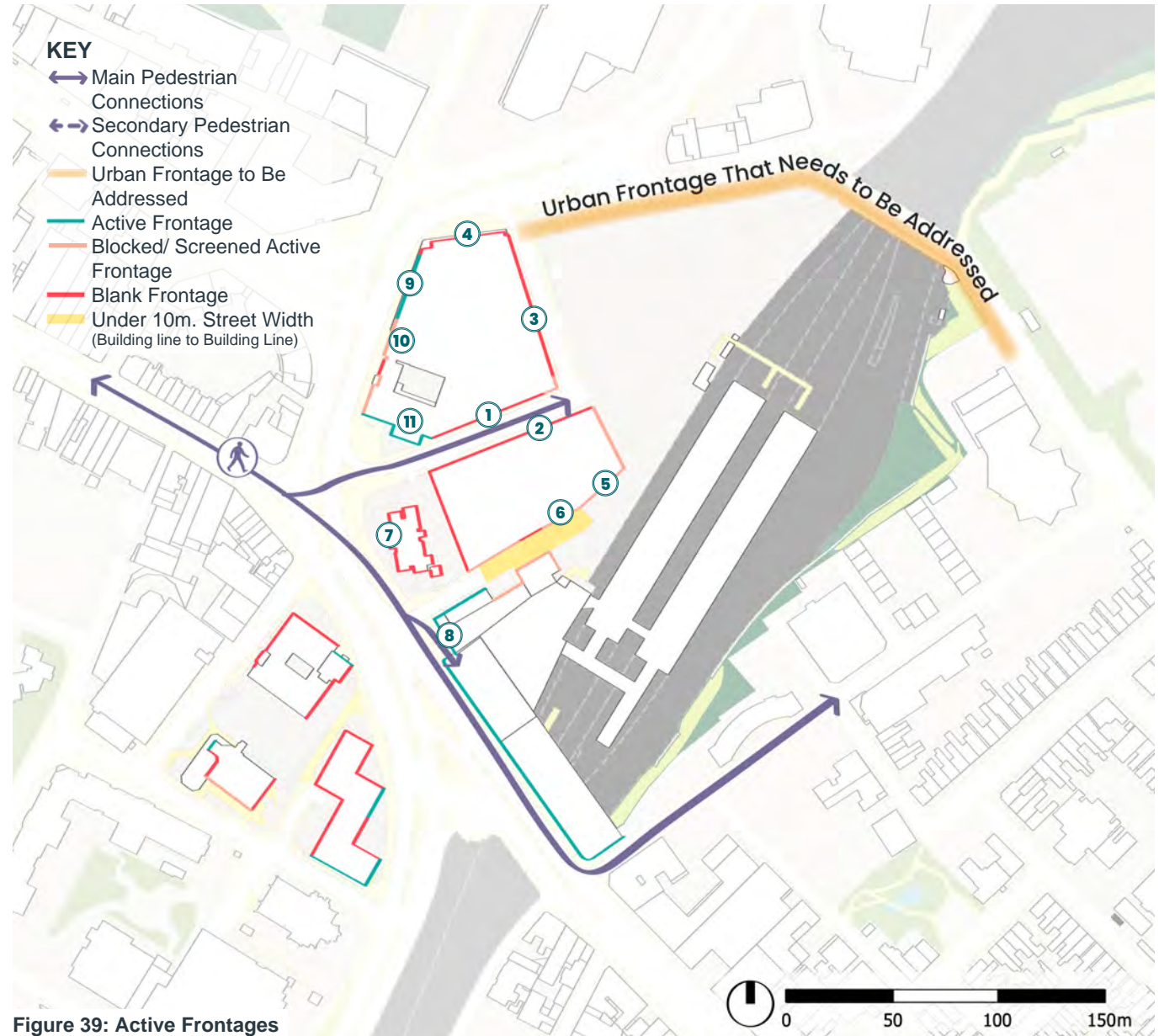


Figure 39: Active Frontages

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Figure 40: Examples of Frontages



2.13. Key Views & Legibility

In considering the taller buildings around the station, in particular the prominent and distinctive St. George's Tower and Elizabeth House, the character area is seen from numerous city centre locations and these tall buildings assist with wayfinding. Closer to the character area, both of these tall buildings terminate views down adjacent streets. East Street and Charles Street are terminated by St. George's Tower and Elizabeth House is prominent in views down Granby Street. The Porte Cochère and the octagonal turret of the Railway Station are also significant landmarks visible from Granby Street and New Walk. However, legibility of the entrance to the station and its relationship to the surrounding streets is poor.

From the north, the Cultural Quarter, St. George's Tower and the mixed-use building on Fox Street dominate the view but pedestrian links are poor and connections with the railway station are not clear. Improvements to reconnect these two areas (the Cultural Quarter with the Railway Station), both physically and visually, are needed.

