

2. Understanding the City

2.1 The Landscape Structure

- 2.1.1 The defining characteristic of central Cambridge is that it is very flat. The only panoramic vista over the central area (other than from within buildings) is from Castle Hill. This means that the very few tall buildings (St John's and King's College Chapels, the University's New Museums Site, church spires) are major landmarks useful for orientating oneself in the city centre.
- 2.1.2 Entering the core area from most directions means crossing some form of open space. These spaces circle and penetrate the commercial area and are a vital component of the core's character. The wide views across them, particularly in the river corridor, allow the grand, mostly collegiate buildings to define the built-up edge of the core area.
- 2.1.3 The river corridor defines the boundary of the core on its north and western sides. To the east, Jesus Green, Christ's Pieces and Parker's Piece perform a similar function. This girdle of landscape is a reminder of the constrained medieval town.
- 2.1.4 The Backs are without a doubt Cambridge's most famous landscaped area. The character is of the grounds of a large country house with wonderful trees, fine vistas and the presence of the river. The interplay of grand college buildings and verdant landscape is perhaps the most enduring image of central Cambridge.
- 2.1.5 To the south, the more natural, but still man-made, areas of Coe Fen and Sheep's Green have a totally different character to The Backs. They are more accessible, have over-mature trees and livestock grazing within yards of the busy city centre streets. The views across, particularly towards Peterhouse, almost give the impression of a walled town. They contain vestiges of the city's commercial past with the few surviving warehouses, watermills and watercourses.
- 2.1.6 The character of the more obviously man-made landscapes are more varied. Jesus Green and Christ's Pieces have some of the character of a nineteenth century municipal park with various facilities and fine avenues of trees. Parker's Piece is really just a large open area with trees around its edges. In summer it is Cambridge's 'beach' whilst in winter people stick to the paths as they enter the core area from the south and east.

2.2 The Historical Development of Cambridge

- 2.2.1 The river terraces of the River Cam formed slightly higher and better drained areas of flat or gently sloping land high enough above the river level to be far less prone to flooding. These had a considerable influence on the town's early growth and layout.
- 2.2.2 People have lived in the Cambridge area since at least the Bronze Age. There was Iron Age settlement on Castle Hill, but it was with the Romans that the first origins of Cambridge can be recognised. Roman settlement was focussed on the hill area, but with extensive occupation in the lower town around Bridge Street and Jesus Lane. The Castle Hill settlement was walled late in the 4th century AD.
- 2.2.3 During Roman Times, the River Cam was navigable as far as Cambridge and was the northernmost point where transport from East Anglia to the Midlands was practicable.

A river crossing has been in existence on, or very near to, the site of Great (Magdalene) Bridge since Roman Times. All routes, both local and long-distance, had to converge on this crossing point, giving it strategic importance. The convergence of both land and river routes at that crossing was the single most important factor in the growth of early Cambridge. The town's value as an inland port giving access to the North Sea and the Continent via the Cam, Ouse and Wash, gave it valuable commercial and strategic potential.

- 2.2.4 Roman settlement in Cambridge faded as elsewhere between 410 and 450 AD. Evidence of early Saxon occupation is limited to cemeteries around the town and isolated settlement remains such as that found recently on the Sidgwick site. Settlement gradually developed on both sides of the river, the debate as to whether this was one or two settlements continues, but the balance suggests it was one settlement separated by a river rather than two settlements. None-the-less the river marked a boundary whose control oscillated between the Mercians and the Anglians. The brief Danish interlude probably influenced the town in its organisation as much as topographically. By the 10th century Cambridge was an important place, the significant inland port of the region.
- 2.2.5 The town continued to thrive under the Saxons although it was burnt out by the Vikings and driven back around the present market. Grantabrycge, as it was known, had its own mint and up to six churches; that of St Bene't still surviving. Because of the limitations of road transport, the availability of navigable water to carry goods was very important and the by the tenth century, the settlement was firmly established as an important and prosperous port and trading centre.
- 2.2.6 By the eleventh century, the town was beginning to take its current shape with a bridge at the loop in the river linking the old Roman town to the main town, which was probably defined to the south by the King's Ditch. The King's Ditch was created to complete the protection of the town. The river itself and the belt of marshy ground along its banks offered a natural defence on three sides. The route of the King's Ditch can still be traced in the line of streets such as Pembroke Street and Mill Lane.
- 2.2.7 The town remained wealthy under the Normans, as evidenced by the number of religious foundations. Many are still in existence (for example the Round Church) and some have become colleges (e.g. Jesus College founded on the Nunnery of St Radegund and St John's founded on the hospital of the same name). Today's street-pattern, with the main north-south routes converging near the Round Church owes its origins to the Norman period.
- 2.2.8 By the thirteenth century, Cambridge was booming. The town was tightly encircled by water meadows and open fields and so was densely populated. The Market Place and St Mary's Church were the commercial hub, and a guildhall, gaol and 'rows' named after the crafts carried on there sprang up adjacent to the market. The number of religious orders continued to increase. Royal Charters of 1201 and 1207 established the town as a corporation whilst the first migration of scholars from Oxford marked the origins of the University. The heavily developed nature of the centre meant that the first colleges had to look to the marshy ground beyond the King's Ditch and on the eastern edge of the river for sites for building.

