

The information in this document has been used to support the preparation of the Local Plan. If you need assistance reading this document, or require it in a different format, please contact us via [email planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk) or call on 0116 454 0085.



Leicester
City Council

Wharf Street Character Area

Townscape Analysis & Design Guidance

Evidence Document



Contents

1. Introduction.....	4	2.11. Connecting Leicester Improvements	34
1.1. Development Context	4	2.12. Active Frontages.....	36
1.2. Townscape Appraisal & Character.....	5	2.13. Key Views & Legibility	38
1.3. Overarching Policy	6	2.14. Architecture, Materiality, Details	40
1.4. Townscape Character Management	7	2.15. Planning Activity	42
1.5. The Scope	8	3. Townscape Diagnosis.....	44
1.6. The Structure	8	3.1. Constraints & Opportunities.....	44
2. Townscape Analysis	10	4. Guiding the Future	50
2.1. Location & Context	10	4.1. Establishing a Vision.....	50
2.2. History & Evolution of Wharf Street	12	4.2. Main Future Development Objectives.....	51
2.3. Heritage & Townscape Assets.....	16	4.3. Future Development.....	53
2.4. Urban Grain & Enclosure	20	4.4. Proposed Heights	56
2.5. Height & Massing.....	22	Glossary.....	58
2.6. Land Uses	24		
2.7. Community Infrastructure & Influence.....	26		
2.8. Housing & Tenure.....	27		
2.9. Open Spaces & Public Realm	28		
2.10. Movement & Connectivity	29		

Based upon O.S. Mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes copyright and may lead to prosecution. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).



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.

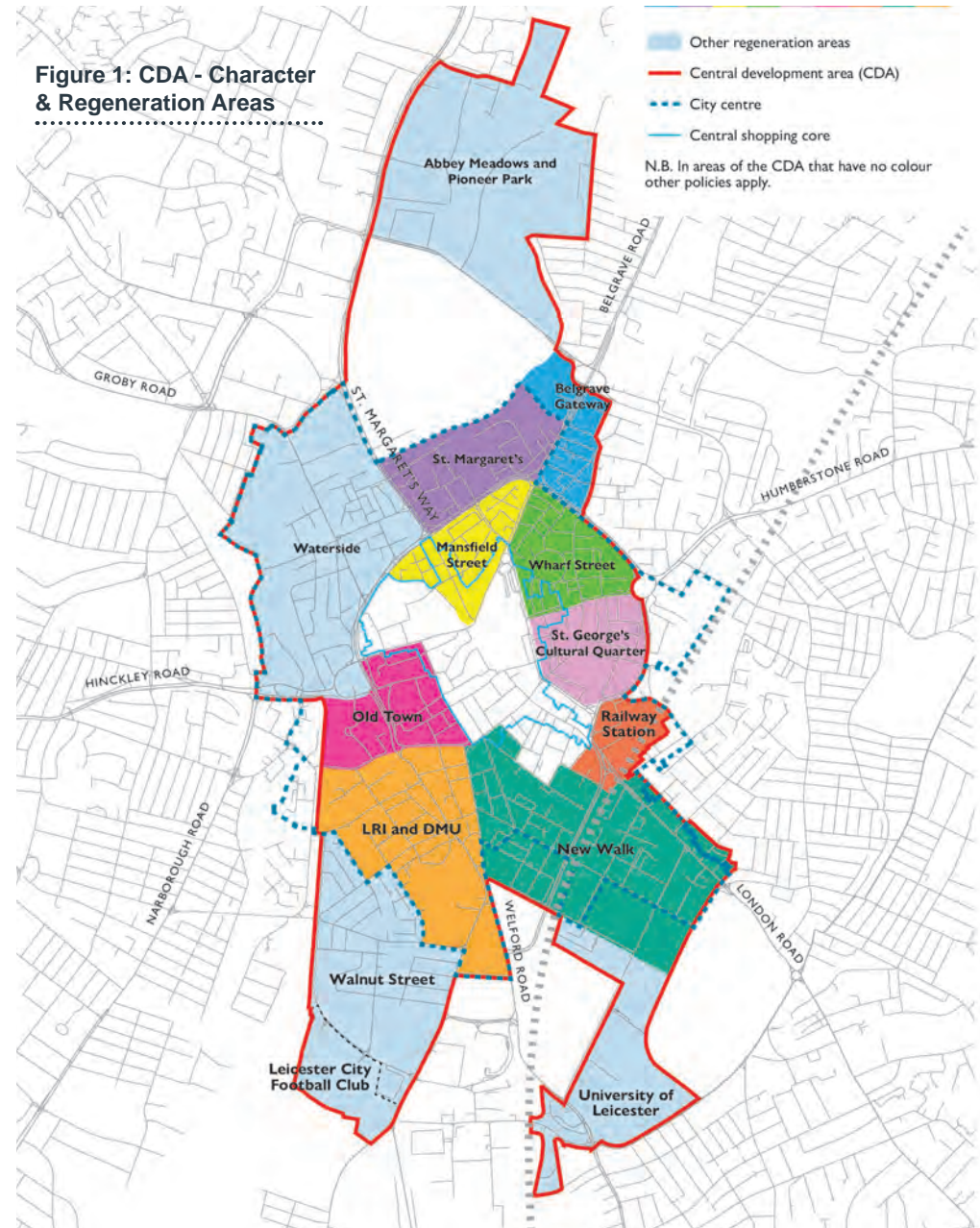
LCC has divided the CDA into 14 distinct areas, including 9 character areas and 5 other regeneration areas, to recognise the individual context of each area and for future policy to be based on the area's defining characteristics. These are:

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

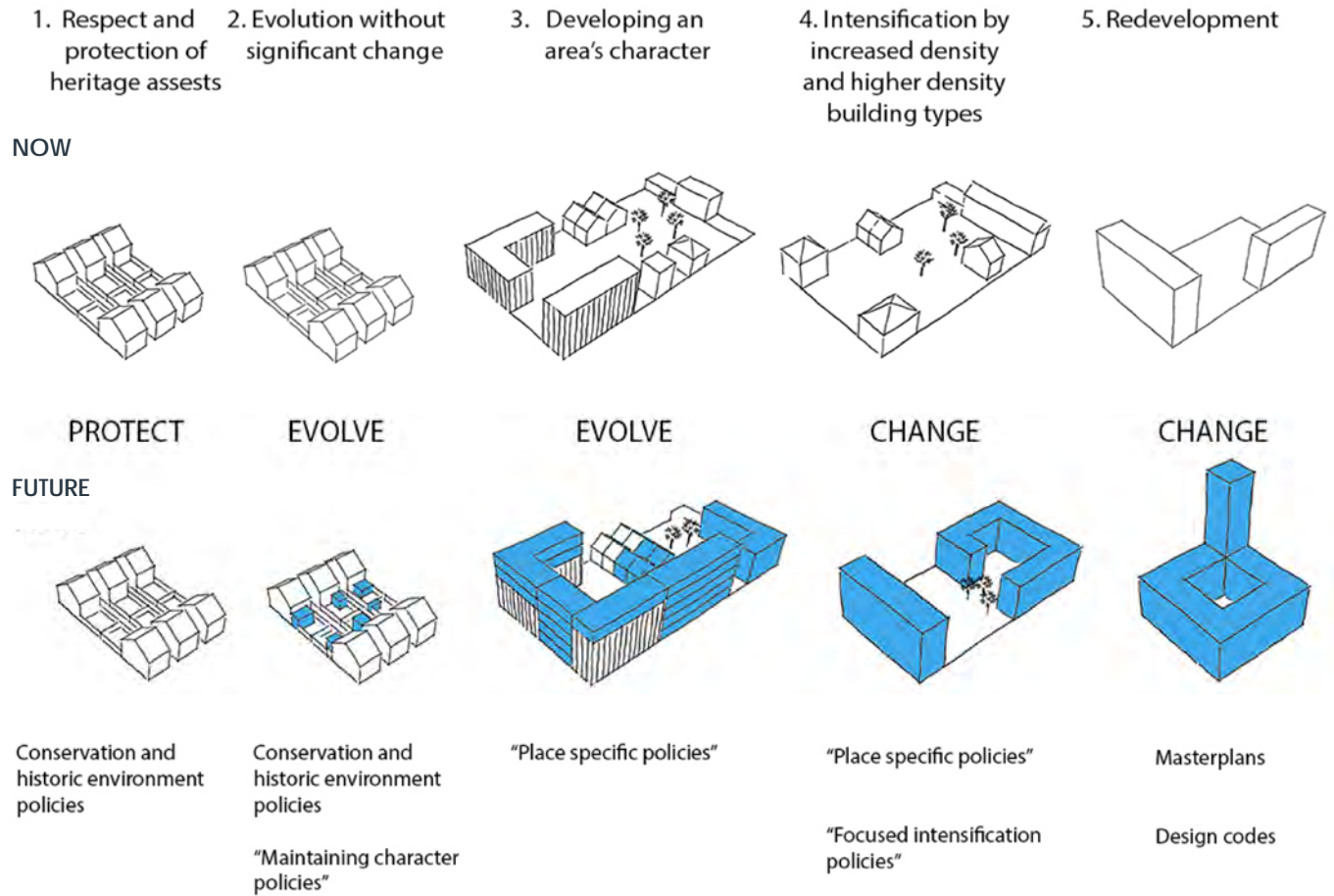
To inform and guide policy, it is helpful to understand the level and scope of change that the specified character areas are likely to undergo during the plan period and beyond. Some of the character areas will predominantly include heritage assets, with few development opportunities, requiring protection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

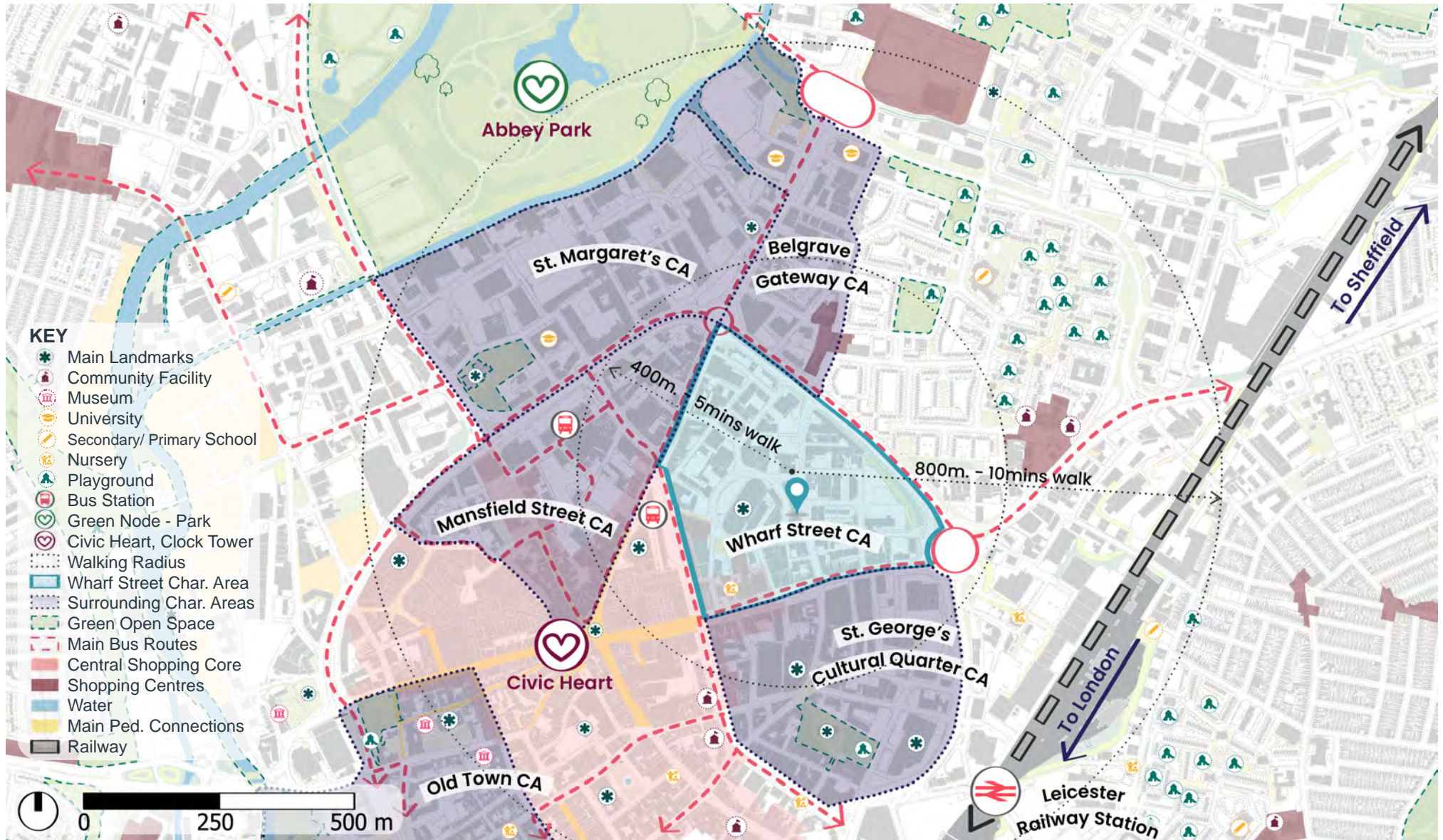


Figure 3: Wharf Street Character Area within the Greater Context

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

The Wharf Street character area is located within the CDA, being part of Leicester's city centre (located at its north-east edge). It's prime location connects the city centre with the surrounding, mainly residential, neighbourhoods (north-east). Surrounded by Mansfield Street, St. Margaret's, Belgrave Gateway and St. George's Cultural Quarter character areas, it is an area of industrial heritage, hidden gems and potentials waiting to be unlocked.

The Clock Tower, Leicester's civic heart, can be reached within a 5 minutes walk, whereas Abbey Park, Leicester's biggest central green open space, is reachable within less than a 10 minutes walk. Likewise the Railway Station, and two main bus stations, can also be reached within less than a 10 minutes walk.

Wharf Street character area is bordered by Belgrave Gate (north-west), St. Matthews Way (east), Humberstone Road (south) and Charles Street (west). Wharf Street South is the only street that permeates the area from north to south, while Lee Circle car park is a key landmark, currently characterising the overall area. Although surrounded by public transport routes, it is a highly car dominated area.

Today in the Wharf Street area, the mix of uses co-existing with an emerging residential community is not dissimilar to its 19th century origins, as a hive of small business, workshops and houses. Builders, hosiery, boot and shoe manufacturers, bakers, millwrights, box and cabinet makers and many others all used to live and work together contributing to city life.

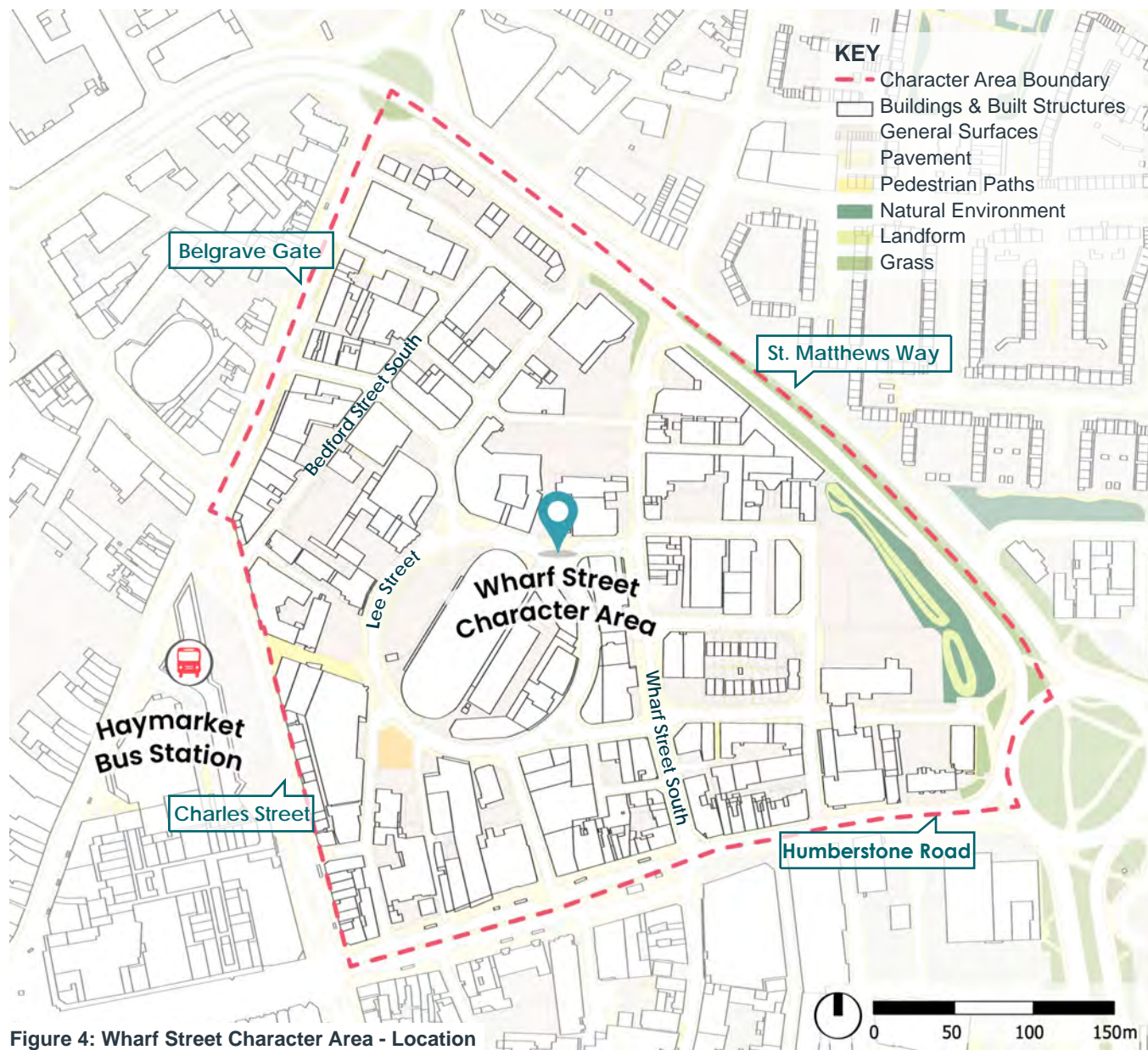


Figure 4: Wharf Street Character Area - Location

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

2.2. History & Evolution of Wharf Street

Eighteenth Century

At this time there was very little development, with a small amount concentrated along Belgrave Gate and Humberstone Gate that became major routes into the city, as illustrated in Robert's map of 1741 (figure 5).

In the 1770s the improvement of the Harborough Turnpike route to London, which ran via Gallowtree Gate, encouraged further development east along Belgrave Gate and Humberstone Gate. As illustrated in Prior's map of 1779 (figure 6), the site of the present Clock Tower was at this time a major junction in the city.

The 1828 map (figure 7) continues to show the importance of the main streets of Humberstone Gate and Belgrave Gate, which are clearly identifiable. Wharf Street is legible and the street pattern of the present day Bedford Street. At this time the intention was to link Wharf Street, hence its name, with the public wharf to the north.