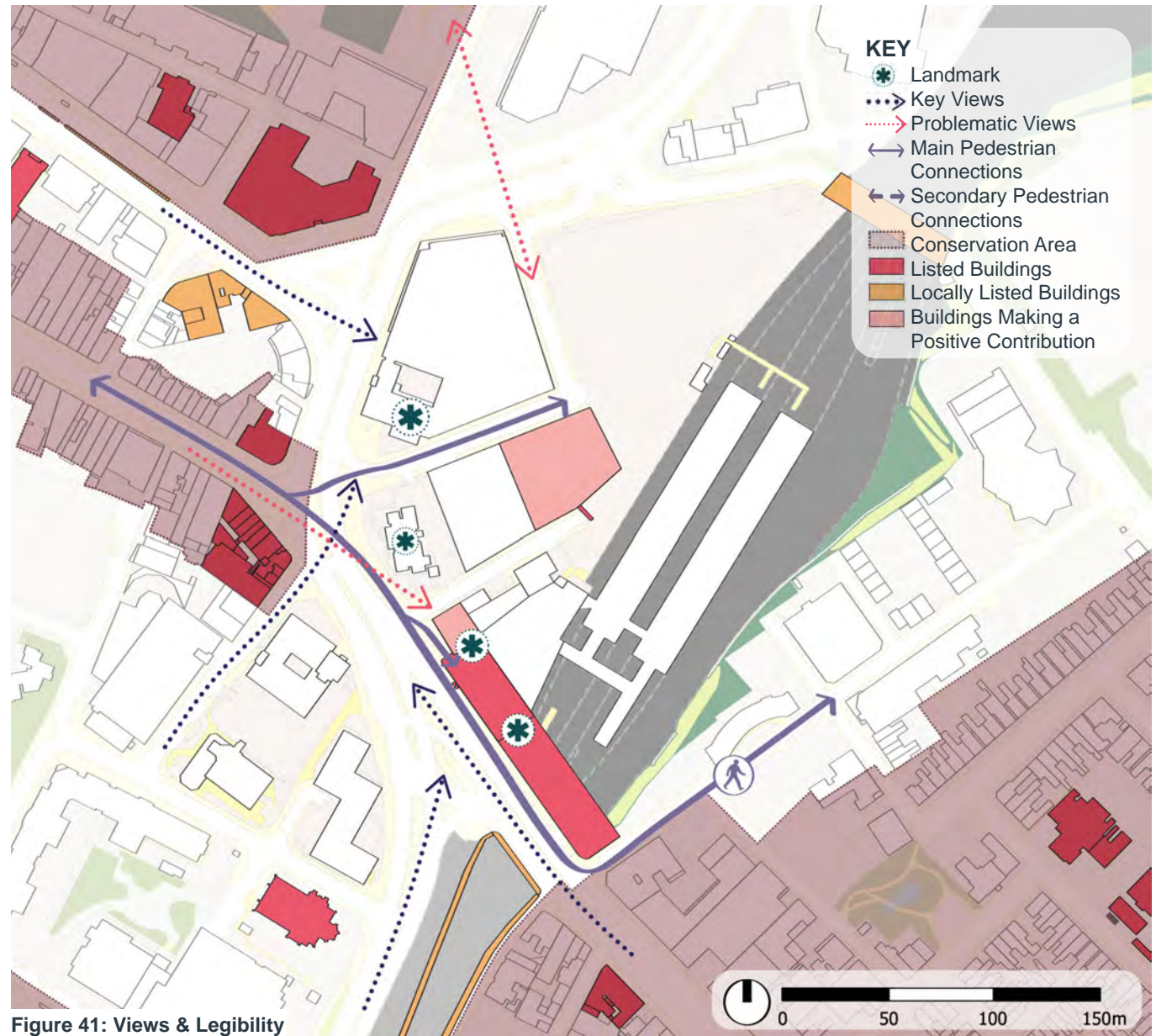
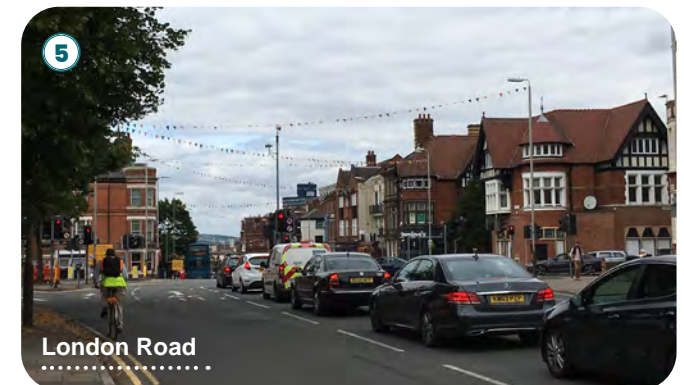
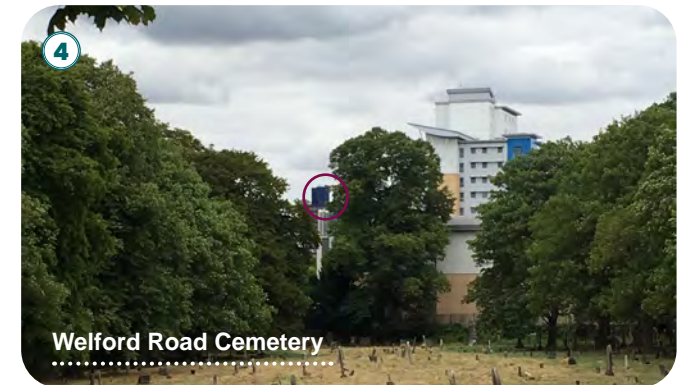
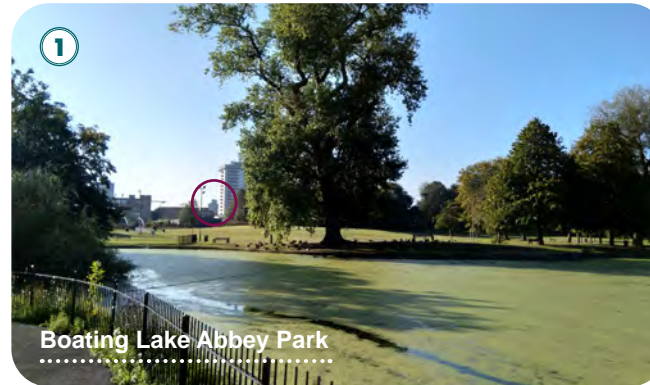


Figure 41: Views & Legibility

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As an area with a number of tall buildings and with tall development likely to come forward in the future, it is important that city wide views are considered to understand the broader impact of tall development in this character area. These views are taken from significant open space and parks within the city. Tall development, as illustrated by the prominence of St. George's Tower in the attached images, would be visible from these spaces. These views are a selection and a thorough views analysis would be required to accompany any future proposal.



2.14. Architecture, Materiality, Details

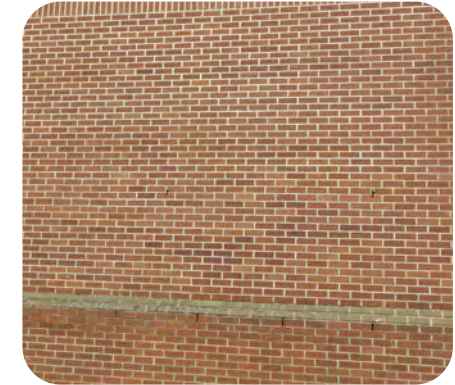
Architecture

The character area is obviously dominated by the decorated Victorian Grade II listed *Porte Cochère* of the railway station.

The tall buildings of St. George's Tower and Elizabeth House built in 1972 and 1976 respectively, are prominent due to scale rather than architectural quality, although the latter has some elements of texture and pattern. The brutalistic qualities of the former glass and concrete tower disappeared in the refurbishment of the outer shell in 2003. The office buildings to the south-west are unremarkable, postmodern, representative of the 1980's.