2.2.9 As a result of the harsh effects of the Black Death on Cambridge during the fourteenth century, the traders' economy became unbalanced and the University and Colleges seized the opportunity to step in and acquire property. Subsequently, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw the growth of the University, often over the hythes and lanes of the townspeople which had spread upstream of Great (Magdalene) Bridge to the Mill Pool on the river's east bank. The river's course was originally further west than its present position. It has been suggested that it was canalised in the fourteenth/fifteenth centuries in order to aid the river trade (and enable the construction of the hythes and wharves) and possibly to maintain a powerful water supply to the mills. The construction of the Royal Colleges (Trinity, King's & St John's) in particular, gradually erased most of this commercial area and this fuelled the 'town and gown' disputes which were to rage for many centuries. The street layout of the town was significantly altered with the construction of Henry VI's King's Chapel over Milne Street a key north-south route.

2.2.10 The early colleges, which were outside medieval Cambridge, were surpassed in architectural quality by the burgeoning religious foundations. This was to end abruptly with the Reformation and the colleges often took over the religious buildings throughout the sixteenth century. The wealthy town attracted rural migrants and Cambridge became increasingly overcrowded as, with the exception of some development along St Andrew's Street and Trumpington Street, its boundaries were much as they had been in medieval times.

2.2.11 Concern at the state of the town, which had buildings split into tenements or built close to or even within graveyards, and outbreaks of plague saw controls over the type of