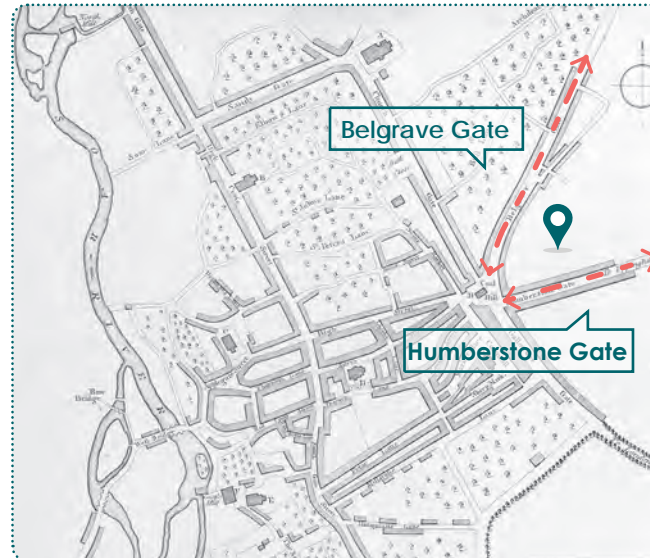


Figure 5: Robert's Map (1741)

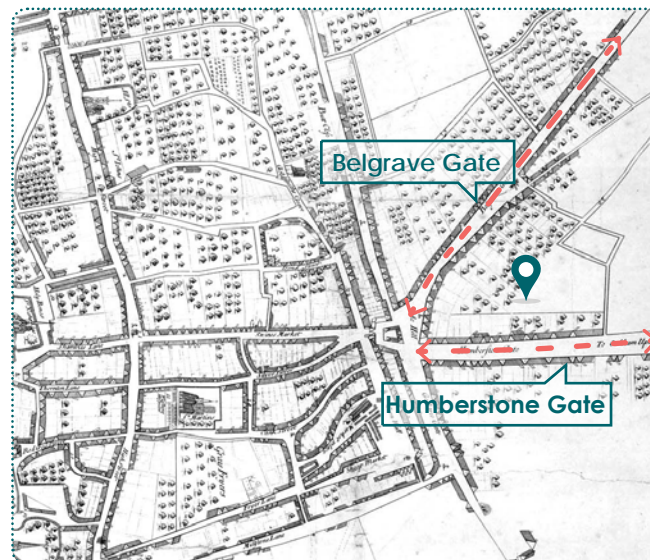



Figure 6: Prior's Map (1779)



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 Wharf Street character area has been marked for further clarity. 

Key references for this section are two books; 'Post war Leicester' published 2006 by Ben Beazley and 'Wharf Street revisited' by Cynthia Brown published 1995.

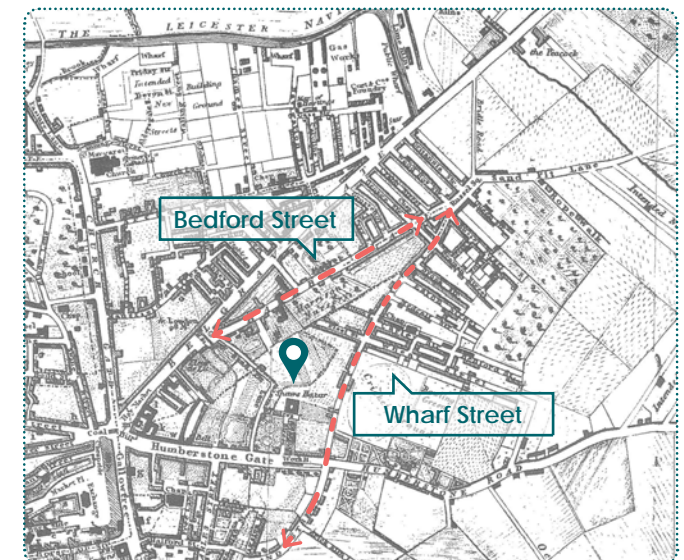


Figure 7: Wharf Street Character Area (1828)

Victorian Era

Before 1828 there was very little development in the Wharf Street character area. The late Georgian and early Victorian era, however, saw the first significant growth with most housing having been built to house local factory workers, with clusters of closely built streets. Some of the housing became lodging houses attracting the very poor.

Industrial premises, both large and small, were also scattered throughout the area. This was a convenient arrangement, and typical of many working class areas in the 19th century. Employees were saved the effort and expense of travelling to work, while employers benefited from lower land prices on the fringe of the town, and a workforce literally on their doorstep. Shops and public houses became established to serve the emerging working community.

Many of the firms in the Wharf Street area were associated with Leicester's main industries - hosiery and footwear manufacturing and the engineering industry which grew up initially to supply both with machinery. One of the largest and best known employers in the Wharf Street area was William Raven and Co. occupying large premises in Wheat Street. In 1914, when he died, 1000 people were employed by the company and it continued to trade until the 1960s.

Some of Leicester's most notable manufacturing companies originated in the Wharf Street area - Imperial Typewriter Company and Pearson and Bennion, which eventually merged with British United Shoe Machinery Company.

With the growth of new industry and housing, more and more open space within the city was being developed. The Wharf Street Cricket Ground was significant to the outdoor social life of Leicester and 'the 10 acre pitch incorporated a bowling green and was said to be the largest in the country outside Lords itself'. In 1860, however, the ground and adjoining land were sold to meet the demands for industry and working class housing.

By 1886 the cricket ground had been developed and the dense concentration of industry and housing is clearly illustrated. The area is characterised by narrow streets and terraces. As noted by Ben



Figure 8: Wharf Street Character Area (1886 - 87)

Beazley, "According to Jack Simmons, one of the foremost modern historians of Victorian Leicester stated that in 1840's the town contained no back to back housing, there were thought to have been 1,500 such dwellings by 1864". Many of these were in the Wharf Street area.

"Wharf street has since the mid nineteenth century been viewed as an area of dense, enclosed housing and over the years had become enveloped in a mythology that in some ways belied its true nature. The romanticised view was of a tightly knit community sharing a common bond of adversity and poverty, with a pub in every street and a shop on every corner; a place where justice was rough and policeman seldom ventured. Much of this was true.

The inhabitants were universally poor, the houses in many cases were hovels without bathrooms, a shared outside tap and toilet the only token of plumbing and sanitation. Unemployment was high and it was a place where an outsider was immediately identifiable. Given the opportunity to escape into new and better living conditions, very few of those trapped in the area would have declined to move".

Ben Beazley 'Post-war Leicester'

Bedford Street and Wharf Street provided main connections through the area with the streets terminating at the area formerly known as Russell Square. The previous connection to the west is apparent.

During the Victorian era the Wharf Street area was much larger than the current character area and included a large area of the city centre which covered most of the present day St. Matthews Estate over the central ring road. The area was bounded by Belgrave Gate, Humberstone Road and the Great Northern Railway.

Famous characters over the years had an association with the, often described 'squalid thoroughfares' of Wharf Street. Joseph Carey Merrick, the 'Elephant Man' was born in Lee Street in 1862, and the gymnasium over the Jolly Angler pub at 122A Wharf Street, was regularly used for training by well known boxers such as Reggie Meen, 'Pop' Newman and Larry Gains.

Early to Mid Twentieth Century

The main impact on the Wharf Street area, and the city as a whole, was the increasing influence of the motor vehicle. In the post war era the city's largely medieval and Victorian street pattern was unable to cope with increased traffic demands.

Plans for a central ring road system were originally conceived in the 1930s, although most construction didn't start until the 1950s. Construction started with the widening of Burley's Lane into Burley's Way, which terminated in a new roundabout at the end of Church Gate and along Belgrave Gate. Also, in the 1950s Leicester City Council planned for a further phase of the ring road between Belgrave Gate and Humberstone Gate to provide access to 21 acres of land that had been set aside for industrial development. This is the north-east edge of the Wharf Street area we see now. It was also to be a 'buffer' between new industry and the new St. Matthews Estate.

Undeveloped bomb sites and demolition sites from the first phases of the clearance of 'slum housing' provided a solution to off-street car parking which was also becoming problematic. In the late 1930s and early 1940s Charles Street was widened and the circle of concrete of Lee Street surface car park was constructed providing space for 1,200 cars. This geometry which characterises the area can clearly be seen today.



Figure 9: Wharf Street Character Area (1914 - 16)

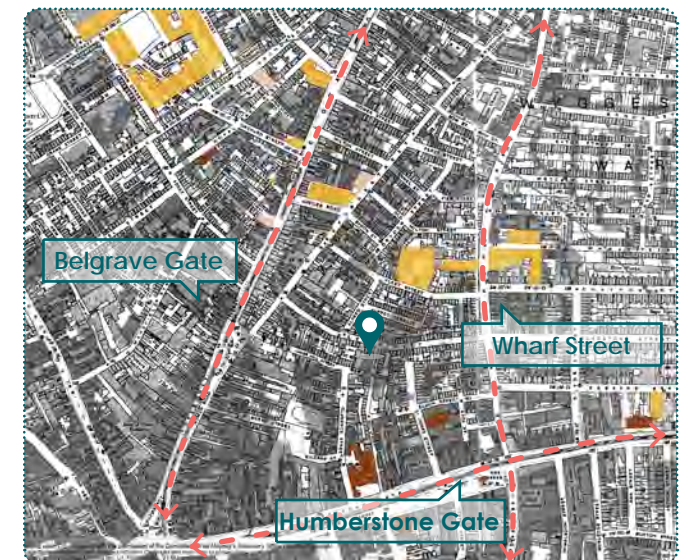


Figure 10: Wharf Street Character Area (1940)



Figure 11: Wharf Street Character Area (1952)

Slum clearance and the influence of the motor vehicle created large fragmented plots for industry and wide streets that disconnected people and places. The Wharf Street area lost its well defined streets and blocks and connections to the east.

Most of the heritage assets which characterise the Wharf Street area we see today survived this period.

Mid to Late Twentieth Century

The 1960's saw the construction and completion of the central ring road between Belgrave Gate and Humberstone Gate. Other landowners took the opportunity to develop cleared sites. Major infrastructure in the area included the laying of underground cables in preparation for the new General Post Office (GPO) telephone exchange. The Exchange Building, opened in 1960, along Wharf Street, remains today a positive landmark to the townscape of the area. The International Exchange (Cardinal Building) was completed in 1970.

In October 1959, in another of its ten year plans, the Transport Corporation recommended 5 sites for multi-storey car parks to alleviate traffic congestion. One of these sites was Lee Circle and construction began in early 1961 on plans by Fitzroy Robinson & Partners of London. It was opened in December 1961 with space for 1,050 cars and as much celebrated at the time, a Tesco supermarket and bowling alley.

Epic House, in Charles Street, was for 38 years home to Radio Leicester from 1967 until the station's relocation to St. Nicholas Place in 2005. It was completed in the mid 1960's as part of a mixed use development on at the time considered to be a 'prime site'. On Wednesday 8 November 1967 BBC Radio Leicester went live, broadcasting from the eighth floor of Epic House. It was the first home town radio station in Britain to begin broadcasting.

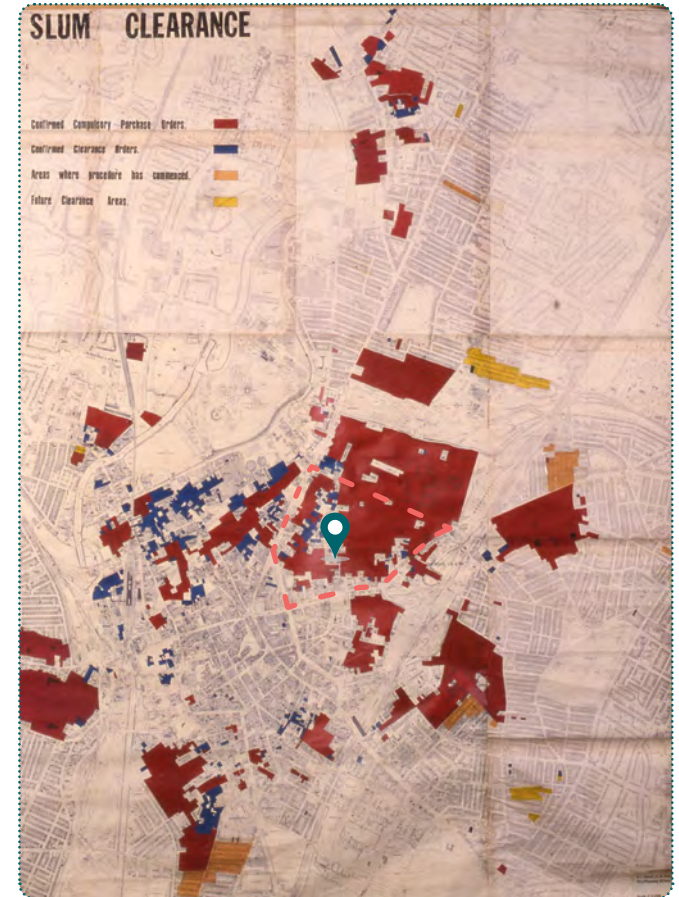


Figure 12: Slum Clearance Plan from LCC Planning Office Archives (June 1974). By 1974 most of the slum clearance illustrated in the plan had already taken place, or if not, had been cancelled and improvements undertaken instead.

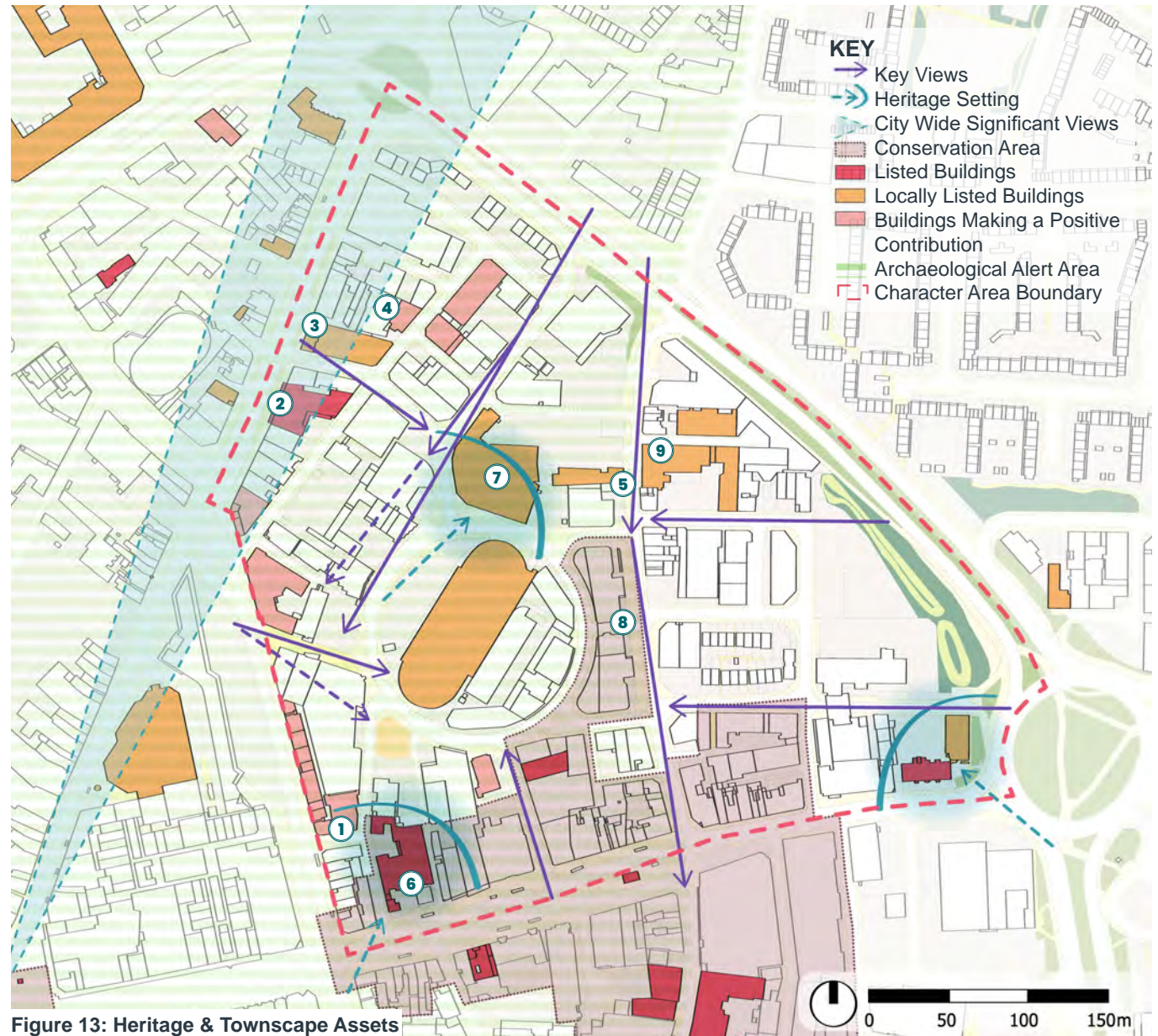
2.3. Heritage & Townscape Assets

After reviewing the history and evolution of the Wharf Street character area, this sub-chapter presents the main heritage and townscape assets of the area (figure 13). However, it should be noted that it does not seek to reproduce the Conservation Area Appraisal (CCA), relevant to this area, although the CCA has informed the present content. For further details the Conservation Area Appraisal 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.

Reflecting the area's history and importance, the Wharf Street area contains a good number of heritage assets both nationally designated and locally listed.

A number of heritage assets reflect the industrial heritage of the area. For example, the former W. Raven & Co Hosiery Factory (9) is an excellent example of a late-19th century large-scale hosiery works complex and has a strong visual presence upon the streetscape (figure 13). Grouped with (4 Wheat Street) and the former Gothic revival shoe and boot industry (80 Wharf Street South) (5), it adds to the appreciation of Leicester's hosiery and shoe and boot industry and how it transformed the townscape of the city (figure 13). The Grade II listed 3 St. James Street was the Headquarters of the former Boot and Shoe Operatives Union.



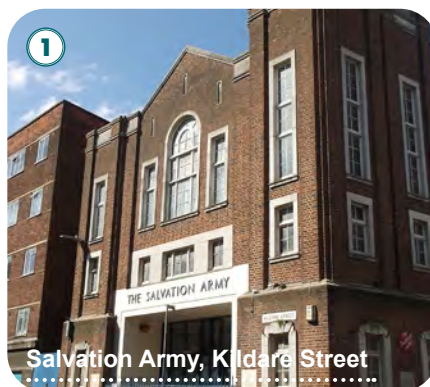
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

Fleet House (7) is a good example of an early-20th century four-story unit, later amalgamated into a single building (built circa 1900 for the company British Steam Specialists Ltd). The architecturally distinct row of late-19th century terraces on Jubilee Road (3) originally comprised of 4 shops, 11 houses and both shops/houses, including a haberdasher's and pawnbroker's serving the local community alongside the former girls school on Humberstone Gate (6). The distinctive former Art Pattern Co. building on Bedford Street is amongst buildings that make a positive contribution to the townscape (4).

Other heritage assets represent the evolution of the area. Lee Circle car park is a significant building and was one of the first multi-storey car parks to be built in an American style in the UK. Also, St. George's Conservation Area, to the south of the Wharf Street character area, protects many more buildings including the former Telephone Exchange (8) (figure 13). The Conservation Area was designated in 1989, but extended in 2003 to include the south of the Wharf Street area. The reason given for its inclusion not only gives some protection to a number of unlisted but, nonetheless interesting, buildings in the area, but also protects an important part of Leicester's commercial, industrial and social heritage.

The place-making contribution of this collection of buildings and frontages should not be underestimated. Their current setting is often lost within the streetscape due to the fragmentation of the streets and poor quality development within the area. They also represent the historic evolution and social heritage of the area.