There is little cohesion and few unifying elements within the area, representative of a place that has undergone significant change over time (without attention being paid to the wider local character).

Red Brick



Concrete



Horizontal Banding



Materiality

Red brick is commonplace, varying from a bright orange-red to darker tones.

Concrete is also used as well as large areas of glazing.

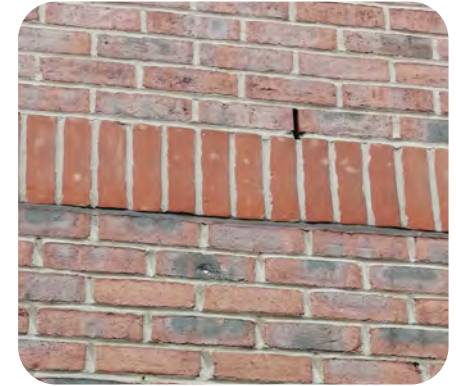
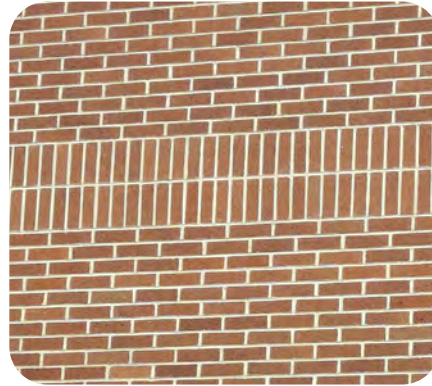
Stonework, which is also decorative, can be found on the older buildings.

Details

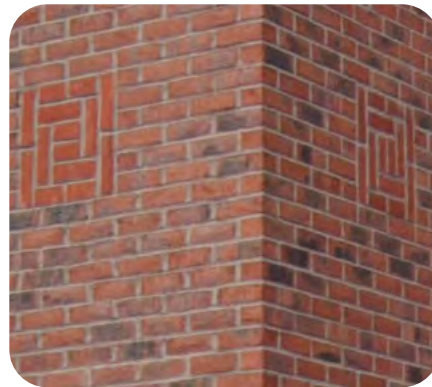
There is limited consistency of detailing, although the 1970s and 1980s office buildings reinterpret in brick the horizontal stonework banding of the station.

Simple brick detailing as rubbed, brick archways and windows and decorative stonework is also evident.

**Horizontal
Banding -
modern**



**Brick
Detailing**



**Decorative
Stonework**



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.

There has been some interest in office development for the area. There are no recent approvals for major residential developments or major permitted development applications for changes of use from office to residential. The identity of the area as a predominantly office destination remains strong with other areas in the city centre more suited to residential development.

Whilst the character area will undergo significant change the aspiration is to reinforce the railway station area as a city destination offering high quality public realm as well as a quality office and retail offer.

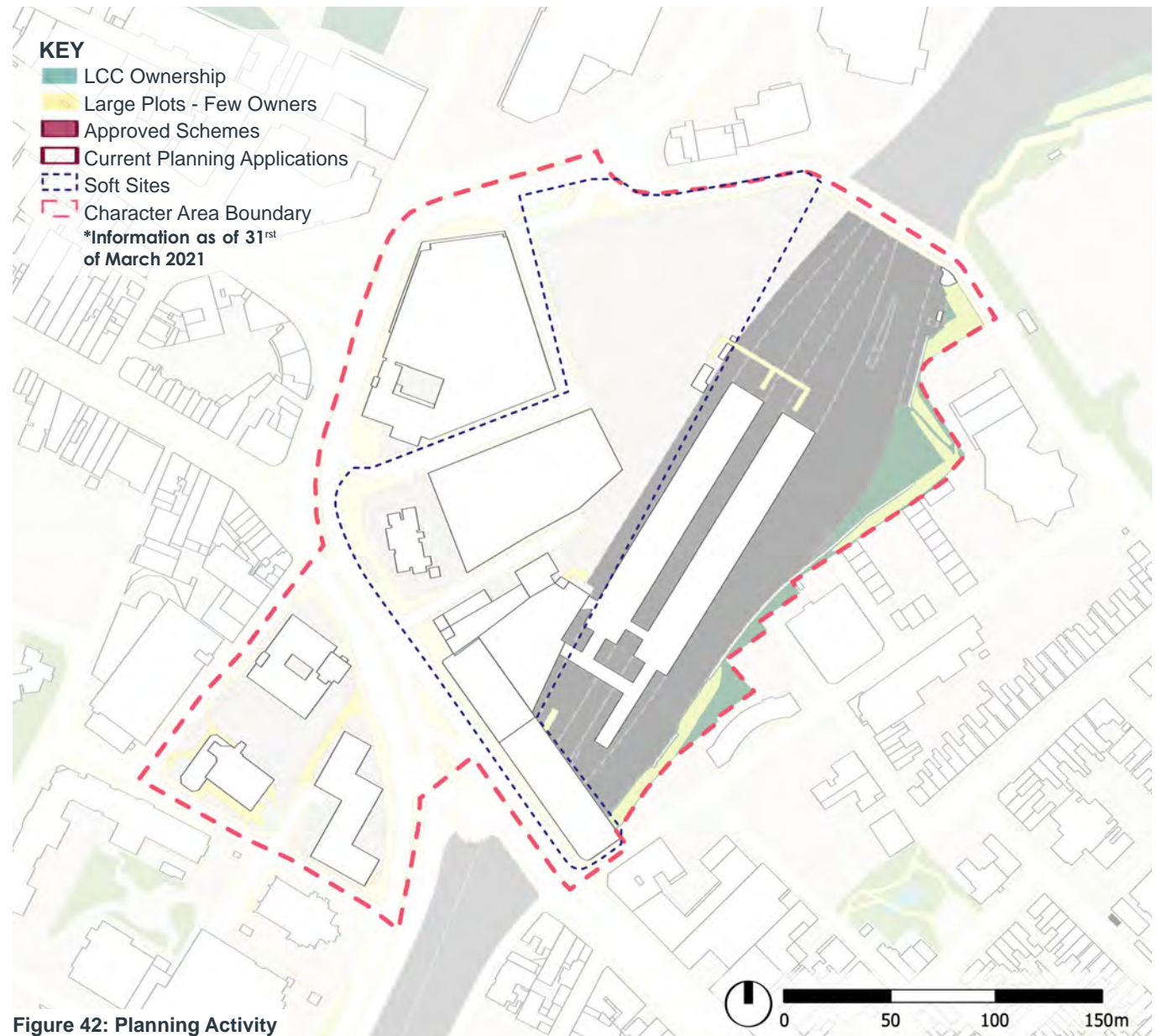


Figure 42: Planning Activity

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3



Townscape Diagnosis

3. Townscape Diagnosis

3.1. Constraints & Opportunities

The detailed townscape analysis of the Railway Station 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 the Railway Station in recent times has not experienced significant change. However, the vision for a new primary gateway has been established and therefore the area is likely to experience a transformation from what it is now. 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 challenges to overcome, but at the same time assets to preserve and enhance and further opportunities to explore.