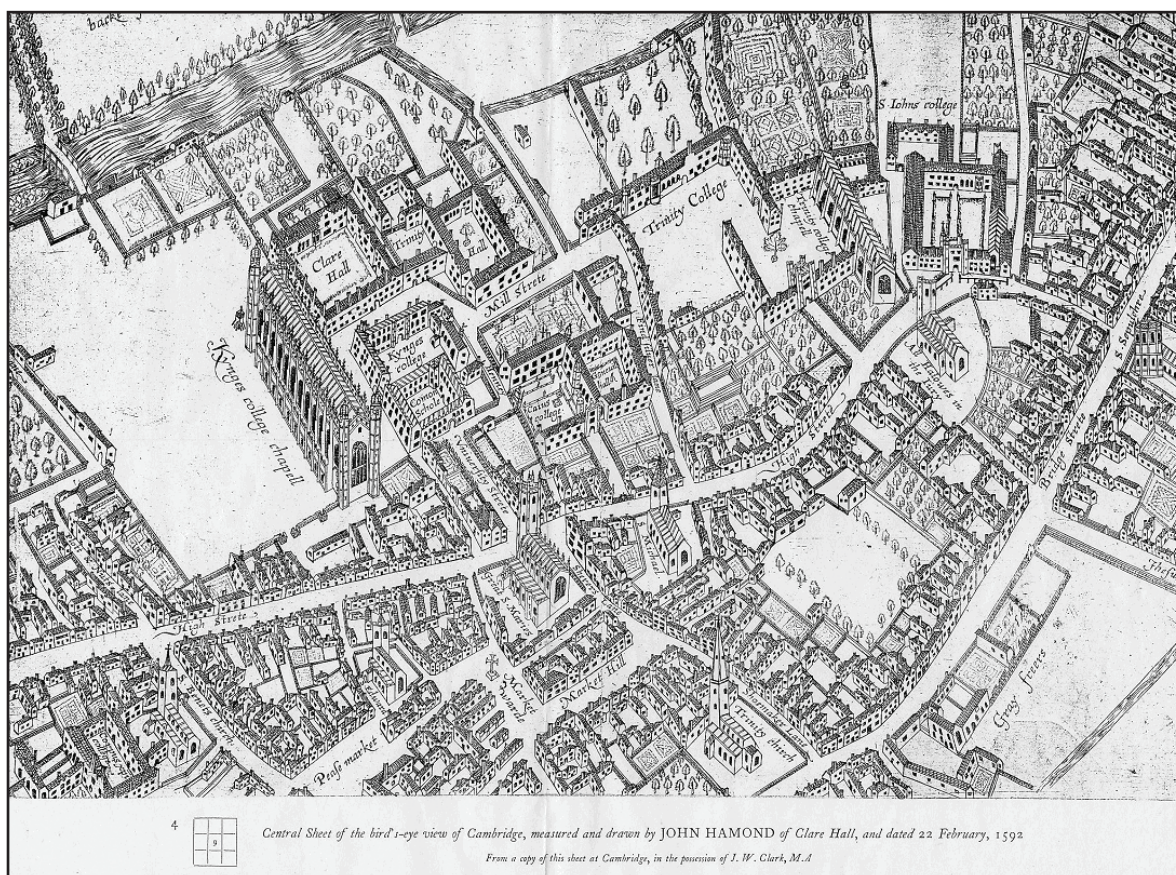


Fig.3 John Hamond 1592

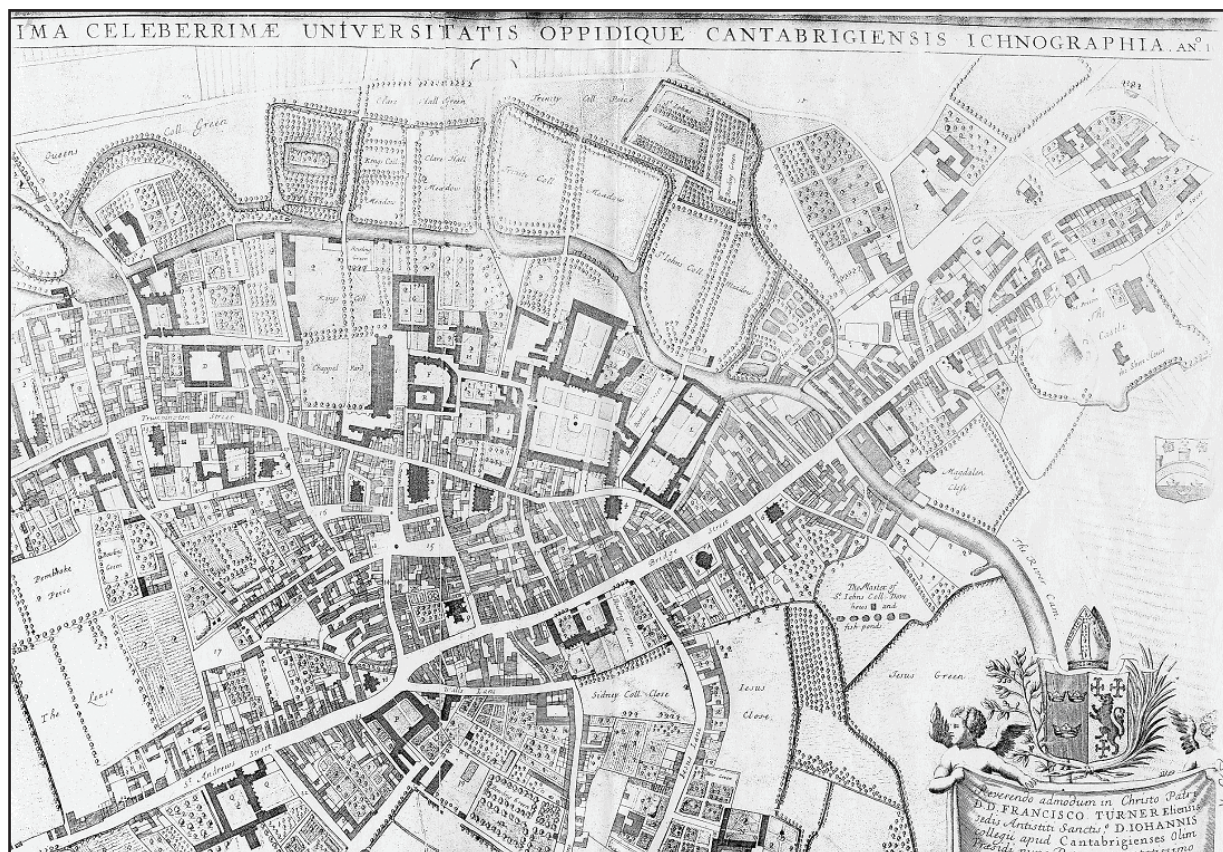


Fig. 4 David Loggan 1698

development allowed. Thatched buildings were outlawed in 1619 because of the potential fire risk, the market was paved and the Hobson's fountainhead erected to bring water into the market place. The last thatched property in central Cambridge was demolished for the construction of the Park Street car park. Also in the seventeenth century, Trinity College exchanged Parker's Piece for some land to the rear of the College and this together with land acquired by St John's was the origin of 'The Backs'

2.2.12 Cambridge's anti-Royalist stance meant that the municipality began to lose power after the monarchy was restored. Although some grand timber-framed and brick houses continued to be built, there was a marked contrast between the college's towering gatehouses and the dingy courts with mean houses behind.

2.2.13 The eighteenth century saw a greater spirit of cooperation between the townsfolk and the University. Although Hawksmoor's plans for the area around King's College were never realised, the improvements around the Old Schools and Senate House saw the demolition of hovels, and King's Parade and Trumpington Street were widened as King's and St Catharine's Colleges bought up property. A botanic garden was laid to the south of the market and major public buildings such as Addenbrooke's Hospital, a sessions house, town hall, great bridge and workhouses were erected. All this was largely within the confines of the medieval town, which continued to be surrounded by commons, open fields and marshes. Most of this land was in the ownership of religious institutions and the university/colleges or cultivated as part of the open field system and this meant that building was constrained.



Fig. 5 Cambridge 1798

2.2.14 This was to change, however, in the nineteenth century when the huge eastern and western fields were enclosed and subsequently built upon. When developed, the character of the two 'fields' would be completely different. The east was built with high density terraced housing as the town's population grew, whilst the west comprised large houses and college sports grounds. Because of the density of the core (as well as 'social' reasons), the new women's and theological colleges had to be built on the edge of town. The university's expansion caused the relocation of the Botanic Garden further south to allow for the development of a new science campus.

2.2.15 Due to the power of the University, when the railway came in 1845, the station was a mile from the city centre so as not to tempt students to the fleshpots of London. The coming of the railway also finally signalled the end of the River Cam as the economic artery of the town, although the railway's location means that few industrial uses from this period are evident in the core area as they tended to be located near the railway (e.g. Foster's Mill).

2.2.16 Although many twentieth century developments have been in the suburbs, there have been some major impacts on the centre. These have often involved the expansion of the colleges; perhaps the most significant and earliest being in the Bridge Street area to allow Magdalene and St John's Colleges to grow. The lack of space in the centre has meant many colleges have sought ingenious ways of housing students. Sidney Sussex