* Please see Heritage & Townscape Assets Plan (figure 13) for the location of the following key building frontages.



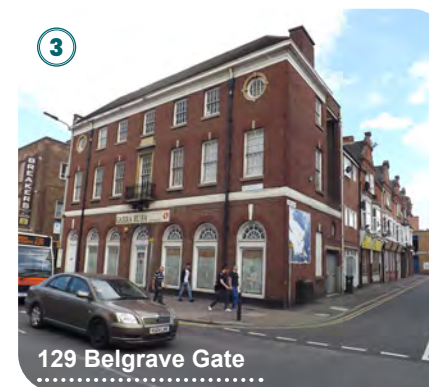
1

Salvation Army, Kildare Street



2

65 - 67 Belgrave Gate



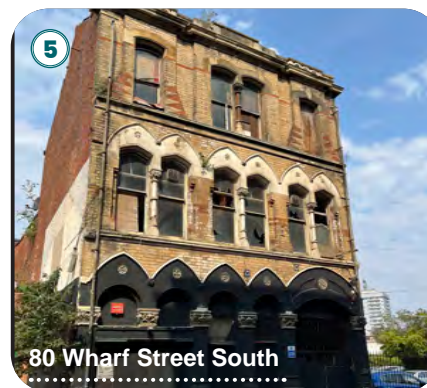
3

129 Belgrave Gate



4

66 Bedford Street South



5

80 Wharf Street South



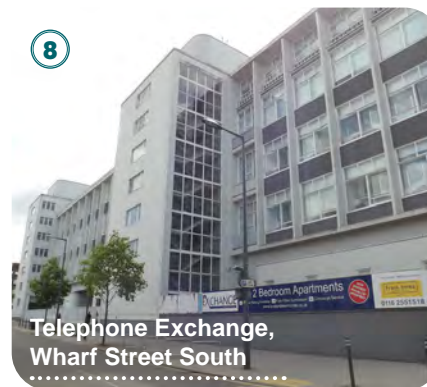
6

45 Humberstone Gate



7

Fleet House



8

Telephone Exchange, Wharf Street South



9

Gilbros Business Centre

There are key views identified which affect the setting and framing of heritage assets. The north west of the area is within the viewing cone of a view and vista of city wide significance, the view from the Clock Tower, down Belgrave Gate terminating in St. Mark's Church.

Opportunities should be taken to use the historic townscape to create and enhance the distinctive character and ongoing identity of the area as it undergoes change. They will aid legibility, be dominant 'markers' and frontages and help to create familiar and navigable places. New development within Wharf Street should, through appropriate size, scale and design, reflect and respect the historic environment whilst introducing high quality architecture.

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 Wharf Street area lies outside of the Roman and medieval core of Leicester and although there was extensive development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its archaeological potential remains to be fully investigated and the presence of sites of archaeological importance cannot be ruled out.

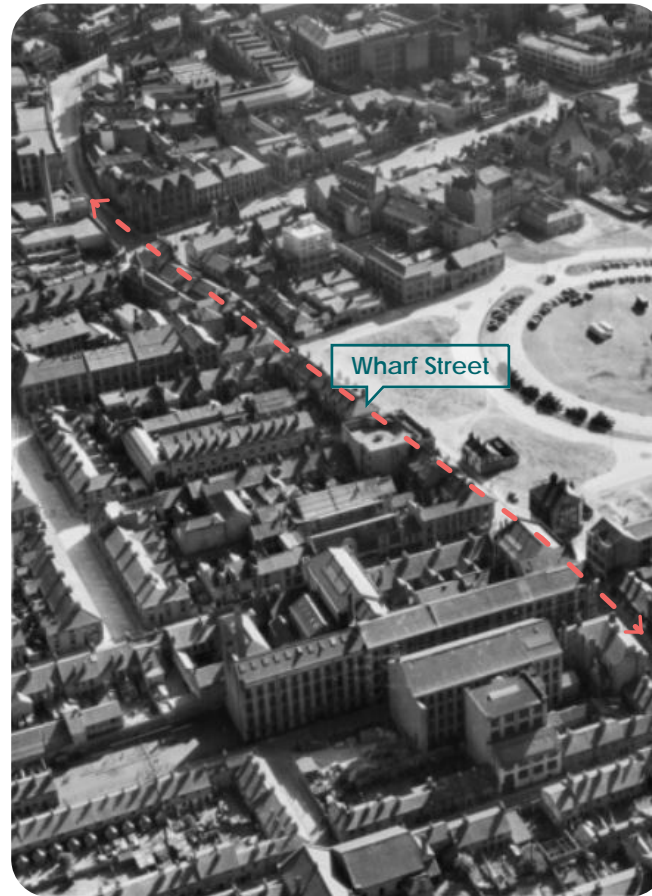


Figure 14: Wharf Street Area from Above, 1947 (Historic England) - Looking South West

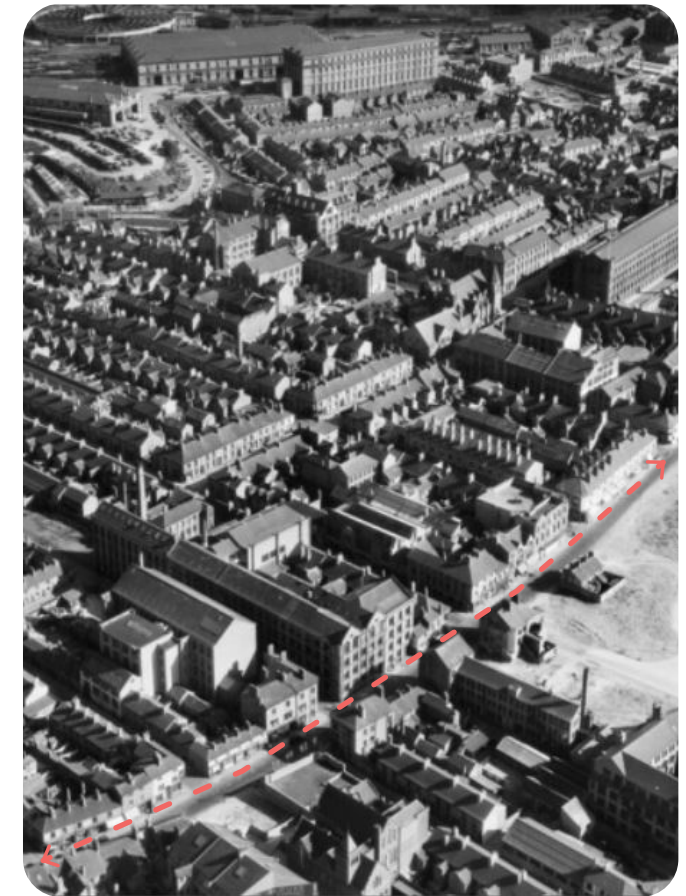


Figure 15: Wharf Street Area from Above, 1947 (Historic England) - Looking South East



Figure 16: The Telephone Exchange/Cardinal Square, Humberstone Road, 1967 (Leicester A Modern History, Richard Rodger, Rebecca Madgin)



Figure 17: BSS advertisement 1947 (© LCC) whose Headquarters were in Fleet House.



Figure 18: Lee Circle Car Park (including a Tesco Shopping Centre & an American-Style Bowling Alley, £750,000, opening December 1961 (© LCC))



Figure 19: Leicester Telephone Exchange 1957 - Shops & Houses demolished to make way (© Leicester Mercury)



Figure 20: Charles Street & Lee Circle Surface Car Park (© LCC)



Figure 21: Former Art Pattern Co. Building, Bedford Street - 100 years on this location. (© LCC)

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.

Wharf Street character area is an area heavily dominated by highways, car-use and parking areas, leading to extensive blocks without well-defined edges. Furthermore, the legacy of slum clearance, making way for vehicles, car parking and new manufacturing uses has led to a fragmented urban grain in parts of the area. These are identified in figure 22.

The area around Lee Circle car park is dominated by the surface car park and the 'circle' geometry of the highway which creates problematic left over spaces. The legacy of the vehicle continues today to the detriment of the townscape.



Figure 22: 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.

The Wharf Street character area has streets generally offering poor enclosure given the fragmented urban grain across the area. Whilst there is a street and block pattern with a fine urban grain to some areas, it is only the streets to the north west, Bedford Street South and Jubilee Road, that are well enclosed with consistent building lines and heights. However, the streets are narrow in this location. On the other hand, the main shopping streets to the periphery of the area, apart from the ring road also have good enclosure.

The Wharf Street area is not a contextual blank canvas for development. Informed by its long history it has many townscape elements that should be protected and enhanced and continue to make a significant contribution to the character of the area as it undergoes change.

A significant impact in this area would have changes to the relationship between boundary treatment/frontage and the adjacent street, respecting and enhancing these townscape elements, whilst creating a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment. Repairing the fragmented urban grain so streets can once again become enclosed, will ensure that these are well defined and legible.



Figure 23: 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 area generally reflect the uses and hierarchy of the streets.

Specifically, the following are to be highlighted:

- The height of frontages along Humberstone Gate, Belgrave Gate and Charles Street are generally between 9 and 21 metres. Some of the heritage assets, which provide prominence and a distinct sense of place are also within this height range.
- Lee Circle Car Park is 18m.
- Gilroes Business Centre (the former W. Raven & Co Hosiery Factory) (2) is 15m.
- The Exchange (former telephone exchange) (3) is 24m.

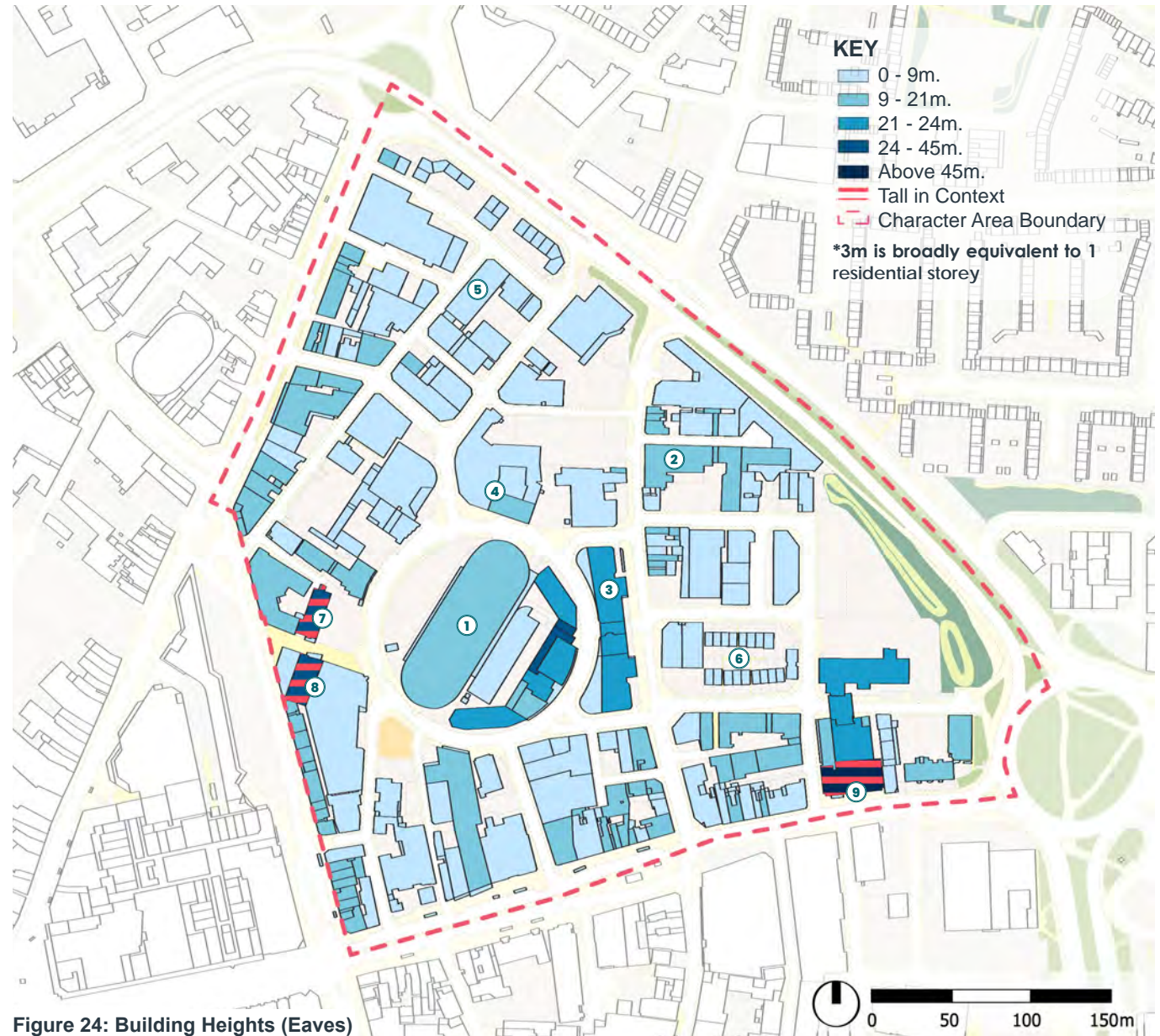


Figure 24: Building Heights (Eaves)

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

- Fleet House (former British Steam Specialists Head Quarters) (4) is between 9 and 12m.
- Almost two thirds of the area is in the lower height range of up to 9m characterised by manufacturing buildings both old (e.g the former Art Pattern Co. on Bedford Street) (5) and more recent manufacturing sheds to Gladstone Street and Dryden Street.
- There are also some small pockets of 6 to 9m residential properties saved from the slum clearance of the 1950s and the homes to New Erskine Street (6) in 2013.
- Crown House (at 45m. roof height (7)) and Epic House (at 36m. roof height(8)) are tall buildings, but also tall buildings in context as they are significantly taller from their surrounding ones. They can be considered to be appropriately proportioned tall buildings contributing in scale to the townscape.
- The Telephone Exchange (Cardinal Tower) (9) at approximately 80m for the part on the corner of Humberstone Gate and Clyde Street is the tallest structure in the city centre, a legacy of the 1960s. It also has a substantial element around Erskine Street.

Planning History

There has been a lot of planning activity in the Wharf Street character area in recent years, particularly for new residential. Many of the recent approvals reflect the position of needing to create a cohesive and consistent height along the important street and spaces and throughout the area. Approved planning applications not yet constructed include:

- **20162286 47 Clarence Street** was approved at 22.4m to provide 47 student flats.
- **20171868 64-66 Humberstone Gate** was approved in 2017 for partial retention of the Palais de Dance and the construction of a maximum 19m building to provide 42 flats and ground floor retail.
- **20200942 Fleet House** was approved at maximum 21.5m to provide 351 flats and communal ancillary facilities.

Other applications of note include;

- **20172259 80 Wharf Street South** - This application has been refused. In the view of the LPA the proposal at a maximum height of 35.2m would not contribute positively to the area's character and appearance in terms of scale, height, urban form, massing. There were also concerns with the appearance.
- **20071365 27 Wharf Street (20160361)** was approved in 2007 at 34.5m. Although it has not been built, a Certificate of Lawfulness has been issued that confirms a start has been made on this scheme. This approval reflects former planning objectives and should not be viewed as a model for future development of the character area.

- **20041683 Crown House** - This application was approved in 2007. This approval would not now be consistent with the findings of this townscape analysis. It reflects former planning objectives and should not be viewed as a model for future development of the character area. It is understood by the LCC that the proposal may have been implemented although not fully constructed.

There have also been additional pre-applications and a small number of current applications in the character area.



Figure 25: Approved Fleet House



Figure 26: Approved 47 Clarence Street

2.6. Land Uses

There are a variety of uses within the Wharf Street area representative of the changing nature of the area. Between the 1850s to 1950s the area was dominated by manufacturing and dense housing for the workers. Today, industrial and manufacturing and commercial and retail uses remain dominant. Retail, as expected, is predominantly along the three primary shopping streets of Humberstone Gate, Belgrave Gate and Charles Street. Residential is increasing.

Some of the uses may have located in Wharf Street to take advantage of the low land values and rents compared to other parts of the city. If they were not located in Wharf Street then it could be argued that they would be priced out of the city centre. These 'low rent uses' such as music venues, leisure uses, specialist services and niche retail contribute to the diversity of uses in the area. As the area changes over time these uses must co-exist with an increase in residential use in order to respond to the current, city-wide housing demand and to the objective of the NPPF and National Design Guide for mixed-use communities. It is also possible that some uses are attracted to the area because it is secluded and away from the city centre.

For a relatively small area of the city centre there are also a reasonable number of places of worship and community uses.