Constraints

In creating a holistic, comprehensive and coordinated approach to the area's future growth the following constraints (figure 43) should be taken into account:

- There are heritage and townscape assets in the character area that should be protected and enhanced with any future development. Some are of a small scale but remain significant (for example the gate piers, phone boxes etc.). Furthermore, additional buildings that make a positive contribution to the townscape have been identified, which should also be retained. However, it is recognised that meeting future development objectives may require their full or partial demolition and this will need to be justified. The south-west of the area is in the viewing corridor of a view of city-wide significance.
- The entrance to the railway station is problematic, with poor legibility and visual connection with the city centre. There is no sense of arrival and the public realm around the station is limited given the level of footfall and the area is often congested.
- The urban grain is quite fragmented and multiple blank façades can be found throughout the area, including along main pedestrian connections, emphasizing the lack of activity, vibrancy and surveillance and lack of consideration given to the design of ground floors and their uses.
- Taxi and vehicle movements along London Road conflict with the cycling infrastructure and cycle and pedestrian movement.
- Views of the 19th century station Porte Cochère from Granby Street and New Walk are important to its heritage setting and the legibility of the station.
- The public realm around Elizabeth House is a physical and visual barrier in an important location and prevents a blank frontage to the main pedestrian and cycle connections.
- The station car park does not contribute positively to the area providing a weak frontage to the north edge of the area.
- Pedestrian and cycle connections between the railway station and the Cultural Quarter (St. George's character area) are weak with poor infrastructure and minimal active frontages, with no legible and direct route.
- Wayfinding and connections are weak between the station and city destinations to the south west, including the stadia of Leicester Tigers and Leicester City Football Club.

KEY

-  Problematic Space
-  Problematic Legibility View
-  Car Park Areas
-  Noise & Traffic Disruption
-  Weak & Unidentified Frontage
-  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)
-  Fragmented Urban Blocks
-  Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings
-  Buildings with Positive Contribution to the Townscape

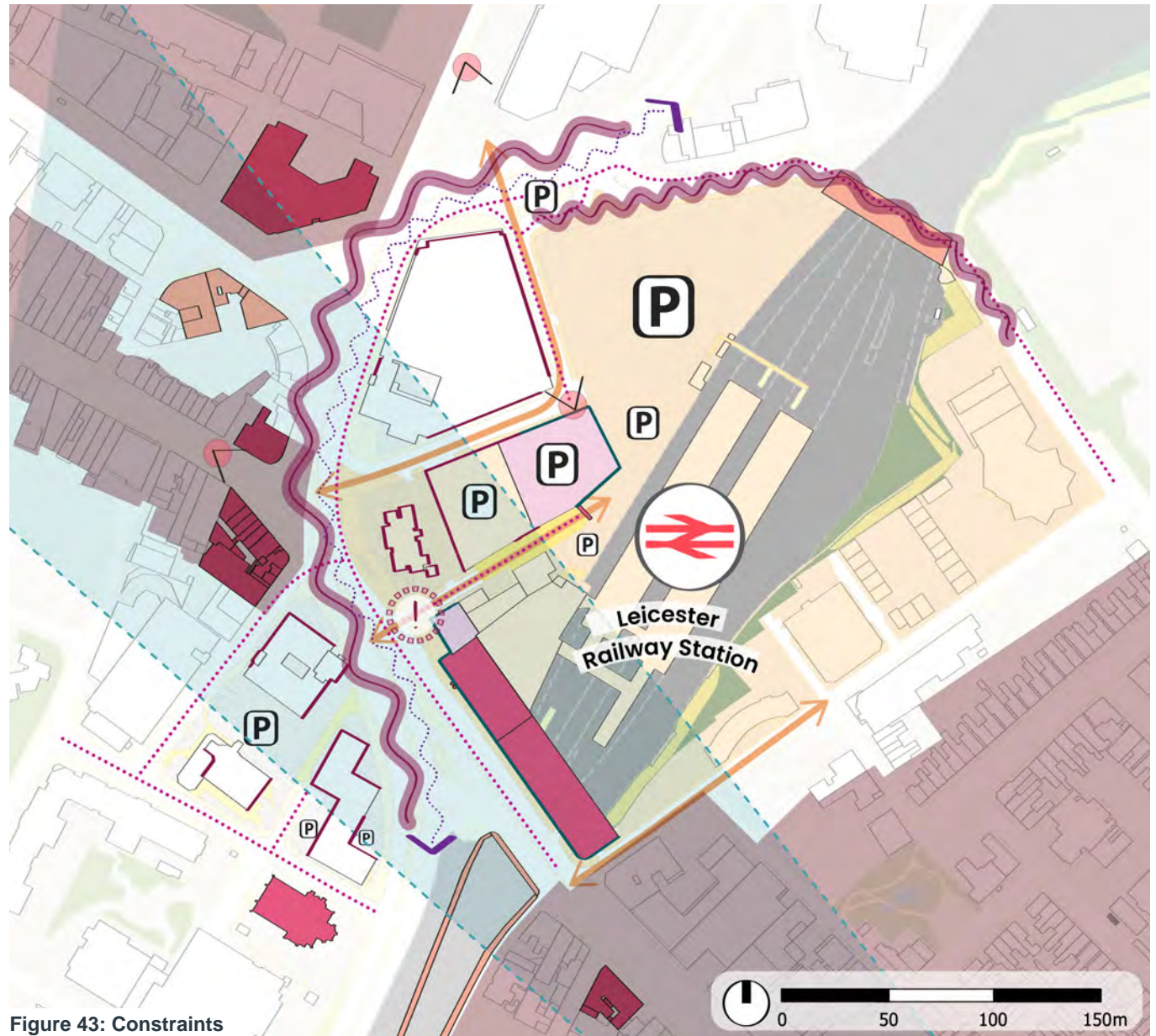


Figure 43: Constraints








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Opportunities

The following points present development opportunities and assets that should be taken advantage of, and incorporated into schemes, to enhance and upgrade that area and contribute to regeneration and redevelopment.