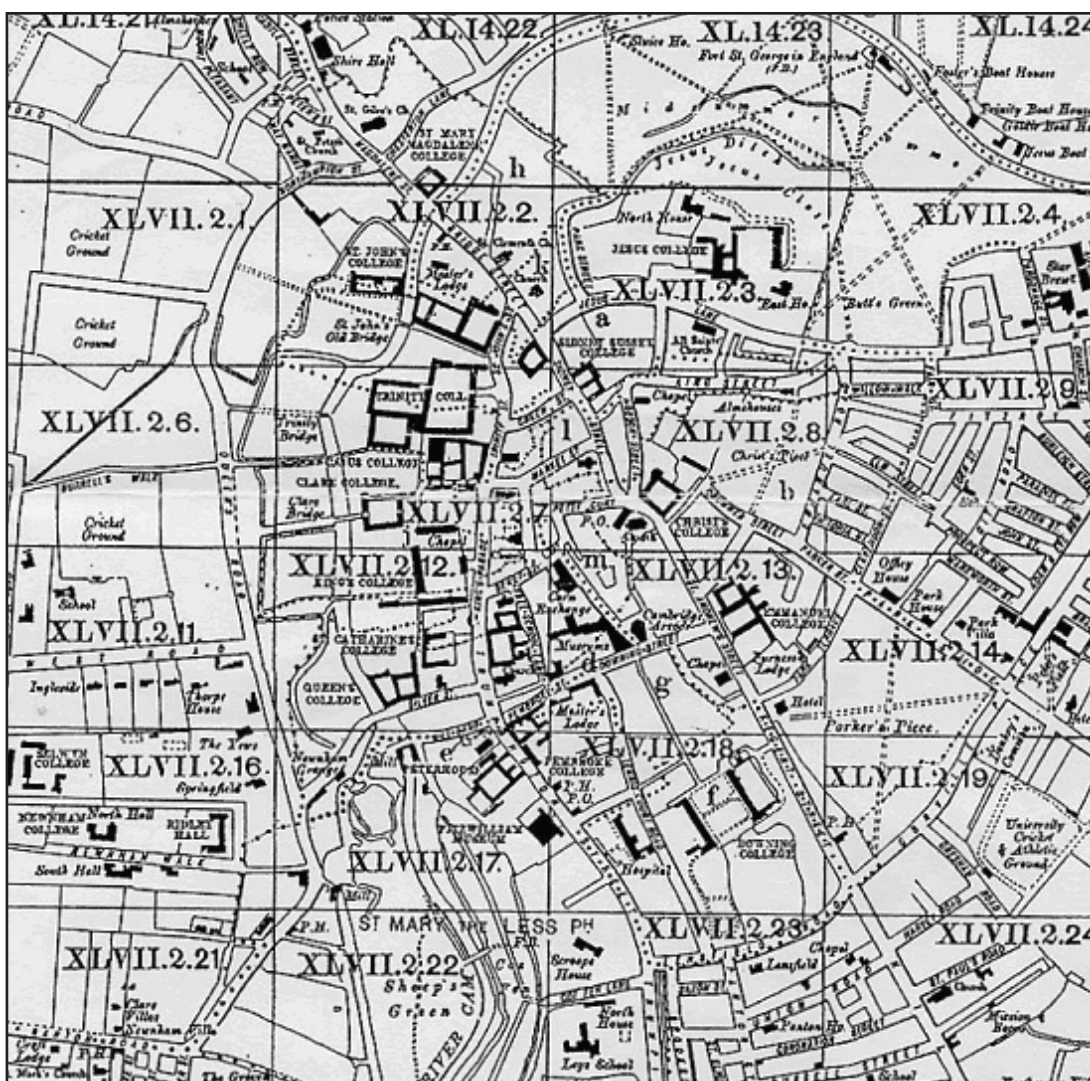


Fig. 6 1886 Ordnance Survey Map

developed Sussex Street with ground floor shops and students above in the 1930s and more recently Trinity College has ingeniously concealed the blocks of Blue Boar Court behind and above retained historic buildings. Commercial development has included the Grafton Centre in the edge of town Kite area, and the redevelopment of the area around Petty Cury as Lion Yard. Both developments have had a major impact on street patterns.

2.2.17 The motorcar, as in other towns, has made its mark on the character of the core in the twentieth century. Obsolete building lines are evidence of never-materialised road plans of the 1960s whilst Queen Anne Terrace and Park Street car parks remain more tangible evidence of the impact of the car. Recent years have seen the trend to discourage cars from entering the historic core and various vehicle restriction points characterise central streets.

2.3 Cambridge Dynamic

2.3.1 Viewed as a simple model, the core area comprises a series of concentric rings. The heart is the commercial core. This is surrounded by colleges, university and residential buildings and beyond are the river and open spaces. Outside this green ring are the post-enclosure developments of mostly large houses to the south and west and more compact terraces of houses to the east.

2.3.2 This simple model is complicated by nodal development at the river crossing points, the development of ribbon commercial development along the main routes and other historical factors.

2.3.3 The river crossings are key nodes particularly in summer. Garret Hostel, Magdalene and Silver Street bridges are still gateways to the historic core and transition points between the peace of the green spaces and the activity of the town. In summer the latter two are popular with tourists attracted to the punt stations, cafes and bars. Quayside in particular has developed into a key destination and the Mill Lane area has the potential to do so.

2.3.4 Whilst most day-trippers do not stray too far from King's Parade, Jesus Green and Parker's Piece are popular areas with local people and language students particularly in summer.