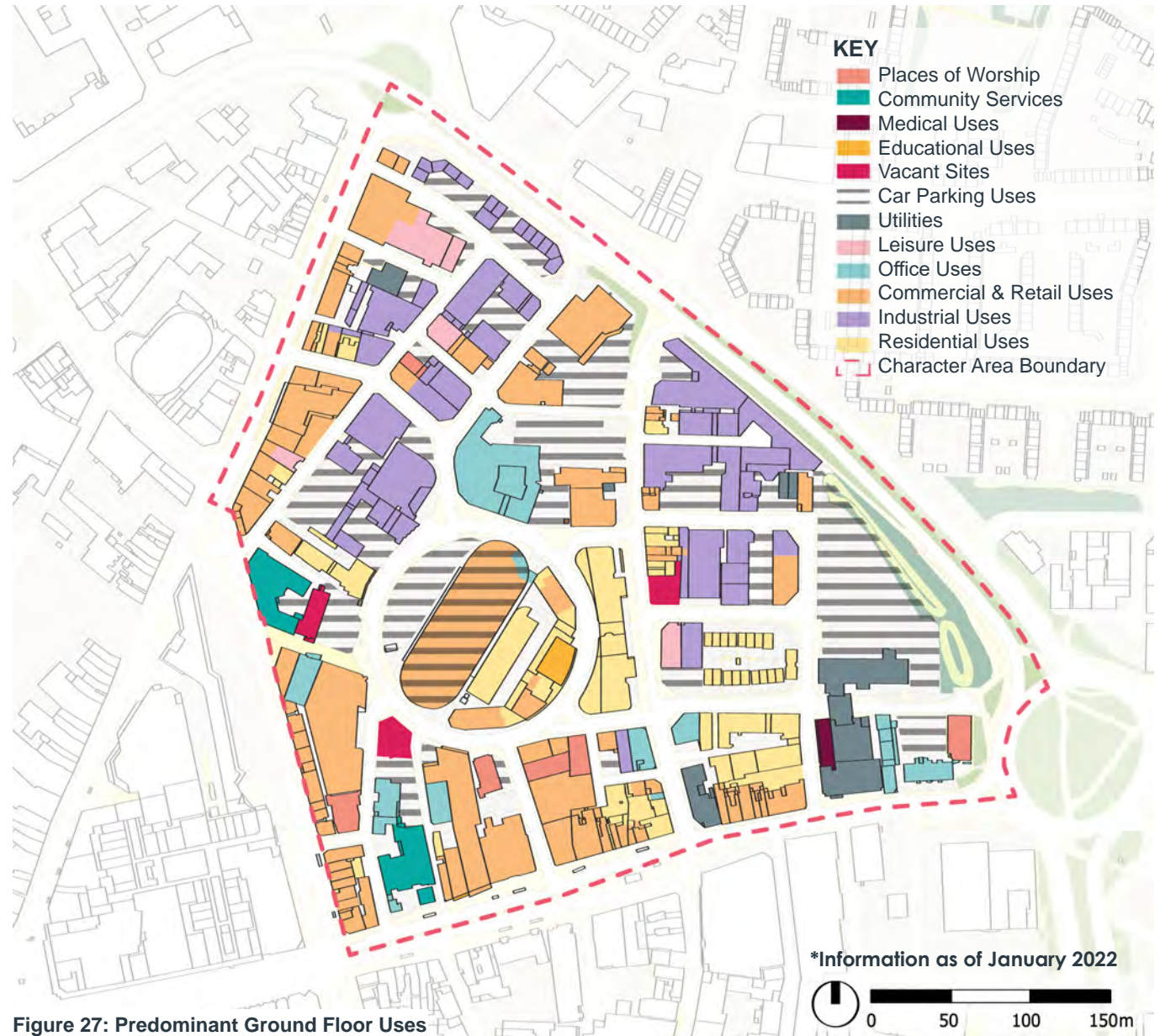


Figure 27: Predominant Ground Floor Uses

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

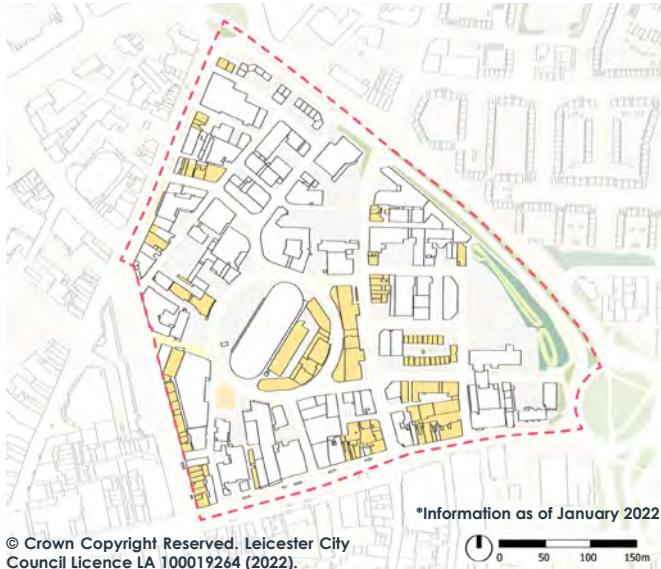


Figure 28: Residential Uses

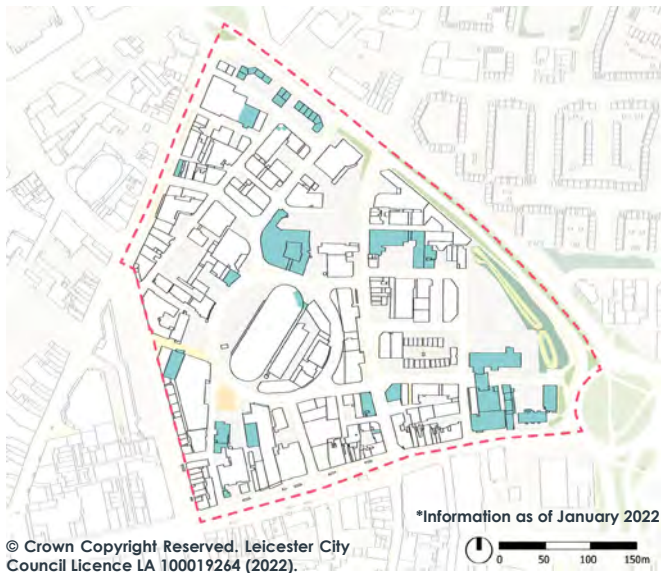


Figure 29: Office Uses

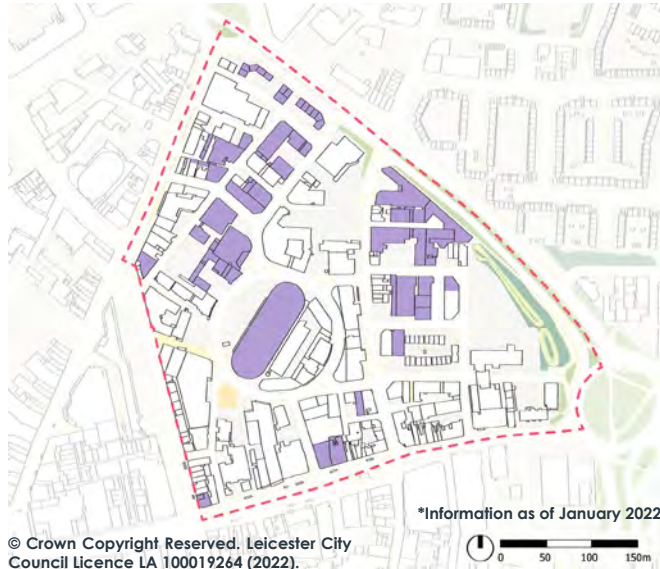


Figure 30: Industrial Uses

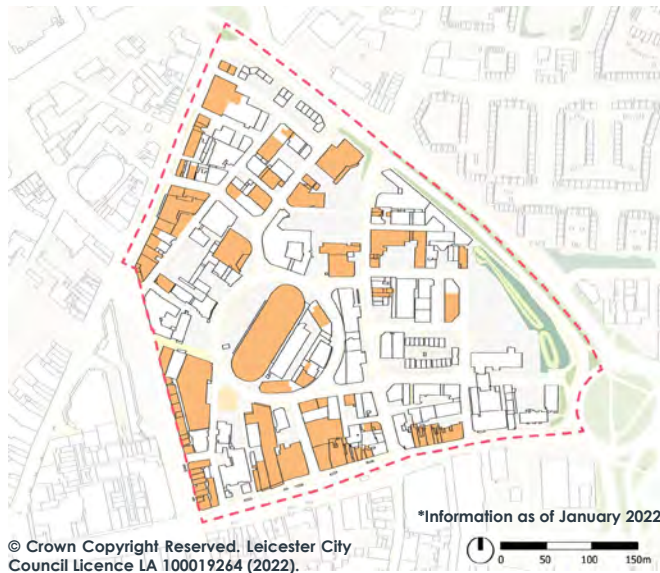


Figure 31: Commercial & Retail Uses

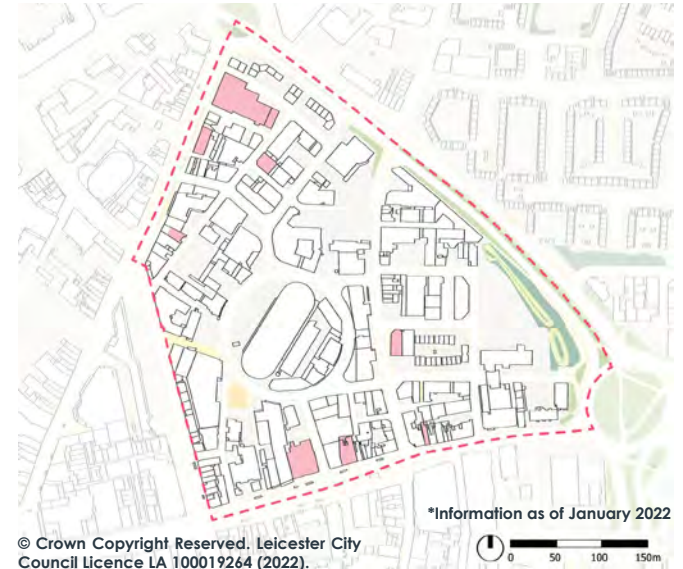


Figure 32: Leisure Uses

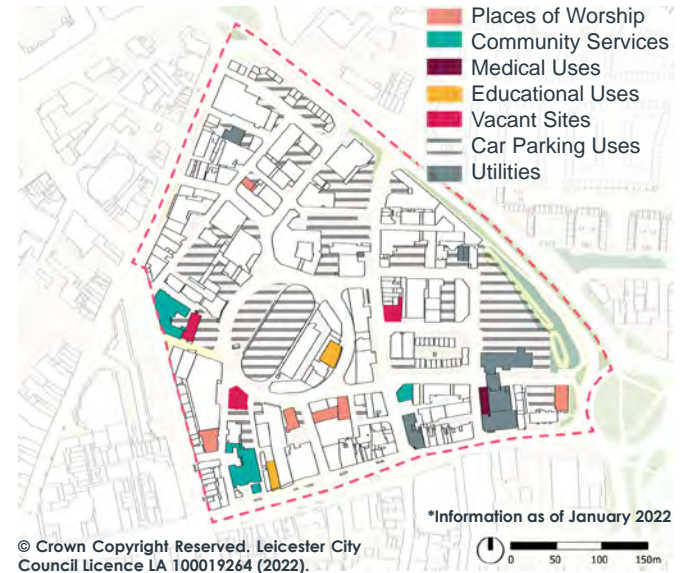


Figure 33: Miscellaneous Uses

- Places of Worship
- Community Services
- Medical Uses
- Educational Uses
- Vacant Sites
- Car Parking Uses
- Utilities

2.7. Community Infrastructure & Influence

Within the character area there are a small number of facilities that support the existing residents and neighbouring communities including a large supermarket and independent food shops, places of worship. However, it is highly likely that they also serve the wider city.

There are a number of leisure uses, that are destinations for city residents and city wide services such as Age UK and the Job Centre.

Outside the area, Abbey Park is a 10 minute walk and there is a local centre to the north of the area along Wharf Street North, providing a newsagents, cafés, take-aways and hairdressers. The open spaces and sports and play facilities of Cruyff Court and the Multi Use Games Area and Kamloops / Bushy Park to the north are within 5 minutes walk. Taylor Road Primary school is also within 10 minutes walk.

Wharf Street character area is uniquely located where it can benefit from both city centre facilities and services and the neighbourhood services of the St. Matthew's community to the north.

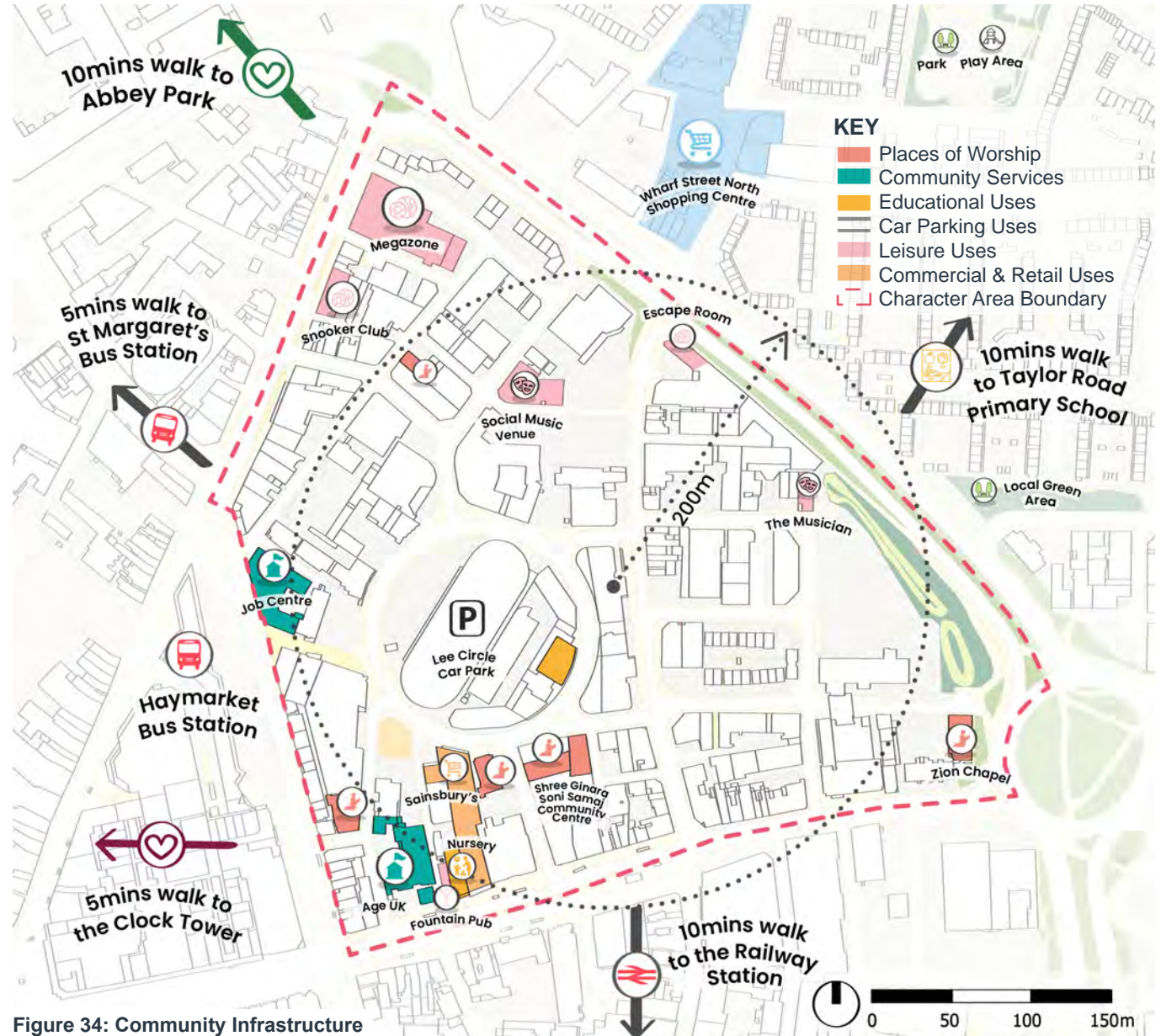


Figure 34: Community Infrastructure

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

2.8. Housing & Tenure

Looking at the Wharf Street character area, its residential coverage and supply is relatively small in relation to other uses. As already mentioned due to current demands and needs for a greater housing supply and provision in Leicester the housing provision is aimed to be increased. Furthermore, the place-making and design objectives that are to be met and a former legacy (19th century) of a place to simultaneously work and live, will help such an increase. However the current look and feel of the area does not favour such an increase.

The low, current rental market offer is mainly consisted of flats and some, very rare pockets of terraced and semi-detached houses, making the lack of family homes even more evident. The apartment buildings vary in scale from larger managed accommodation within purpose built buildings and heritage buildings to smaller scale flats above retail.

In addition, given the low rental market in this area compared to other parts of the city centre, it is likely that a large proportion of the residential is for private/ affordable rent (buy to rent). It is unlikely that there will be a market for owner occupiers in the short to medium term, although with improvements to the area a longer term forecast could include the latter. It is therefore vital that the future development of the Wharf Street character area is cohesive, comprehensive and managed.

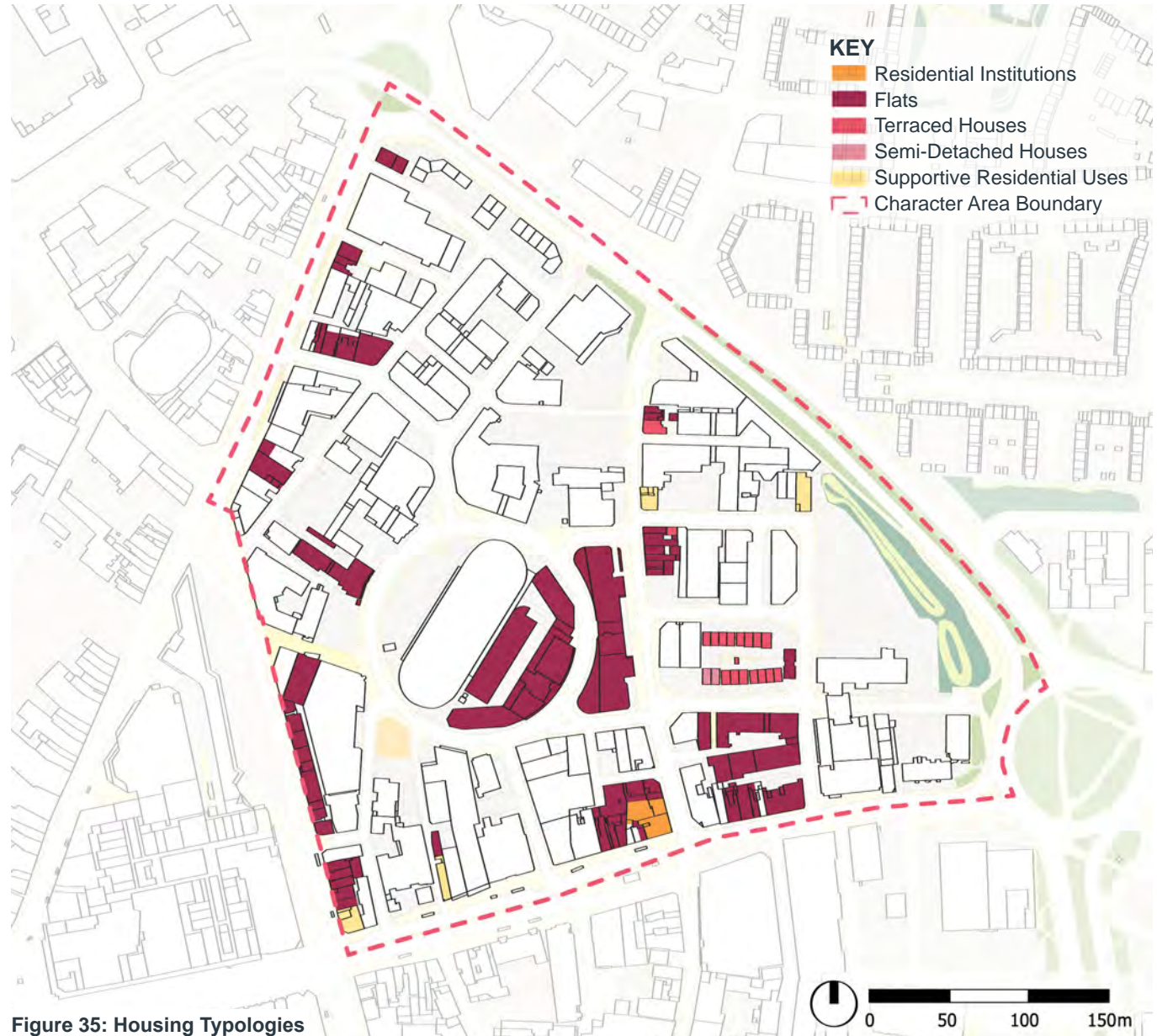


Figure 35: Housing Typologies

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

2.9. Open Spaces & Public Realm

There are no public spaces within the area itself, the lack of which is even more evident due to the pedestrian unfriendly and car dominated environment.

The largest open space, providing a variety of activities, is Abbey Park to the north-west which is within 10 minutes walking distance. However, the walk through adjacent character areas is challenging and needs improvement.

Other public spaces, within 10 minutes walk include Bushby / Kamloops Park and Cruyff Court Multi Use Games Area which primarily serve the community of St. Matthew's. This, however, could place additional pressure on spaces serving existing residential neighbourhoods.

Also within 10 minutes are a variety of public spaces within the city centre including Town Hall Square, Green Dragon Square and New Walk. Further afield, just beyond 10 minutes, are Cathedral Gardens and Castle Gardens, which are much quieter and greener. Abbey Park is also within a 10 minute walking distance, although pedestrian and cycle connections are in need of improvement.



Figure 36: Current Public Realm in Wharf Street

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.

In Wharf Street character area the street hierarchy is very clear. The ring road, St. Matthews Way, is the main arterial to the north-east edge of the character area, with the remaining periphery served by the central connectors of Charles Street, Belgrave Gate and Humberstone Gate.