- The Railway Station character area is in a prime location to the south east of the city centre. It is within a 10 minute walking distance from the Clock Tower and Victoria Park and would be considered to be a walkable destination for most of city centre, with the Cultural Quarter (St. George's character area) and New Walk directly adjacent.
- The proximity to principle, cycle routes and the two Leicester bus stations could enable the area to operate as a main transport hub with the potential for an active travel hub.
- Within the Railway Station character area there is potential for a new 'neighbourhood heart' and civic space that could provide a sense of arrival, creating a pedestrian and cycle friendly environment.
- Significant improvements to cycling infrastructure and pedestrian routes have been made to London Road and Granby Street. However, key pedestrian and cycle connections could be enhanced and new ones provided to deliver pedestrian and cycle routes that are safe and overlooked. In particular to provide a legible and direct connection between the Cultural Quarter and the railway station.
- Figure 44 illustrates the place-making opportunities that could present future development, transforming and place-making opportunities for the overall area's regeneration.
- Increase the office uses in the area, with ancillary retail and high quality public realm to create a new gateway and transform the character and identity of the area.
- Higher density development is possible with some potential for tall development.
- Figure 44 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. At the same time, areas have been identified where the urban blocks could be redefined and better enclosure and definition could be achieved through future, well-designed, well-structured, well-connected development.
- The 19th Century Porte Cochère and associated heritage assets make a significant contribution to the identity and character of the area. They have landmark status for their historic importance, not just their visual prominence.

KEY

-  Existing Landmarks
-  Gateways
-  Bus Stops
-  Place-Making Development Opportunities
-  New Neighbourhood's Heart
-  Improved Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections
(Connecting Leicester Delivered & Planned)
-  Potential for New Pedestrian Connections
-  Opportunities for Better Enclosure
-  Active Frontage Opportunities
-  Existing Active Frontages
-  Opportunity to Redefine Urban Blocks
-  Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings
-  Buildings with Positive Contribution to the Townscape
-  Potential to Redefine Development Frontage & Ring Road

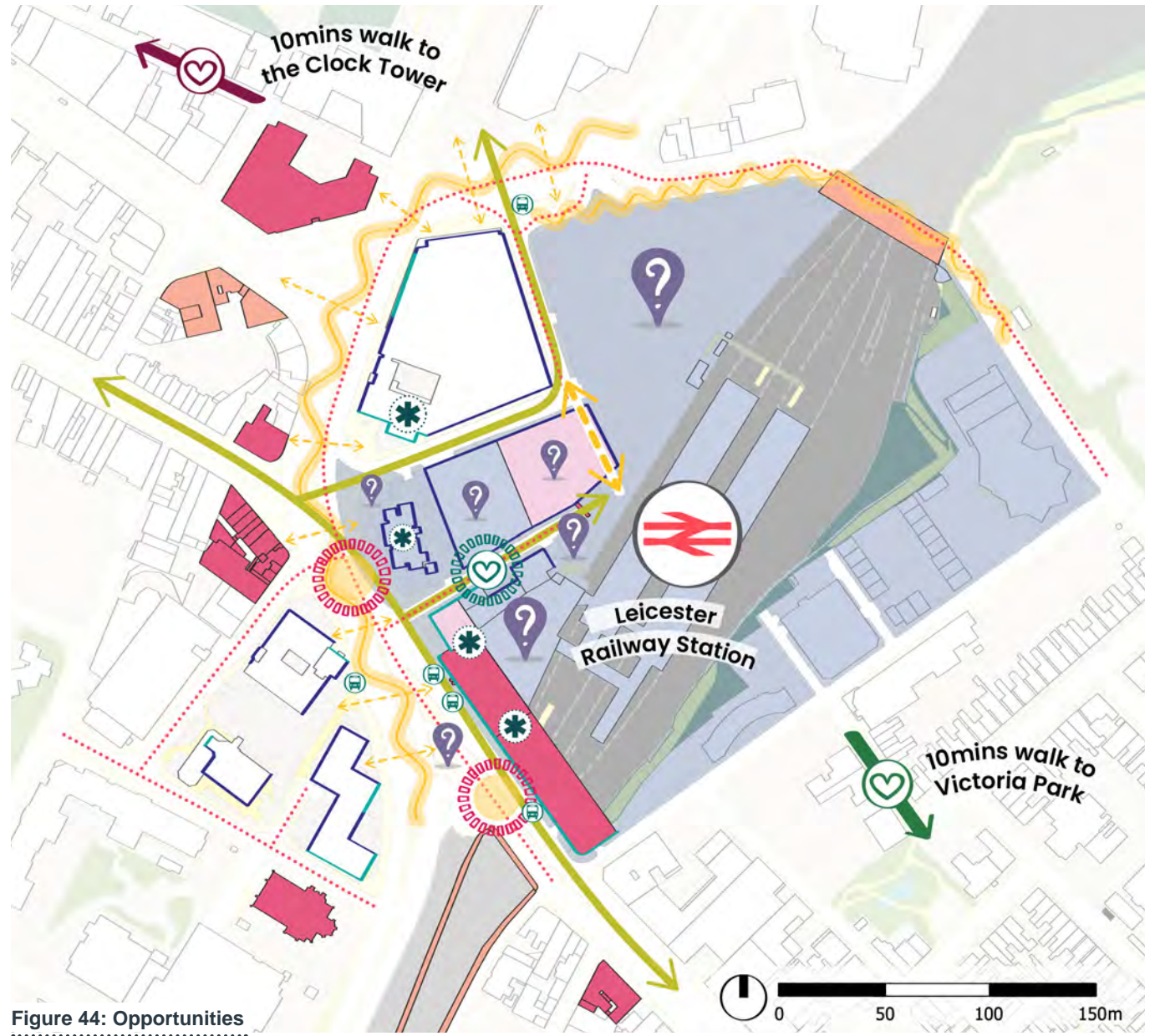


Figure 44: Opportunities

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Character Area Townscape Management

Railway Station character area falls within 4. *Intensification by increased density and higher density building types*, where place specific policies will be used to guide future development and 5. *Redevelopment* where masterplans and design codes will be used to guide future development (see page 7 - Townscape Character Management).