2.3.5 The key shopping streets and the market remain busy throughout the year, but only during the day. The buoyant night-time economy is concentrated at Quayside, Bridge Street, King Street and St Andrew's Street.

2.3.6 The majority of the streets in the college hinterland are used mostly as access routes into the city, though in summer they are popular with tourists. The fact that the streets are narrow, not particularly overlooked and in places dimly lit means that they are not popular after dark. This is also true of the narrow passageways in the commercial zone.

2.3.7 The main routes from Magdalene Bridge down to Trumpington and Regent Streets, despite restricting private car access in recent years, remain the key through-routes for other modes. Pembroke / Downing Street is the principal cross-core route for vehicular traffic. Other cross-core routes, particularly those within the college and university zones, can become extremely busy at times with pedestrian and cycle traffic as students move around the city to and from lectures.

2.3.8 The residential areas, even those which are largely college owned, have a pleasant intimate, unhurried feel especially if entered from the busy commercial streets. Such contrasts are a key feature of the core area.

2.4 Land Use (see fig. 7)

2.4.1 The commercial heart of the city remains focussed on the market and surrounding streets. They are vibrant streets which contain the majority of the key retailers. There is a hierarchy of streets ranging from the Market Square through the main routes (e.g. Trinity Street, Sidney Street), linking lanes (Market Street, Green Street) to the alleys (Market Passage, All Saints Passage). Only the Market Square has any real scale. Otherwise even the main roads are relatively narrow.

2.4.2 This commercial heart is effectively a triangle into which several less popular commercial streets link. To the north are Bridge Street and Magdalene Street, two of the city's key streets for over 1000 years. Today these streets house specialist shops, bars and restaurants and are supplemented by the redeveloped Quayside area. Sussex Street runs east to link into King Street, whilst to the south St Andrew's Street becomes Regent Street, the home of numerous bars, restaurants, specialist shops and estate agents.

2.4.3 Streets such as Trumpington Street and Silver Street are predominantly in university use with only a few retail units. The Mill Lane area, however, although in similar use, has seen a growth of new restaurants and bars with the potential to further exploit its location adjacent to the river.

2.4.4 The main college area is between Trinity Street / King's Parade and the river. This was the marshy ground on which the town's hythes were located before the major college expansion in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

2.4.5 The location of the majority of other core area colleges is a consequence of their being outside the old city gates (Peterhouse, Pembroke and Christ's) or their taking over religious foundations (Jesus, St John's, Emmanuel and Sidney Sussex). The major exception is Corpus Christi which, being founded by the townsfolk, lies close to the commercial heart of the city. Darwin College, which was not founded until the 1960s, was created from a range of houses and commercial buildings on the west bank of the River Cam.

2.4.6 The ceremonial heart of the University is the Senate House. This is surrounded by the 'Old Schools' administrative buildings and lies at a key point in the city where the colleges and University meet the commercial hub.

2.4.7 Iconic University buildings also include the Pitt Press and Fitzwilliam Museum, both on Trumpington Street. Behind the former, the University has converted existing buildings and built new ones to house administrative functions, teaching and social uses. Other University faculties lie off Trumpington Street in converted houses (e.g. Architecture), converted hospital (Judge Institute) or purpose-built departments such as engineering or biochemistry, the latter now part of a consolidated university campus along Tennis Court Road.

2.4.8 The main central university teaching areas, however, lie either side of Downing Street. On the north side is the New Museums Site on a site previously occupied by the Botanic