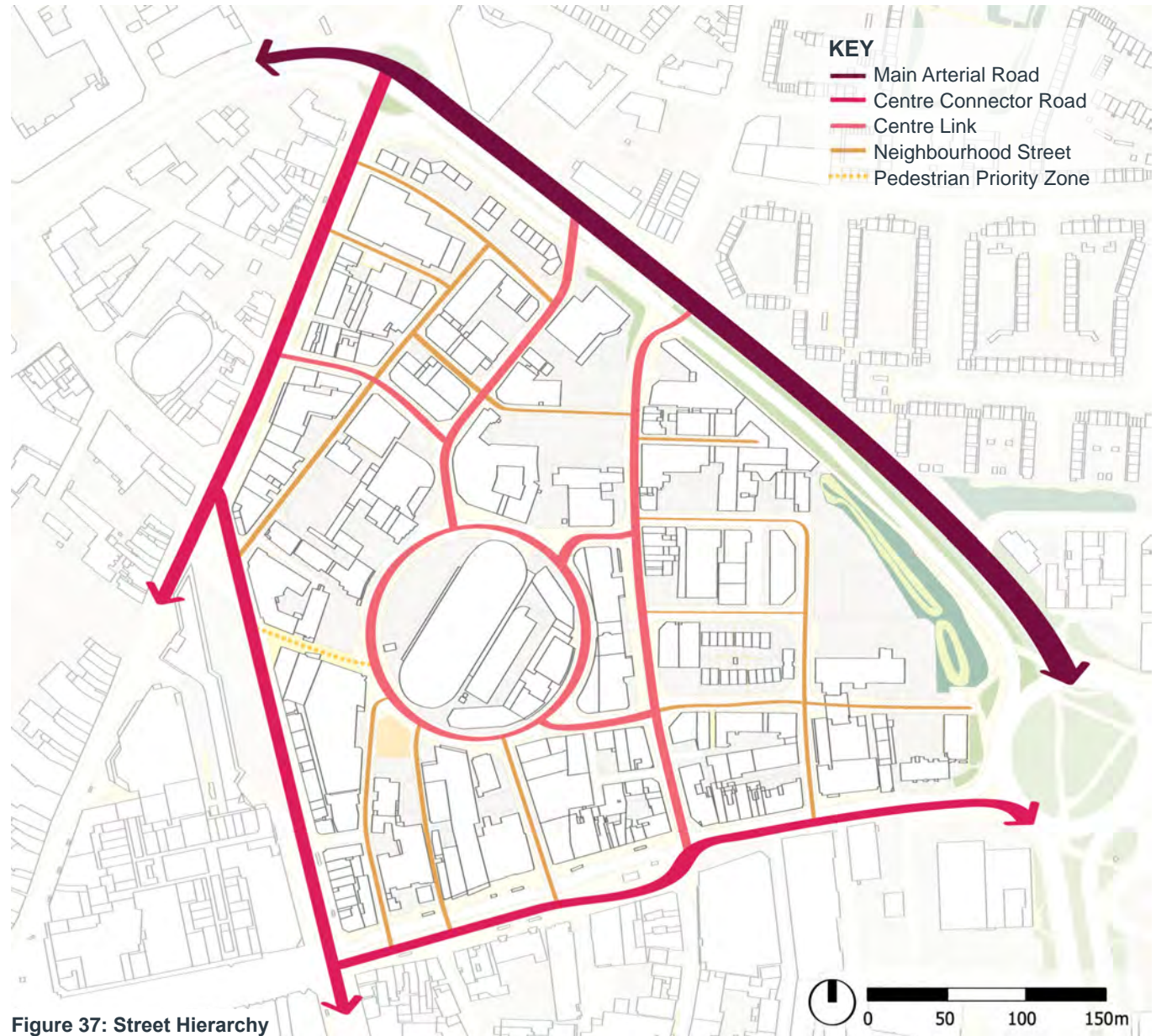


Figure 37: Street Hierarchy

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

Within the character area itself most of the streets are centre link roads and lower order neighbourhood streets. Centre link streets provide the main vehicle circulation through the area and access to the ring road and Lee Circle car park. These streets include Wharf Street South, Lee Street, Dryden Street, Fleet Street, Eldon Street, Byron Street and Jubilee Road.

The only pedestrian priority zone in the area is the connection from Charles Street to Lee Circle (Lower Hill Street).



Figure 38: Streetscape Environment within Wharf Street Character Area

Vehicle dominated streets within the Wharf Street area. Over engineered junctions, wide carriageways and excessive on street parking impact negatively on the townscape.



Parking Areas & Streets Configuration

The network of streets in Wharf Street character area is dominated by the vehicular movement required to access Lee Circle car park, while managing access on and off the central ring road (St. Matthews Way). The central 'circle' configuration dates back to the 1950s plans providing on site car parking for the city, which opened up following slum clearance. The dominant 'circle' configuration was produced to allow ease of access and egress around the car park and surrounding streets.

The current character of the Wharf Street area, especially around Lee Circle car park, is dominated by streets designed for vehicles and vehicle circulation with areas of highway, which are too wide and over engineered, providing no contribution to the townscape or assisting legibility. The fragmentation that resulted from the loss of well-defined streets enclosed by building frontages has never been addressed and does not give an appropriate setting to the heritage assets and buildings that make a positive contribution to the area. These buildings should define the space and streets and not the highway layout.

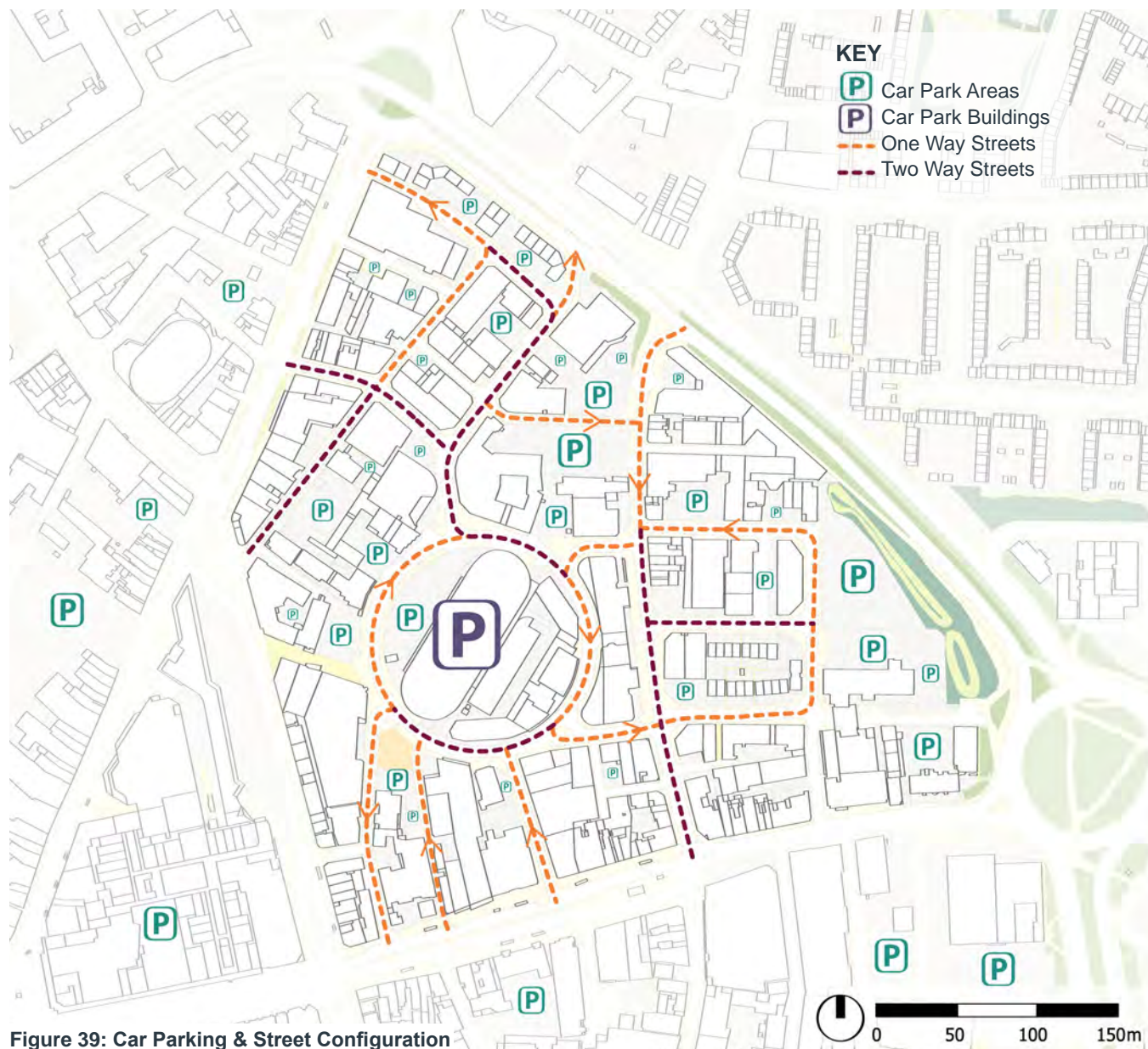


Figure 39: Car Parking & Street Configuration

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

Public Transport

Bus lanes and bus routes are taken from bus operators information in Leicester. Wharf Street character area is well served by bus connections running along the primary streets on its periphery.

Haymarket bus station can be found at the west border of the character area on Charles Street, whereas St. Margaret's bus station is less than five minutes walk away.

The Railway Station is within 10 minutes walk.

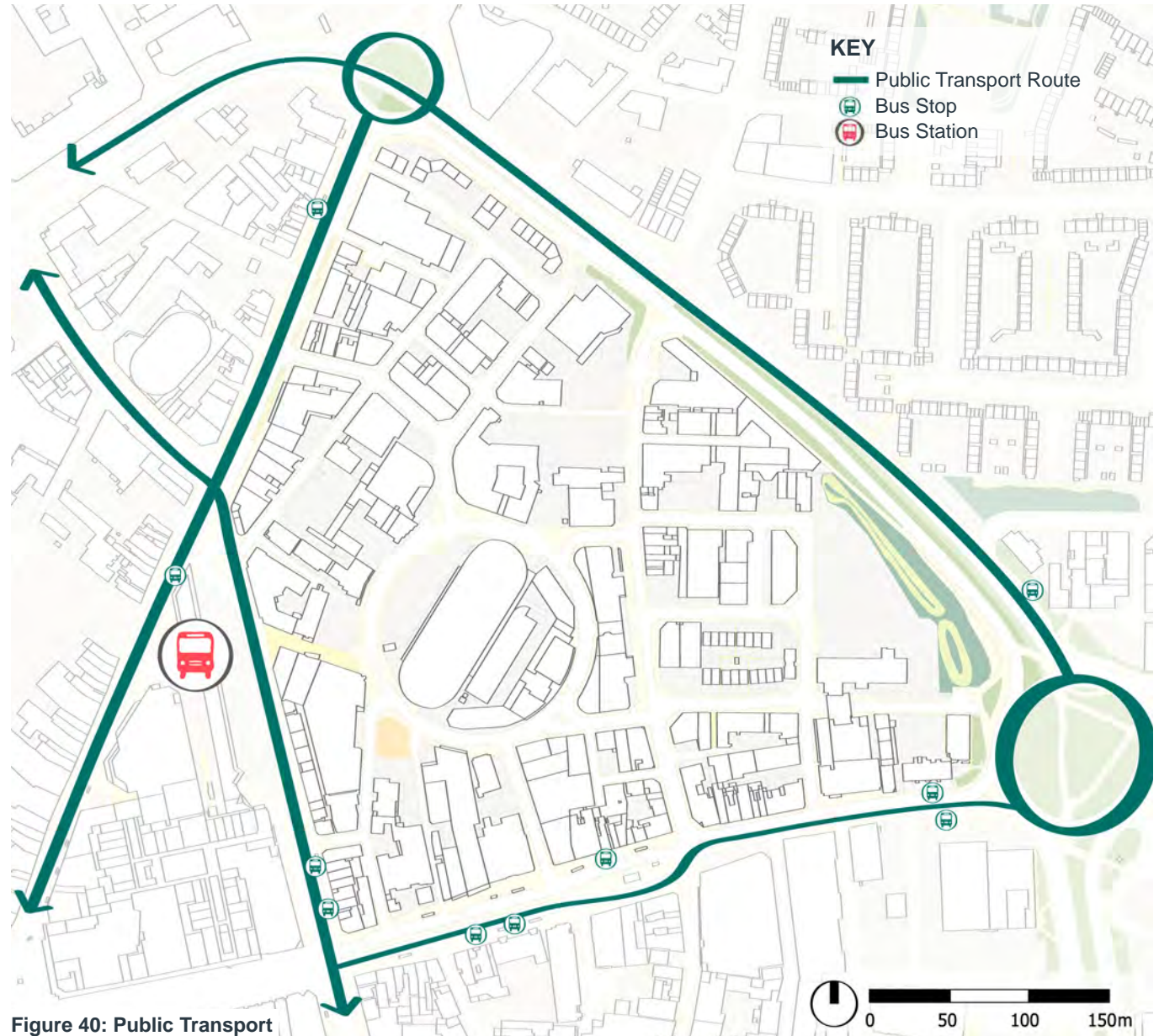


Figure 40: Public Transport

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

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.

Wharf Street South is the principle street through the Wharf Street area. This key connection is the main north-south route for both pedestrians and cyclists to and from the city centre. It is a very legible and well-used route connecting St. Matthews and Belgrave areas (north) with the Cultural Quarter and city centre (south). The dominance of the ring road is apparent, but pedestrian crossing points across reflect the desire lines. The main pedestrian east-west route is not well-defined, although there are strong frontages along the route and improved connections across St. Georges roundabout. Former east-west routes shown in the historic plans have been severed by the central ring road.

The east-west route connecting the Haymarket Bus Station to St. George's retail park and beyond is less direct, but nonetheless well used by pedestrians passing through the area.

Whilst the historic streets of Bedford Street South and North and Wharf Street are still apparent the central ring road has severed the original connections. Further, it has severed connections to the east.

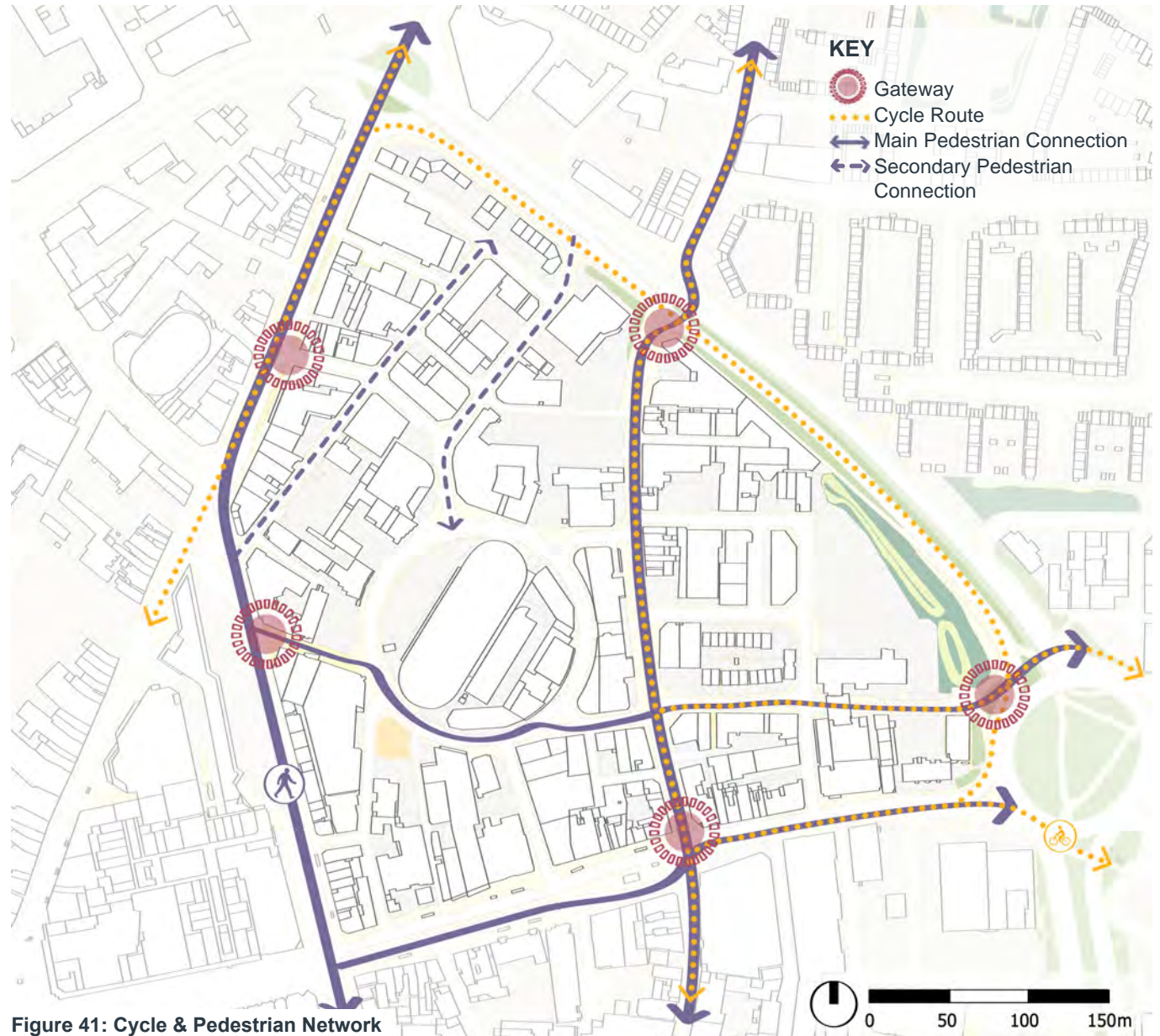


Figure 41: Cycle & Pedestrian Network

© 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 the Wharf Street character area Connecting Leicester public realm projects have been focussed on the streets to the periphery of the area.

Projects already completed include Humberstone Gate, Charles Street and the new Haymarket Bus Station and Humberstone Road roundabout. Also completed are improvements works and new cycle infrastructure to Belgrave Gate and a new bus and pedestrian connection through to Mansfield Street which will allow further public realm improvements to Church Gate and Belgrave Gate. Cycle infrastructure has also been provided along the ring road and improved to the northern part of Wharf Street South.