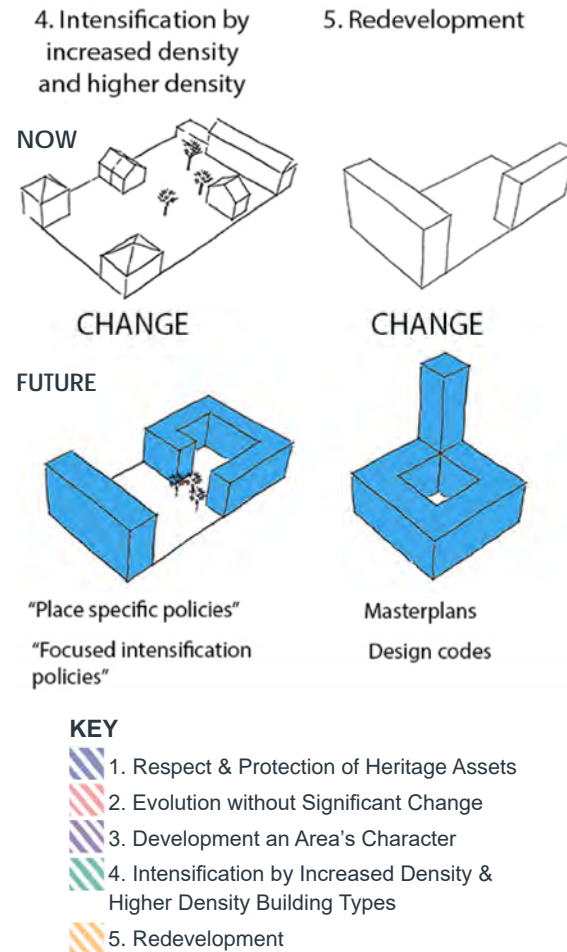


Figure 45: Character Areas Development & Management Plan

4



Guiding the Future

4.2. Main Future Development Objectives

1 Character & Identity



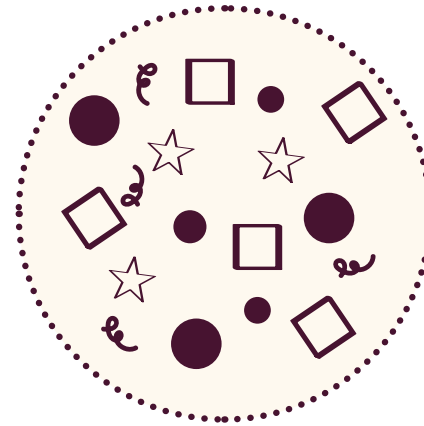
Development should enhance the character, identity and sense of place by considering the built, natural and historic context, responding to it ecologically, socially and aesthetically. All development should contribute to the unique character of the area by protecting and enhancing existing heritage 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.

2 Cohesive, Vibrant & Inclusive Neighbourhoods



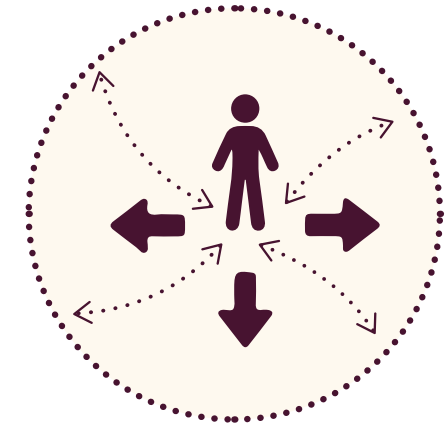
Ensure everyone's health, safety and quality of life creating buildings, streets and spaces that encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to meet and mix. All development should use the appropriate built form, layout, scale and mixture of uses and tenures to create a welcoming and attractive place for people to live work and visit. There should not be any differentiation between the quality of market and affordable housing.

3 Diversity



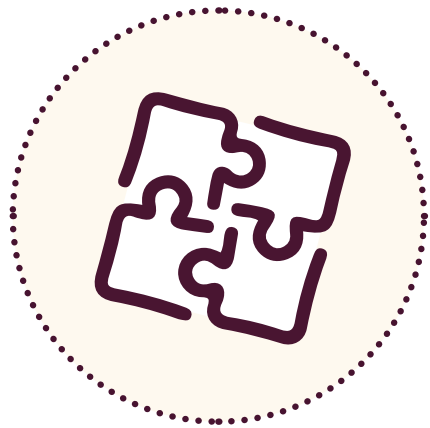
Within each Character Area variety, choice and design sensory richness should be provided in keeping with local distinctiveness. Development should promote and create mixed-use communities through providing a diverse range of facilities, activities and residential typologies with good access to public transport.

4 Ease of Movement



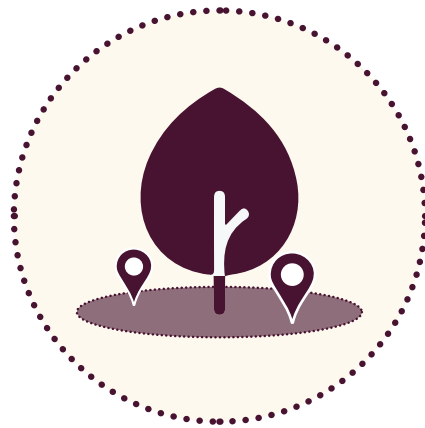
Ensure, improve and promote ease of movement, accessibility and connectivity within the Character Area and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The use of creative and innovative solutions for reducing car-dominated streetscapes should be considered to promote safe and welcoming pedestrian and cycle movement. 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



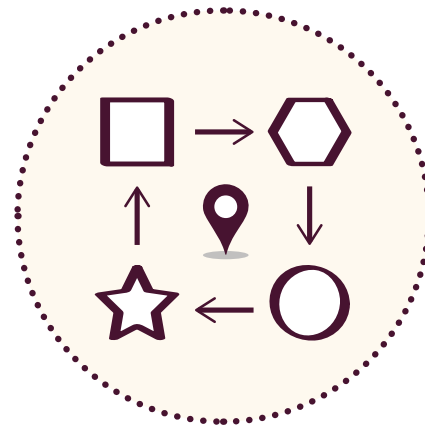
Ensure that each Character Area can be properly understood and easily navigated. There should be a positive relationship between the fronts and backs of buildings and structures, together with clearly defined public and private spaces, well-defined block and street pattern and distinctive townscape markers. 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.