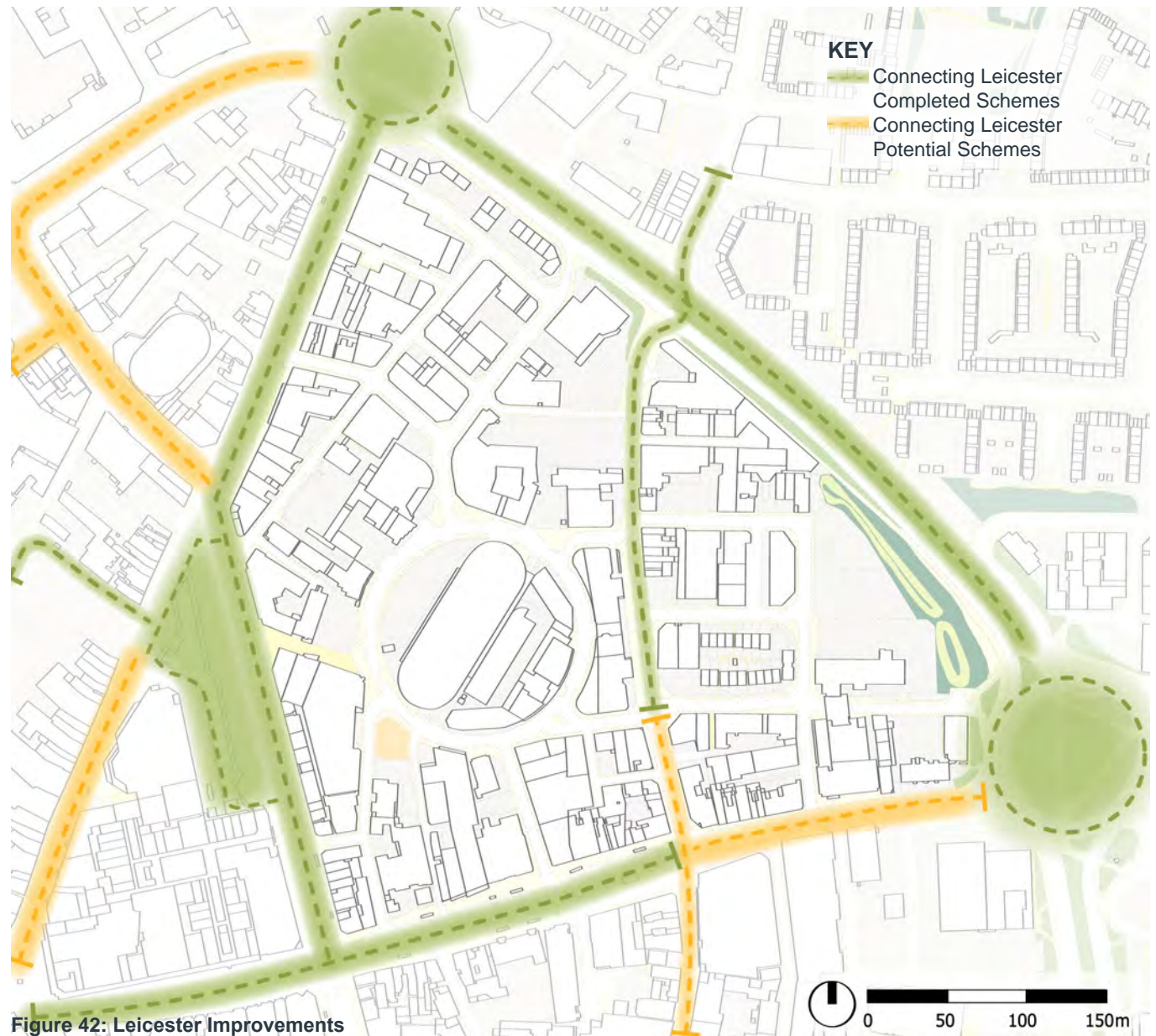


Figure 42: Leicester Improvements

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

Within the Wharf Street area itself there have been minimal improvements in the public realm. As part of the Exchange Buildings development public realm improvements were undertaken along the extent of the frontage of the building including tree planting, new footway materials and street furniture. This small stretch of improvements makes a significant contribution to improving the setting of the Exchange Buildings and improving the streetscene along Wharf Street South. The trees, in particular, make a difference in an area lacking in green infrastructure. Additional cycle infrastructure has also been provided to the north of Wharf Street South.

Projects to extend these improvements along Wharf Street South and consideration of the highway to Lee Circle could be future priorities.

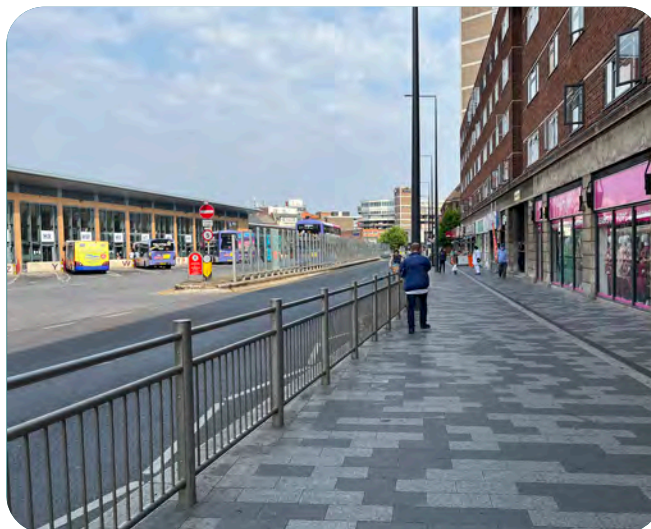


Figure 43: Improvements to Charles Street



Figure 44: Wharf Street South Public Realm Improvements Secured with the Planning Permission for the Exchange Building



Figure 45: Improvements to Belgrave Gate

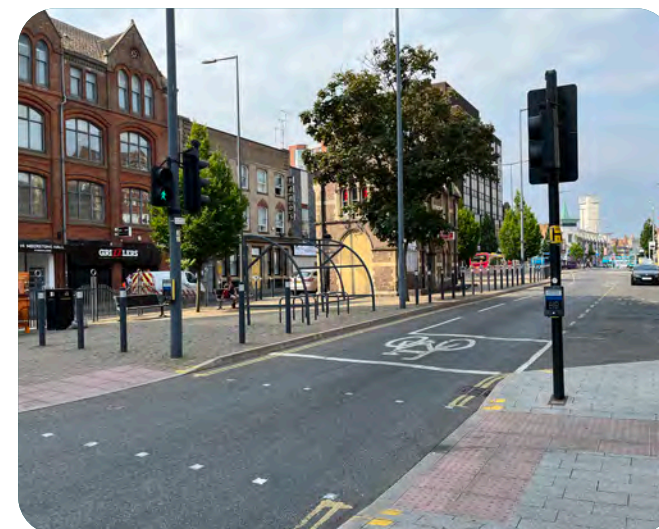


Figure 46: Improvements to Humberstone Gate

2.12. Active Frontages

Active frontages are important to create 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.

Within the Wharf Street area there are parts with a lot of active frontages, but also a significant amount of blank frontages/ façades. Most of the active frontages are located to the 'primary shopping streets' of Humberstone Gate, Belgrave Gate and Charles Street on the periphery; an expected outcome given the retail/ commercial uses on the ground floor. On the other hand, blank frontages are characteristic of the employment uses and the form of buildings that dominate the whole area, creating an unwelcoming and unsafe environment for pedestrians. The situation is worsened when the width of the street is under 10 metres and due to the lack of active frontages to the main pedestrian routes, although there are a few retail uses along the east-west route (Lower Hill St./Lee St./Eldon St./Erskine St.).

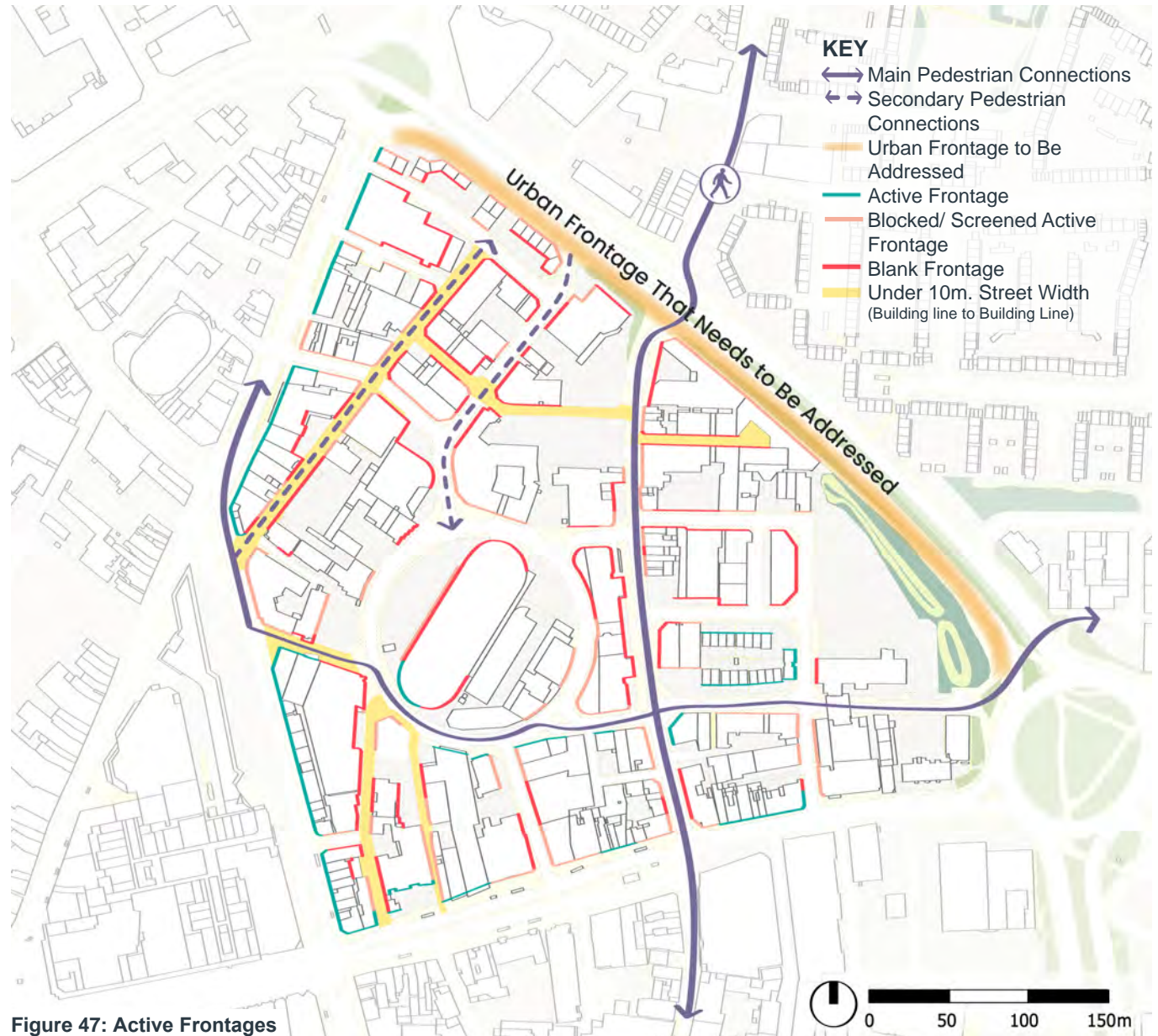


Figure 47: Active Frontages

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

Simple interventions could be potentially applied on existing buildings façades to create an engaging and welcoming environment, enhancing the street's vibrancy. Often doors and windows are covered or screened as if occupants wish to 'turn their back' on the area as a whole. This may be a consequence of how the area is perceived and it may take time for the confidence in the area to be established and for such a trend to be reversed. At the same time, some other uses in the area, by their nature, wish to retain privacy within the building. Overall, within the Wharf Street area the streets are busy with pedestrians, but the visual engagement of ground floors with the street is very poor.

Some recent residential developments, eg. Crecy Court and 28 Bedford Street South, have tried to address the need for an active frontage and a threshold space, but it is not very successful as it incorporates harsh brick boundaries, illustrating more of a desire to 'turn away from the street' rather than look over it and contribute to its quality. As a result, the balance between privacy, surveillance and outlook has not been achieved. The design of ground floors giving consideration to building lines, thresholds, glazing and boundary treatments in particular needs specific attention in this area.



2.13. Key Views & Legibility

Views 1 and 2 show the legibility of the main north-south pedestrian connection of Wharf Street South and the contribution of the Exchange building in particular. Views 5, 10 and 11 illustrate the experience along the main east-west connection. Lee Circle car park is clearly visible in view 5 alongside the tall buildings of Crown and Epic House. A secondary pedestrian connection from the south is from Yeoman Street, across Humberstone Gate through Hill Street. Views 3 and 4 show this progression with the Grade II listed former school dominant in both views and Lee Circle car park in the background being clearly visible.

From the east (view 10) Cardinal Tower is dominant, and as expected has an imposing presence with annexe buildings bridging over the street. However, the Exchange building again can be seen terminating the view which then becomes more prominent (view 11), given the lower scale homes on Erskine Street.

From Belgrave Gate the main pedestrian connection is from Jubilee Road (view 7) that is enclosed on the north side by the locally listed, late-19th century, terraces and terminated by an unremarkable industrial building. Progressing east (view 8), Cardinal Tower, can be seen together with the west elevation of Fleet House.

The view up Bedford Street South (6) looking north-east is much lower in scale, a characteristic of Wharf Street area's west side. The positive townscape elements along that street are not clearly visible with a poor termination of the view between industrial buildings.

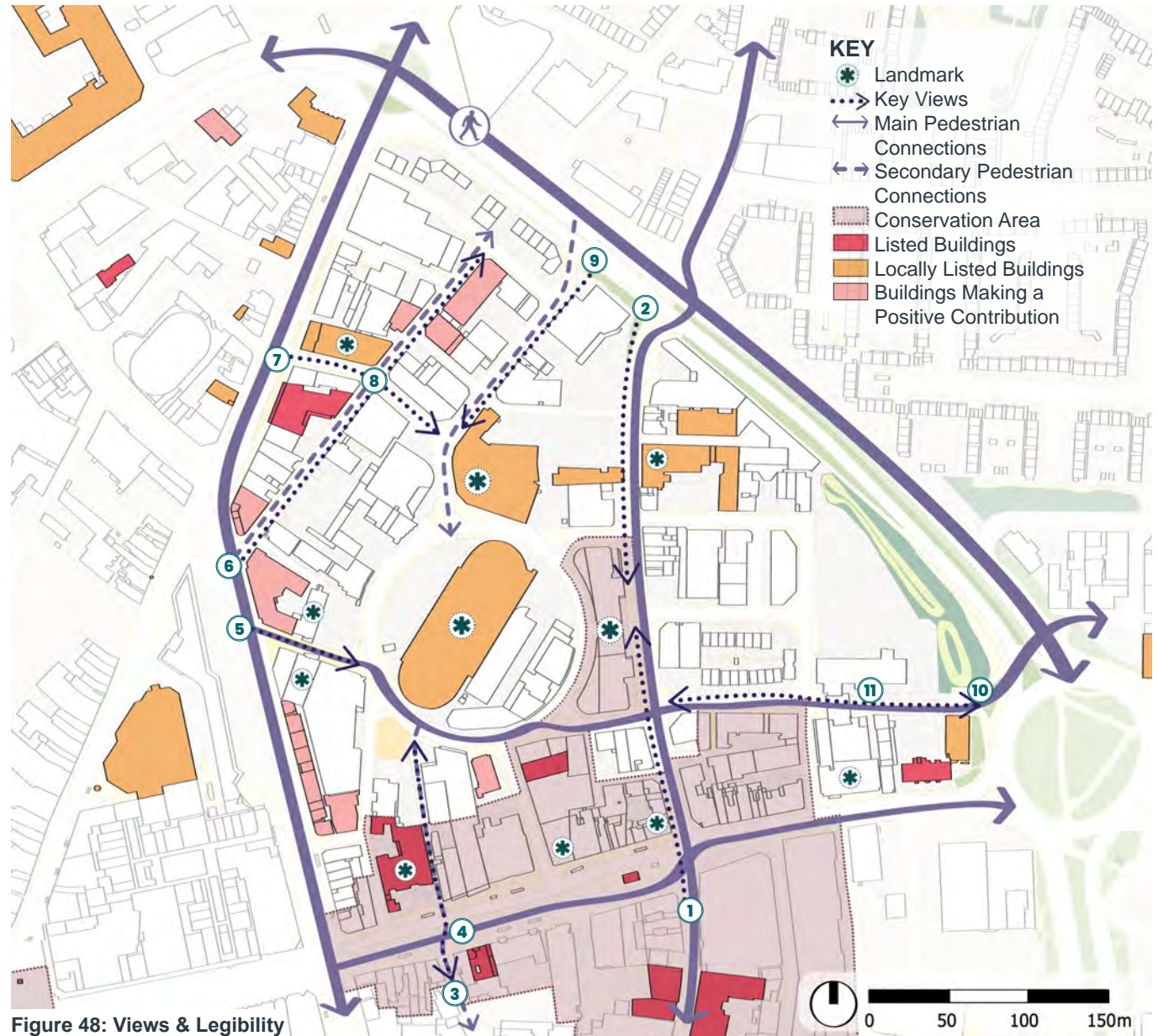


Figure 48: Views & Legibility

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

In general terms, Wharf Street area is quite legible and pedestrian-wise easily understood, although improvements to the gateways are needed. The contribution of the existing heritage assets and landmarks cannot be underestimated, especially where they terminate views, contributing to the overall wayfinding. Thus, the area does not need additional landmarks. However, the fragmented urban grain, the poor street enclosure and the dominant highway configurations do need to be addressed in order to enable the full benefit of such townscape assets to be realised and experienced.

In addition, the current tall buildings in the area, whilst contributing to a legible place, need improvements to their appearance, in particular the Crown House.



2.14. Architecture, Materiality, Details

Architecture

The area is predominantly characterised by nineteenth-century Victorian buildings representative of the area's growth, a mixed community and its industrialised past. Victorian former factory buildings are common place but also former schools, shops, homes and cultural venues can be seen, all with distinctive features. Buildings from the inter-war period with the characteristic architectural proportions and features of the era are also present. Other twentieth-century architecture is limited in quality with the former Telephone Exchange building, with its distinctive white render and generous proportions, being the main landmark along Wharf Street.

Materiality

Red brick is commonplace with orange tones for the older Victorian buildings and darker red for the newer buildings. Patterns of red, blue and burnt bricks are also distinctive, often expressed in different brick bonds from the main façades. Slate, decorative metal and sandstone are also used. There are also glazed brick plinths of varied tones; orange, red, and blue.

Newer buildings are introducing buff and grey bricks to the area.

Red Brick



Red & Blue/ Burnt Brick Multi Patterns



Grey Brick



Details

There is a richness of detailing to the Victorian buildings related to their use and status. Large areas of decorative stonework to cultural and civic buildings and simple, yet effective, brick detailing to the former factories.

There is some consistency in the treatment of the shape of the arches and windows for the Victorian buildings and all façades are well proportioned with clearly identifiable rules.

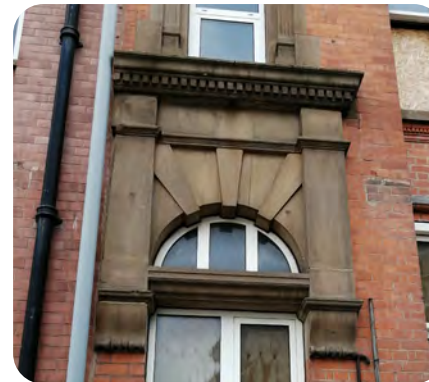
Later infill to some of these buildings has compromised their architectural integrity.

The inter-war buildings are more restrained but nonetheless the distinctive rectilinear detailing, generous window proportions, curves, expressed doorways, and simple brickwork detailing are evident.

**Arches -
Doors &
Windows**



**Decorative
Stonework**



**Glazed
Brick Plinths**



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.

The Wharf Street area could make a significant contribution to new city centre housing. Residential uses and additional planning activity are increasing in recent years. A large proportion of Wharf Street is covered by large plots and development blocks under one or few ownerships and these could be considered to be 'soft sites' for redevelopment. For residential development to come forward some of the existing uses, mostly industrial, would need to relocate elsewhere in the city. The availability of employment land and appropriate premises would be a consideration. However, there is evidence that such industrial sites are coming forward for residential development in this area.