6 Public Realm & Landscape



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.

7 Adaptability & Flexibility



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.

8 Lifespan



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

The aspiration for the Railway Station character area is to make it a destination within the city offering high quality public realm, quality office space, hotel and ancillary retail and a new station entrance. It will become the foremost office destination within the city centre, to be considered and delivered comprehensively. Achieved through the allocation of land around Campbell Street sorting office and the station car park, developed in accordance with the aforementioned vision and main development objectives. Specifically:

KEY

-  Existing Landmarks
-  Proposed 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
-  Proposed Road
-  Potential Streetscape Improvements - Materials & Layout
-  Active Frontages Priority Areas/ Façade Animation
-  Built Continuous Frontage - Repair Urban Grain
-  Enhanced/ Proposed Civic Public Space - Neighbourhood's Heart
-  Enhanced/ Proposed Green Space/ Public Realm
-  Redefined Urban Blocks
-  Potential Development Sites
-  Listed, Locally Listed & Positive Contribution Buildings

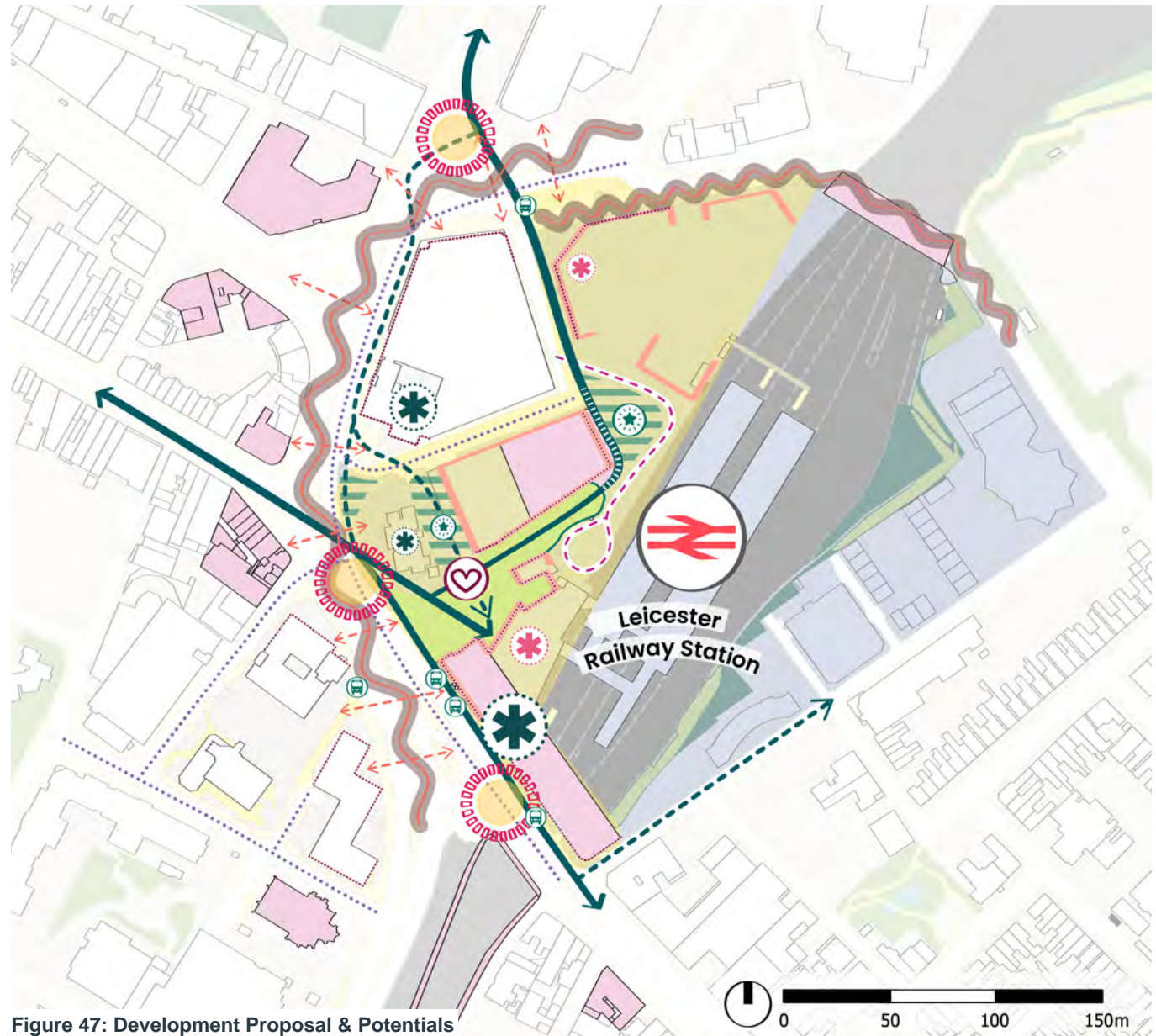


Figure 47: Development Proposal & Potentials

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- Specific area policies and a coordinated and comprehensive approach to guide development will ensure that the Railway Station will preserve and enhance existing assets, while addressing current challenges and utilising present development opportunities. Potential development sites should not be considered in isolation to the area's main, wider objectives.
- Improving the legibility of the station with a new entrance adjacent to the original 19th Century Porte Cochère providing a stronger visual relationship with the main pedestrian routes to the city centre. This could be made possible through the demolition of buildings to the north west of the Porte Cochère and buildings of exceptional design quality will be needed to justify their loss.
- Create a new public space, a new 'neighbourhood heart', in front of the station, providing a clear arrival point and a place for people to meet, dwell and enjoy.
- The setting and visual prominence of the 19th Century Porte Cochère and associated heritage assets must be protected and enhanced.
- Improvements to the public realm to the west side of Elizabeth House will enhance the visibility of the new station entrance and provide pedestrian connections.
- Stopping up of Station Street to remove vehicles, and relocating buses and taxis to Fox Street and Campbell Street improving access and providing the opportunity for ancillary uses within the Porte Cochère. This will also reduce congestion from London Road, important given the implementation of cycling infrastructure as part of the Connecting Leicester improvements.
- Create a new public space to the south of Fox Street that will provide a key node for the new development to the east of the character area and for pedestrian connections between the station and the Cultural Quarter. The space will be designed to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movement over vehicles at key crossing points.
- Improve legibility and connectivity between the Railway Station and the Cultural Quarter (St. George's character area) through new improved connections (proposed new crossing at St. George's Way, linking St. George's Street and Fox Street) across the ring road, improvements to Fox Street and the reconfiguration of building lines to the footprint of the Campbell Street sorting office, creating straight viewing lines and direct routes. This could be made possible through the demolition of the former sorting office building. New development will also provide active frontages along Fox Street and to the new public space to Station Street.
- Ensure any future development along the ring road to the north is well-designed and well-defined, addressing the need for activity and surveillance and providing a quality living environment, while minimising the effect of the ring road as a barrier.
- Opportunities for improving the wayfinding from the station and connections to city destinations to the south-west, including the stadia of Leicester Tigers and Leicester City Football Club, will be encouraged.
- New development will be expected, in design terms, to repair fragmented urban grain and the street-level status of the area, reinstating perimeter blocks and recreating well-defined and well-enclosed streets (figure 47).
- 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.