Given the level of planning activity in the area combined with its development potential, this area will undertake significant growth in the plan period and beyond, requiring a coordinated and comprehensive approach to guide development ensuring development sites are not considered in isolation of the area's wider objectives. Furthermore, the infrastructure for an increasing residential community should be provided.

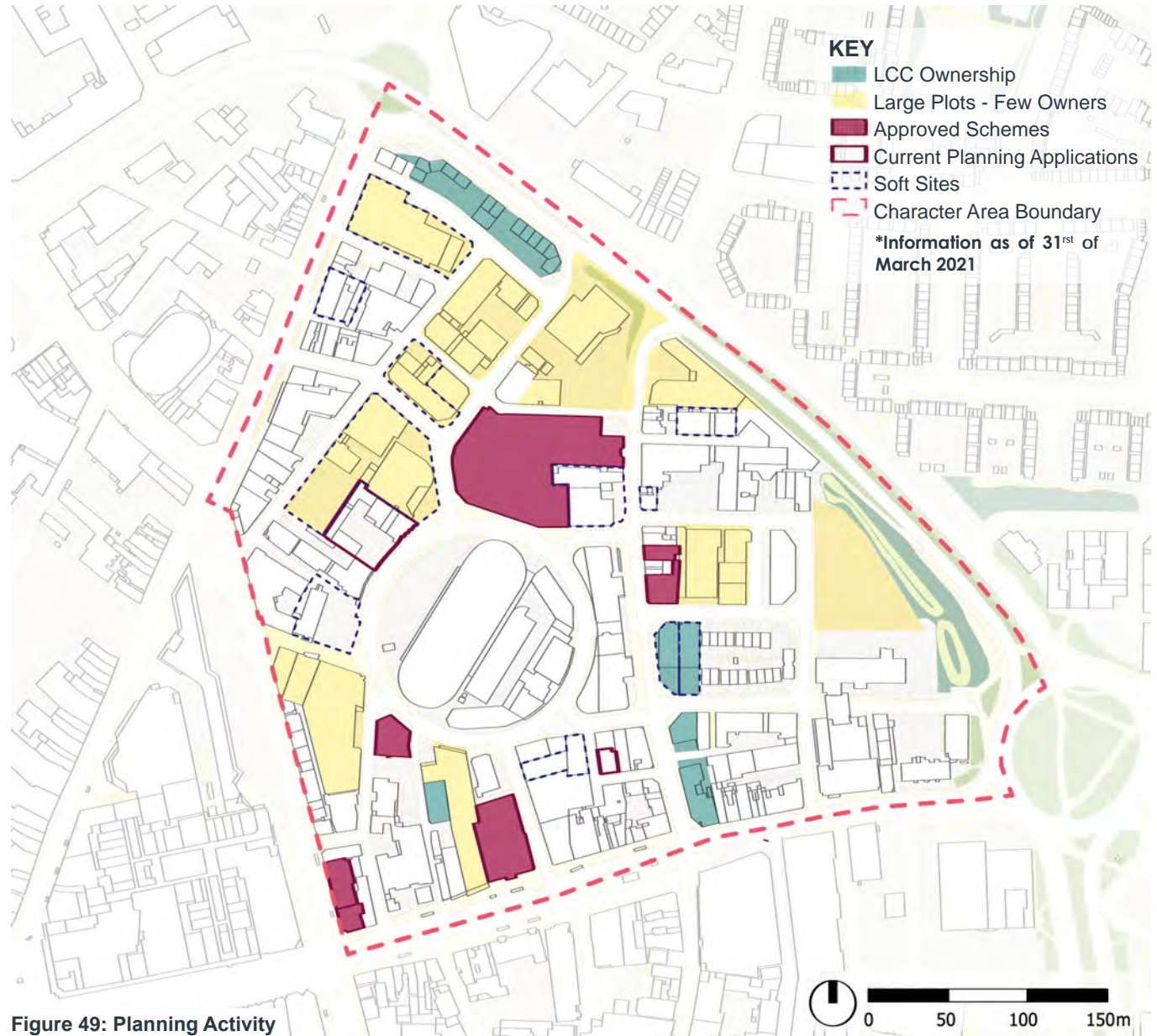


Figure 49: Planning Activity

© 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 Wharf Street 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 Wharf Street character area has been subject to a high level of planning applications and pre-application enquires for residential development in recent years and is experiencing considerable residential growth. In the past, proposals have been considered in isolation in the absence of a holistic vision for the area, together with the lack of a thorough townscape appraisal that will be able to identify and further highlight the state and potential of the current urban fabric, socio-economic activity and the overall use, function and perception of the area. Moving forward from this state and also 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 enable the creation of an attractive, successful and sustainable place with a distinctive identity. A place that will become over time, as development comes forward, a great place to live, work and experience.

It is recognised that the area has challenges and issues that needs to overcome, but at the same time 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:

- Wharf Street character area is an area with heritage and townscape assets that should be cherished and preserved within any future development. St. George's Conservation Area is located at the south edge of Wharf Street area with a good number of heritage assets, nationally and locally listed buildings. Furthermore, additional buildings that make a positive contribution to the townscape have been identified, which should also be retained. Last but not least, views of city-wide significance have an impact on the area and require consideration.
- The majority of existing frontages and façades that shape the overall perception and function of the area, is problematic. Wharf Street's north-east edge, along St. Matthews Way, needs to be properly identified and addressed, responding to the ring road, providing appropriate enclosure and definition for any future and existing development and recognising the amenity requirements and accommodation quality that is needed. Furthermore, multiple blank façades can be found at the inner part of the area, emphasising the lack of activity, vibrancy and surveillance at the street level.
- The area is heavily car-dominated and car-dependant, something that can be understood through the weak pedestrian and cycle connections and the multiple car-related functions. The streets generally prioritise vehicle movement over pedestrian and cycle friendly streets. Wharf Street's unbuilt urban fabric is composed either by streets dedicated to car-usage or open spaces (public and private) turned to car park yards, uses and areas.
- There are a few weak pedestrian and cycle connections (figure 50) to be addressed where both infrastructure and/ or active frontages for overlooking are needed in order to provide safe routes.
- The urban grain is quite fragmented, with blocks not properly defined, but shaped as a 'left-over' outcome, in absence of comprehensive development and guidance. The majority of the streets are characterised by weak enclosure, which is even more evident due to the widespread car-park use. To make matters worse, very narrow streets, with a width under 10 metres, put extra pressure on the built environment and the massing of the existing building forms.

KEY

- P 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
- Conservation Area

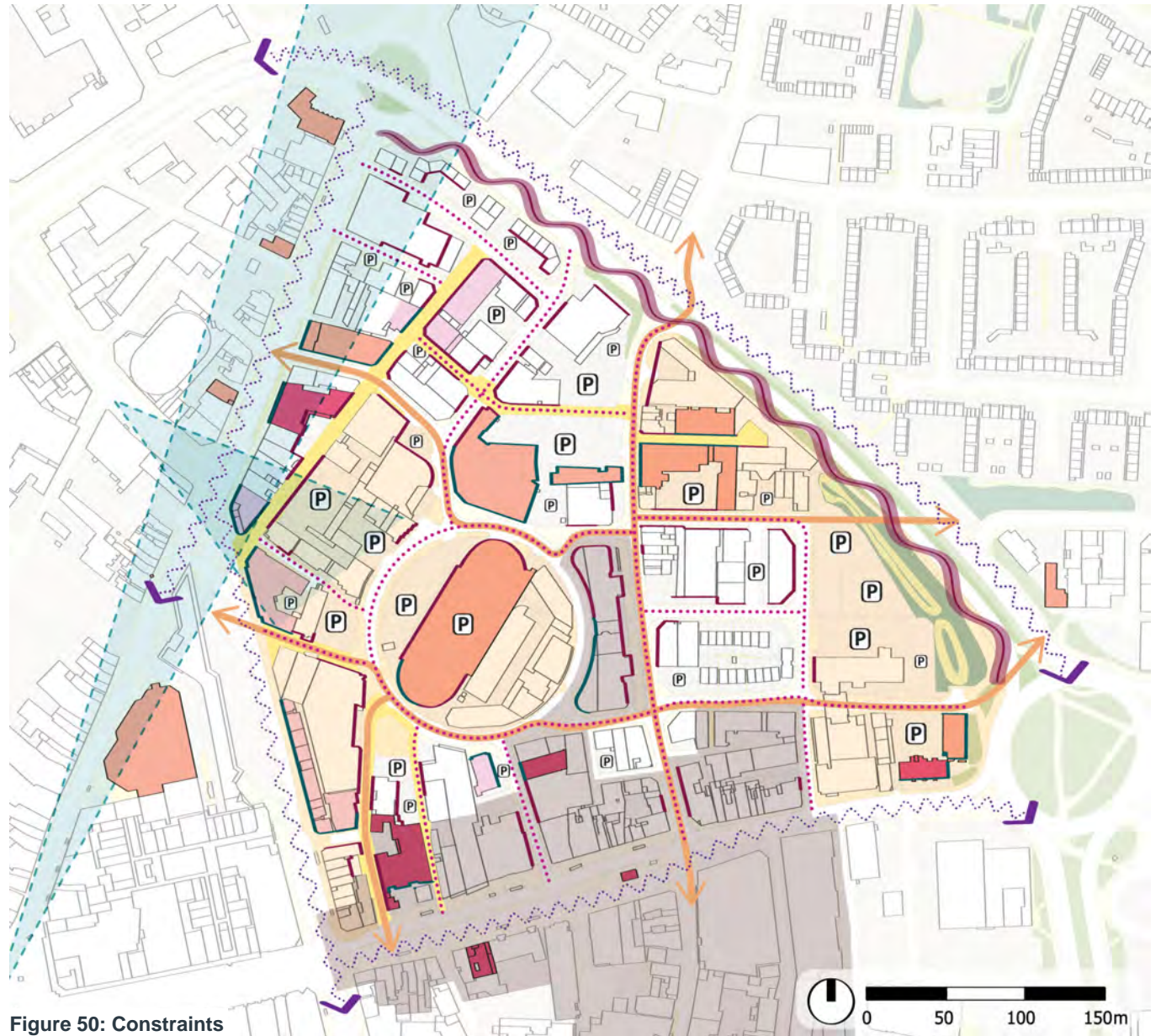


Figure 50: Constraints

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







- Some of the employment uses in the area could be considered to be detrimental to the area as a growing residential community and may require management through further guidance to ensure they are well-integrated.
- The residential offer in the area mostly consists of flats, apart from the houses at Erskine Street. The lack of family homes in the area is evident.
- Other issues that should be taken into account are the noise and traffic disruption mainly coming from the peripheral road network (main arterial and central connector roads).

Opportunities

Wharf Street could be considered to be an area of limited potential, however, the following points present development opportunities and assets that if properly utilised will enhance, upgrade and contribute to the area's aspiring regeneration and redevelopment.

- Key characteristic of Wharf Street is its prime location, within and at the north-east edge of the city centre, being the link between the city centre and the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Wharf Street is also located within a 10 minute walking distance from both the Abbey Park and the Railway Station, making it an ideal place to work, live and visit.
- Recognising the future growth of the area and the needs of a growing community, a new neighbourhood heart could be created. Potential for a comprehensive redefinition of the neighbourhood's heart and its function, impacting the character of the overall area, from a car-dominated place to a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly one. During this process the industrial heritage of Wharf Street should not be downplayed nor forgotten.
- Heritage assets provide existing landmarks, representing the industrial history of the area, making a significant contribution to the area's character and identity and assisting its legibility.
- The streets to the periphery of the area have undergone considerable improvement to provide cycle infrastructure and improved pedestrian connections. Improvements to Wharf Street South recognise its importance as a north-south route connecting neighbouring communities to the city centre. However, north-south and east-west pedestrian connections could be enhanced, linking to the current gateways at the edges of Wharf Street (figure 50 - constraints). Those existing gateways could be further enhanced, leading and guiding pedestrians through the area and upgrading the area's legibility and permeability.
- The adjacent figure 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.

KEY

-  Existing Landmarks
-  Gateways
-  Bus Stops
-  Place-Making Development Opportunities
-  Neighbourhood's Heart
-  Potential to Redefine Development Frontage & Ring Road
-  Improved Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections (Connecting Leicester Delivered & Planned)
-  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

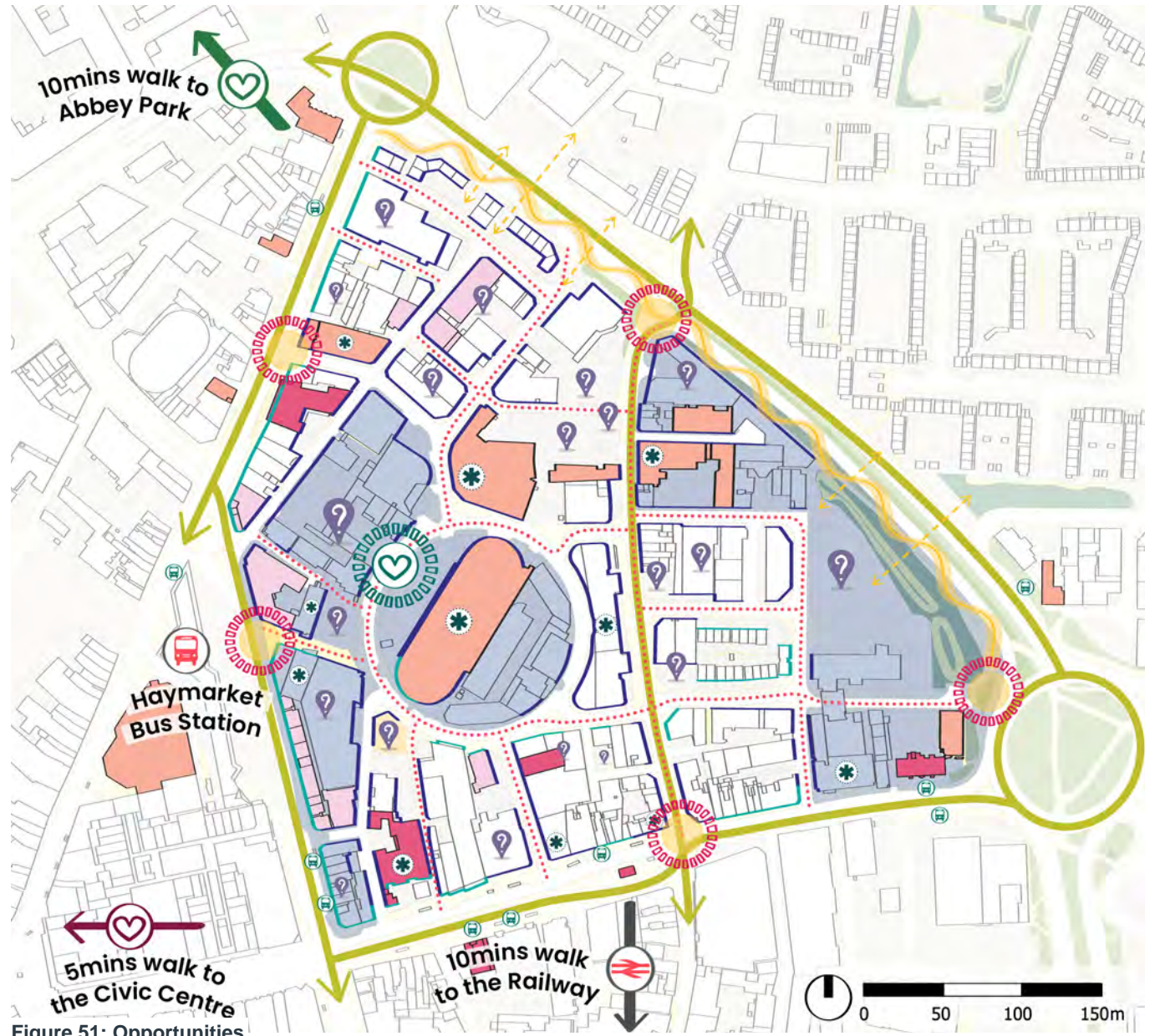


Figure 51: Opportunities

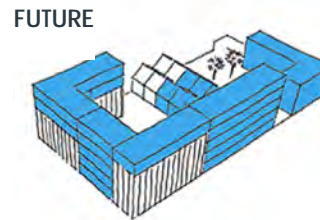
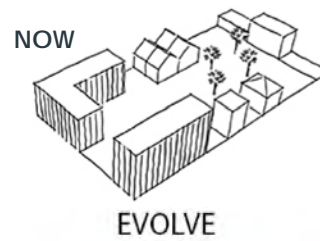
© Crown Copyright Reserved. Leicester City Council Licence LA 100019264 (2022).

Character Area Townscape Management

- Figure 51 illustrates the sites that could present future development, transforming and place-making opportunities for the overall area’s regeneration. Important buildings and existing landmarks are hidden gems to highlight the area’s value and heritage.
- The mix of uses in the area generally works well, apart from the challenges associated with the employment uses. As the area experiences increased residential development, the maintenance of commercial, retail and community uses that will bring further activity and people into the area, while taking care of its residents needs, will be important.

Wharf Street character area falls within 3. *Developing an Area’s Character* where place specific policies will be used to guide future development (see page 7 - Townscape Character Management).

3. Developing an area’s character



“Place specific 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 52: 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 Wharf Street character area will undergo significant change in the next 15-20 years and this process needs to be managed positively and pro-actively. Taking into account the aforementioned elements of the townscape analysis and diagnosis (townscape appraisal), Wharf Street character area is envisaged as:

A **well-served, growing mixed-use neighbourhood**, enhancing its **unappreciated heritage gems**, while connecting the city centre to the surrounding communities.

Establishing a **new, city-living identity** through **well-designed and enclosed streets and spaces** and a **brand new 'heart'**.

Figure 53 illustrates Wharf Street 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.

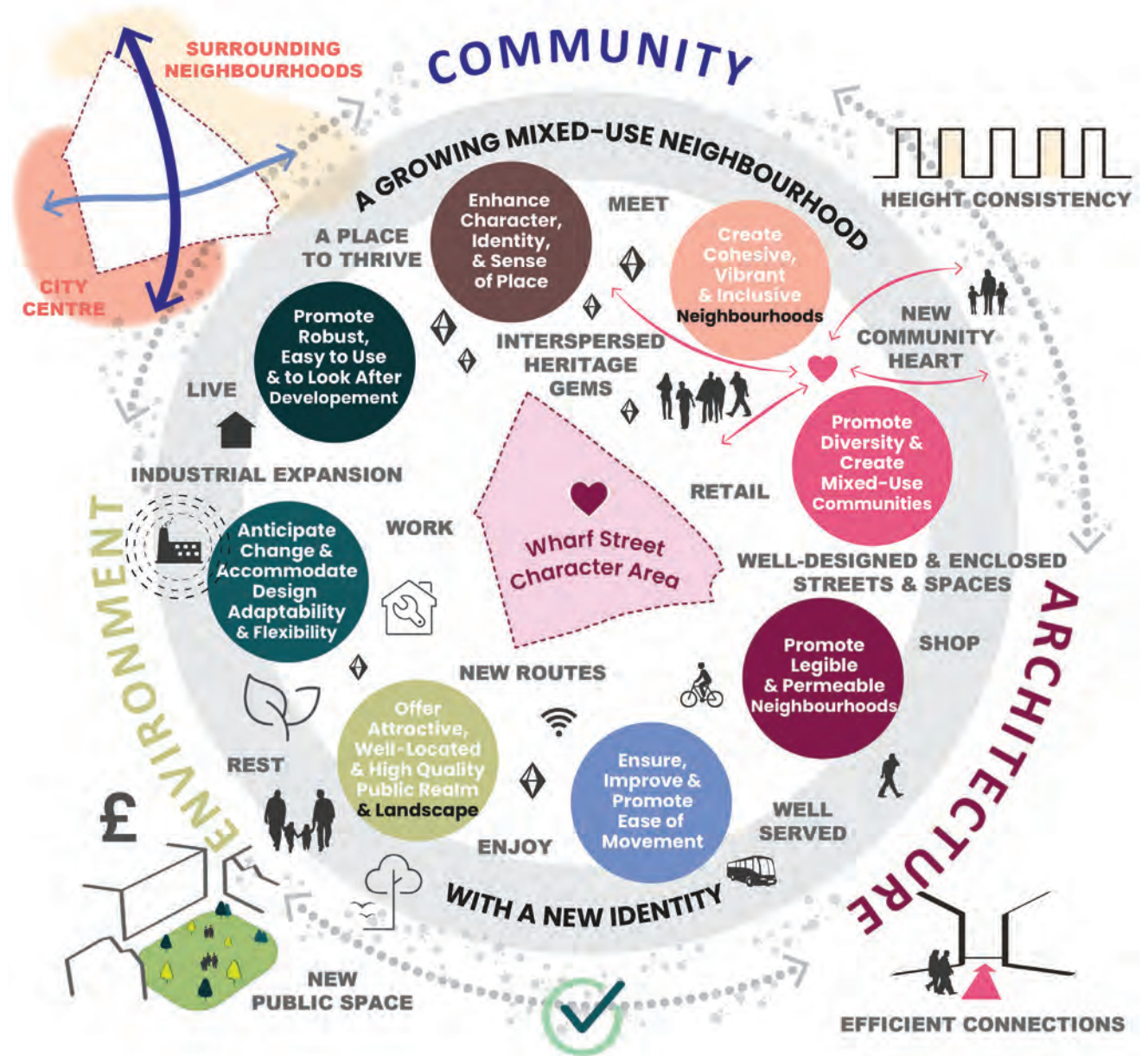


Figure 53: Wharf Street Character Area Vision

4.2. Main Future Development Objectives

1 Character & Identity



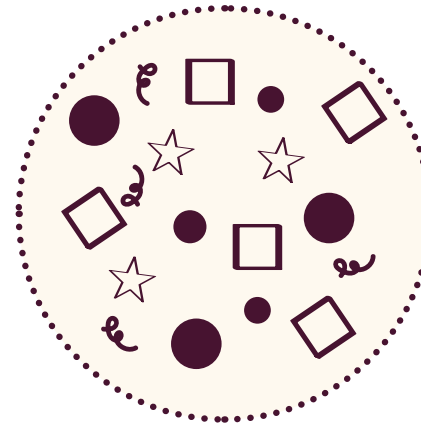
Development should enhance the character, identity and sense of place by considering the built, natural and historic context, responding to it ecologically, socially and aesthetically. All development should contribute to the unique character of the area by protecting and enhancing existing heritage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



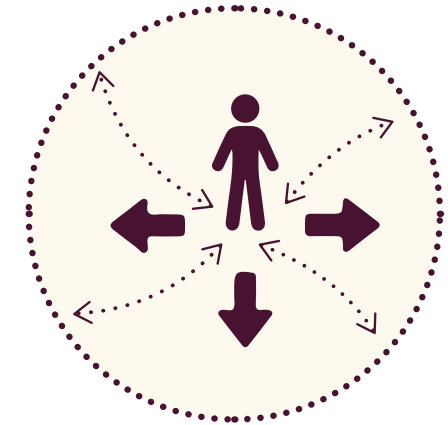
Ensure everyone's health, safety and quality of life creating buildings, streets and spaces that encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to meet and mix. All development should use the appropriate built form, layout, scale and mixture of uses and tenures to create a welcoming and attractive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

3 Diversity



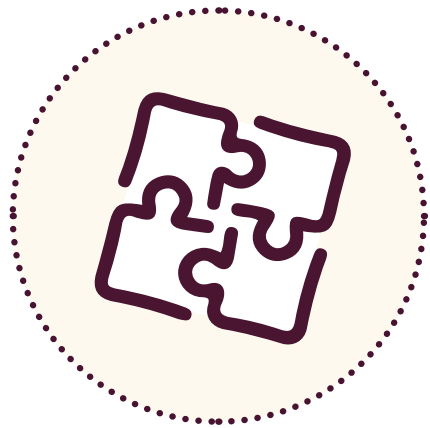
Within each Character Area variety, choice and design sensory richness should be provided in keeping with local distinctiveness. Development should promote and create mixed-use communities through providing a diverse range of facilities, activities and residential typologies with good access to public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

4 Ease of Movement



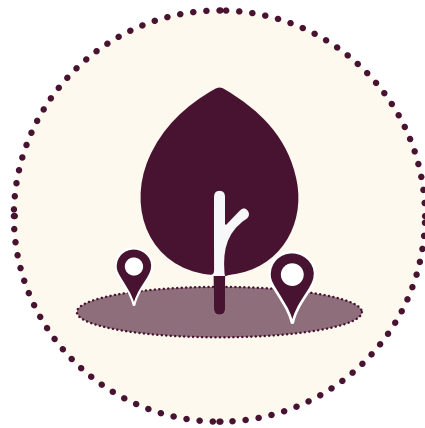
Ensure, improve and promote ease of movement, accessibility and connectivity within the Character Area and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The use of creative and innovative solutions for reducing car-dominated streetscapes should be considered to promote safe and welcoming pedestrian and cycle movement.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



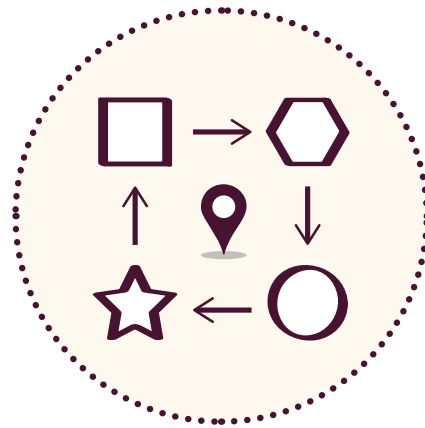
Ensure that each Character Area can be properly understood and easily navigated. There should be a positive relationship between the fronts and backs of buildings and structures, together with clearly defined public and private spaces, well-defined block and street pattern and distinctive townscape markers.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

Wharf Street character area will provide significant future growth to the city centre, which needs to be in accordance with the aforementioned vision and main development objectives. Specifically:

KEY

-  Existing Landmarks
-  Gateways
-  Bus Stops
-  Pedestrian Priority Zone
-  Enhanced Green Infrastructure
-  Create a 'Healthy Street'
-  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
-  Potential Streetscape Improvements - Materials & Layout
-  Active Frontages Priority Areas/ Façade Animation
-  Built Continuous Frontage - Repair Urban Grain
-  New Civic Public Space - Neighbourhood's Heart
-  Enhanced/ Proposed Green Space/ Public Realm
-  Redefined Urban Blocks
-  Potential Development Sites
-  Larger Sites & Areas That Would Benefit from Redevelopment
-  Listed, Locally Listed & Positive Contribution Buildings

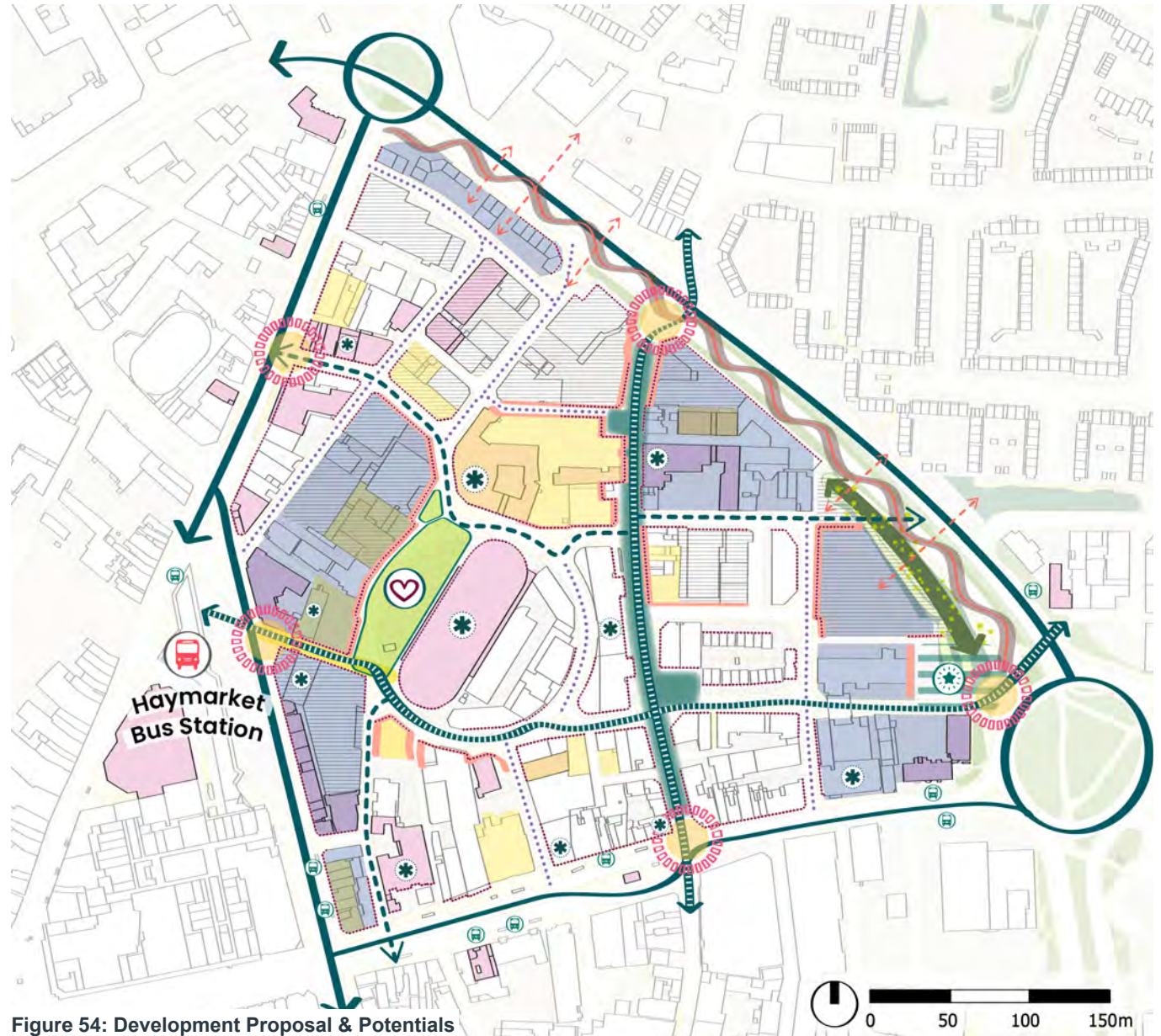


Figure 54: Development Proposal & Potentials

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

- To the south, St. Georges Conservation Area will undergo evolution without significant change guided by national and local heritage policies. However, outside of the conservation area, growth needs to be managed in developing the area's character. Heritage and townscape assets (listed, locally listed, landmark and positive contribution buildings (buildings not nationally/ locally listed or within conservation areas, but with a positive contribution to the townscape)) will be retained and enhanced, continuing to make a significant contribution to the area's ongoing identity and legibility as dominant 'markers' and frontages.
- Specific area policies and a coordinated and comprehensive approach to guide development will ensure that Wharf Street will become a place of a coherent character, sense of place and distinctive identity. First step in that process will be the definition of the neighbourhood's heart, through a brand-new public space in front of Lee Circle car park.
- Opportunities for improving the appearance and setting of existing buildings (as Lee Circle Car Park, Crown House etc.) and spaces will be encouraged and actively promoted. Such buildings and spaces will be identified by the Council.
- New development will be expected to improve connectivity, accessibility and ease of movement both within and outside the character area, reducing car usage, opening new connections, providing hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces and improving the streetscape.
- Development should allow for the ongoing provision of a mix of uses 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, enhancing the current residential provision, whereas all potential development sites should not be considered in isolation to the area's main, wider objectives. As a result, new infrastructure, public realm and streetscape improvements (materials, layout) and new public spaces are expected to be delivered, supporting the residential growth and the needs of the growing community.
- Wharf Street South (north-south connection) is envisaged as the new, 'healthy street' with pedestrian and cycle priority, reinstating its importance and including areas to 'dwell', trees, public realm improvements, active frontages and an improved highway configuration. Moreover, east-west pedestrian and cycle links, of various hierarchy levels, are proposed and illustrated at figure 54. All proposed connections are linking the existing gateways, which are to provide a welcoming and pleasant experience.



Healthy Street

A 'healthy street' is 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:

1. where everyone feels welcome,
2. that is easy to cross,
3. that offers shade and shelter,
4. that provides places to stop and rest,
5. that is not too noisy,
6. where people choose to walk and cycle,
7. where people feel safe,
8. that offers things to see and do,
9. where people feel extra relaxed and
10. with clean air (good air quality).

Healthy Streets Approach was developed by Lucy Saunders, adopted by Transport for London (TfL).

- The street network around Lee Circle car park is to be reconfigured to minimise car dominance and to provide an improved setting to heritage assets with improved enclosure. Other areas have also been identified in need of streetscape improvements (figure 54).
- Proposed development will be expected to present active frontages, especially along established pedestrian connections (according to figure 54) 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, in design terms, to repair fragmented urban grain and the street-level status of the area, reinstating perimeter blocks and recreating well-defined and enclosed streets (figure 54). Larger sites and areas that would benefit from redevelopment have also been identified, enhancing place-making in the area.
- Ensure that 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, while minimising the effect of the ring road as a barrier.
- 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.

An average height of 15 metres, broadly equivalent to 5 residential storeys, is proposed across Wharf Street area to create a place of human scale suited to a new neighbourhood. It is proposed that most of the area will be 15 metres and below. This respects the scale of the existing heritage assets and the ambient height of the frontages to the main streets of Belgrave Gate, Humberstone Gate and Charles Street, together with the area overall.

There are opportunities for buildings of up to 21 metres around Lee Circle and along Wharf Street South (incorporating set backs at the upper floors, where appropriate). This is to reflect the heights of the Lee Circle car park and the Exchange Building whilst allowing them to remain the dominant frontages/ structures within the streetscape. A uniformity of height along Wharf Street South will help define and enclose the street with consistent heights and reflect its importance as the main pedestrian and cycle connection through the Wharf Street area. Uniformity of height around a new, future, public space to create enclosure is also supported.

As outlined in the previous analysis there are townscape markers, gateways and buildings in the area that already make a significant contribution to the legibility of the area which will be enhanced through retention and improved setting. Consequently, there is no townscape justification for new tall development to provide local landmarks and improve legibility to the area.

The area adjacent to the south-east corner of the ring road could accommodate buildings up to 24 metres, whereas there is also some potential for tall elements (above 24m). 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. Tall development is defined as above 24 metres, broadly equivalent to 8 residential storeys. However, the mass, scale, and form must be appropriate to the context, respect the setting of heritage assets, in particular to the Grade II listed Spa Place (36-42 Humberstone Road) and locally listed former Zion Chapel to the south, and be of exceptional design quality. Figure 55 shows an illustrative location for potential tall elements, however its proposal should justify both location and appropriateness of design. The area is also accessed by lower order streets and therefore acceptable access may be a further consideration.

KEY

- - - Important Views
- W** Avoid the Canyon Effect
- Narrow Streets
- Create Enclosure Around Public Space
- 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

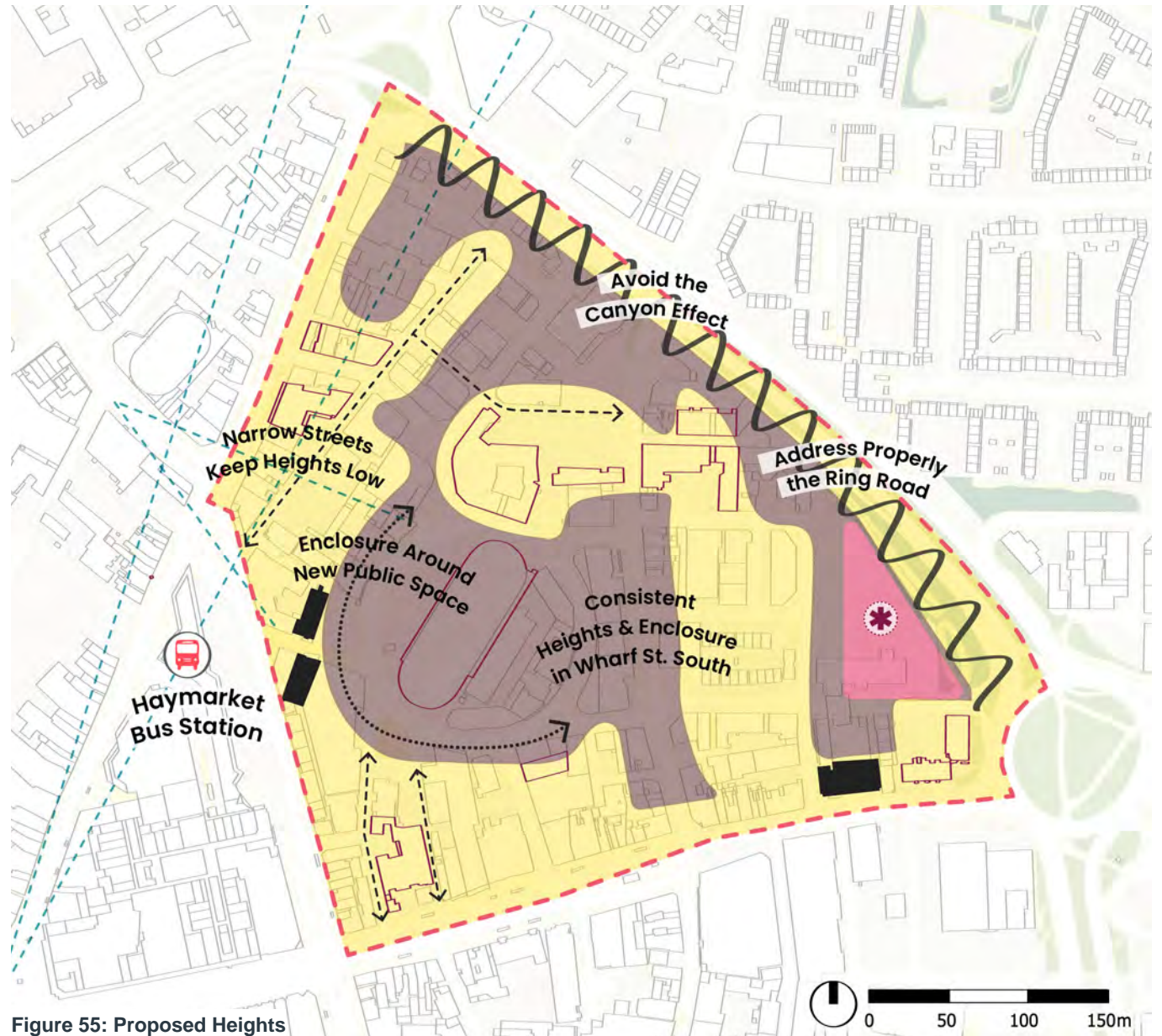


Figure 55: Proposed Heights

© 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