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.

The ambient height of the Railway Station character area is high compared to other parts of the city centre. Two of the tallest buildings in the city, St. George's Tower (79m) and Elizabeth House (46m) are located adjacent to the railway station and are visually prominent in the Leicester townscape and skyline. Additionally, elements of the office buildings to the south west are above 24 metres.

There is potential for development above 24 metres, broadly equivalent to 8 residential storeys, adjacent to the existing tall buildings to contribute further to this prominent cluster. Figure 47 shows an illustrative location for potential tall elements, however proposals should justify both location and appropriateness of design. Furthermore, development between 21m and 24m falls within a transition height between what is and is not defined as tall for Leicester. Such buildings, or parts of buildings will therefore need to be considered with care and potentially tall building policies will apply.

The area does have heritage constraints and these must be considered. The Grade II listed station building is particularly low within the character area. Development adjacent to this building should allow it to remain the most prominent building in the character area and enhance its setting, in particular as viewed from Granby Street and New Walk as outlined in the previous analysis. The view of city wide significance from London Road, with Bradgate Park in the distance, is also a consideration and will constrain the location and scale of tall development.

KEY

- - - Important Views
- 0 - 15m.
- 15 - 21m.
- 21 - 24m.
- ✱ Potential for above 24m. - Illustrative Location
- Existing Tall Buildings
- Listed & Locally Listed Buildings
- Character Area Boundary

*3m is broadly equivalent to 1 residential storey

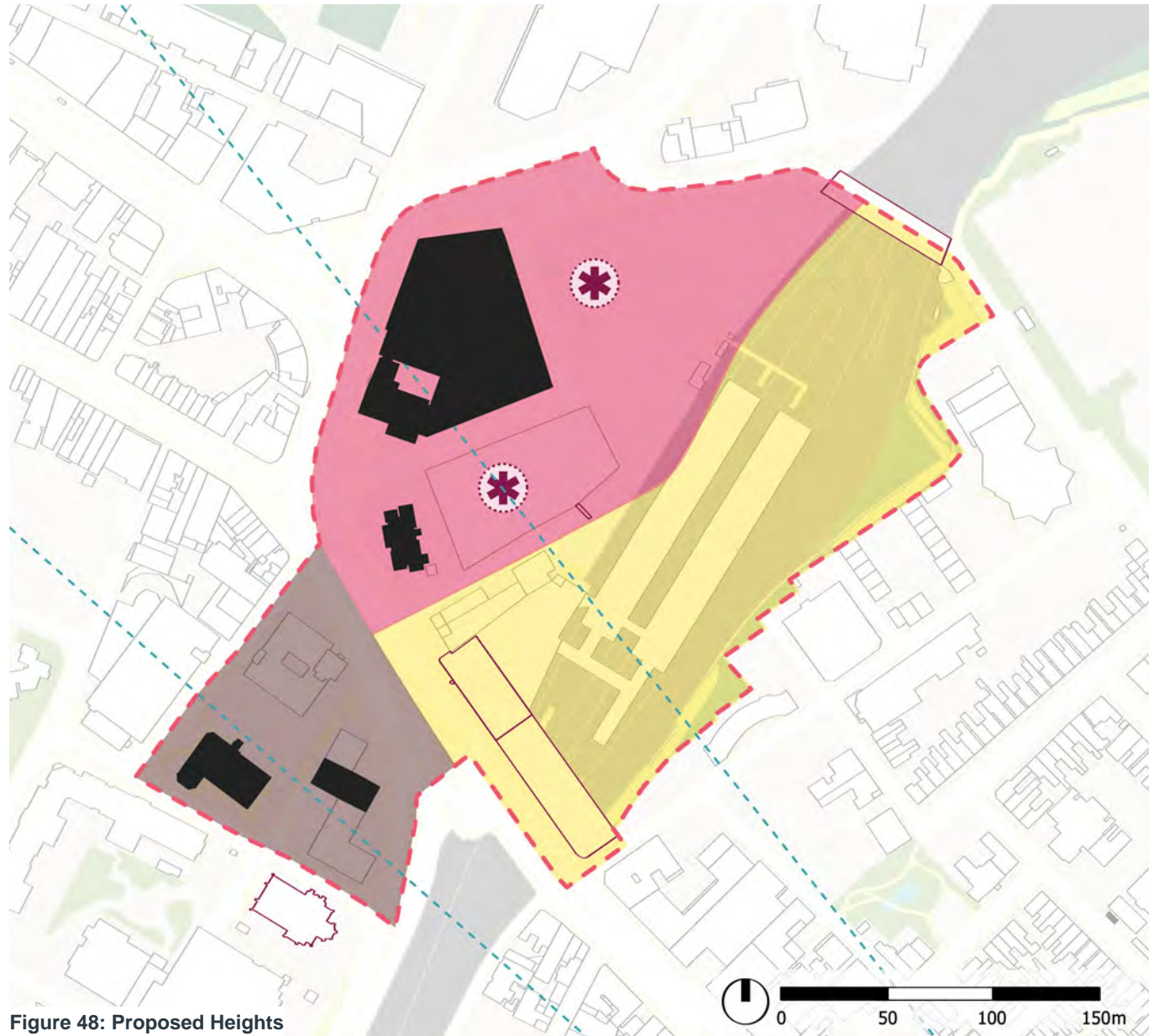


Figure 48: Proposed Heights

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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.



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