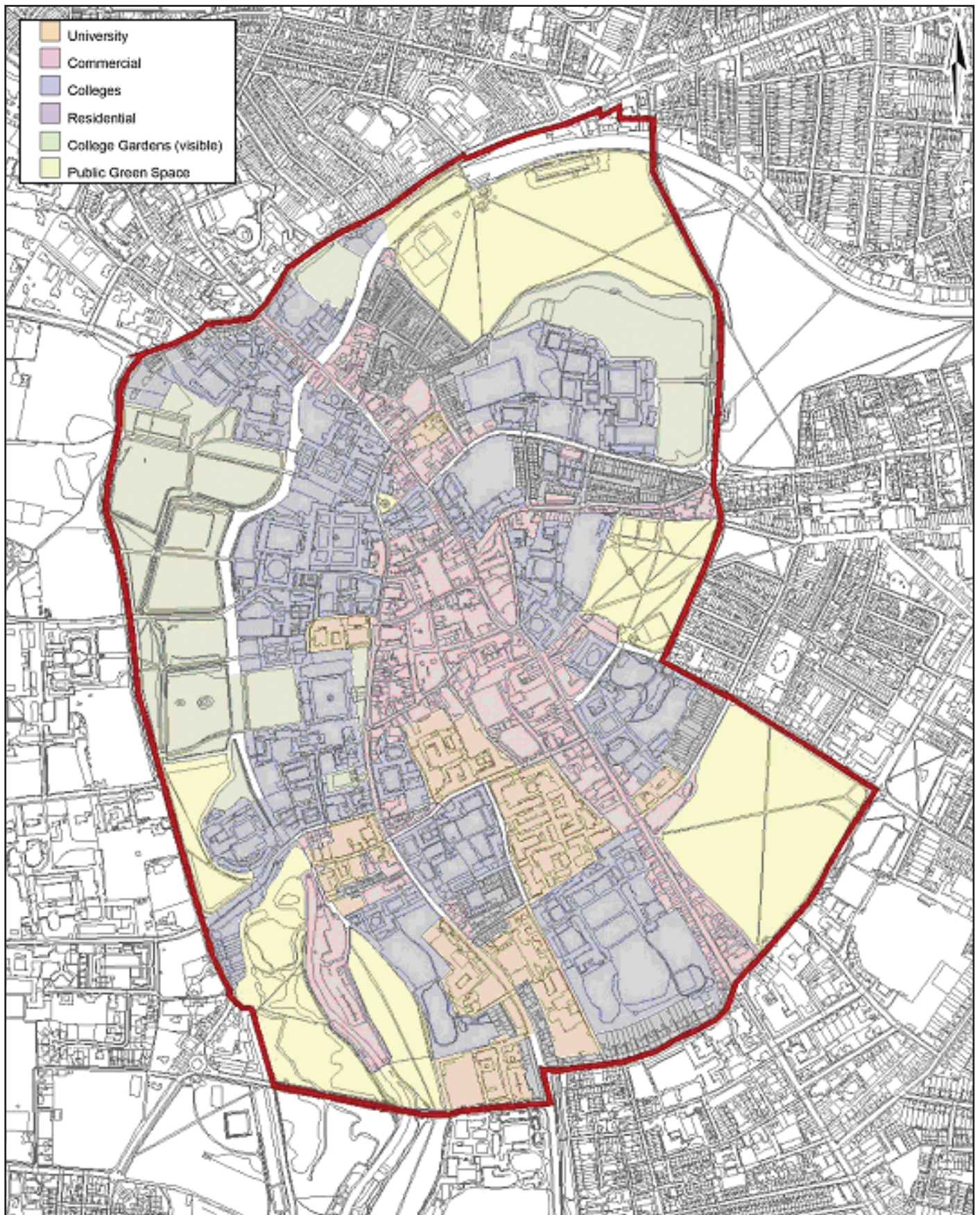


Fig. 7 Predominant Land Use in Historic Core

Garden. On the South side, the Downing Site was built on land acquired from the eponymous college. Both were developed from the late nineteenth century.

2.4.9 The ADC Theatre and University's Union Society are the only significant University use in the northern part of the core. The University has recently sold the leases of its Faculty of Education offices (formerly residential buildings) in the Trumpington Street / Lensfield Road area.

2.4.10 Although quite large numbers of people live within central Cambridge, they tend to be students occupying the colleges and the upper storeys of shops. Private residential areas are restricted to smaller enclaves.

2.4.11 The main residential area is adjacent to Jesus Green and is centred on New Park Street. This area comprises a grid of quite narrow streets, a small primary school, shops and inns that add to the strong character as a residential enclave. Little St Mary's Lane, Botolph Lane and the East end of King Street contain the oldest buildings. These narrow streets with their houses, inns and small shops of varying heights, ages and materials have the character of a small East Anglian market town.

2.4.12 The other housing areas are also generally typified by terraced housing. The grandest is at Park Terrace overlooking Parker's Piece and the University-owned buildings on the southern end of Trumpington Street and on the south side of Jesus Lane. These are tall, formally designed townhouses built for wealthy townspeople in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Fitzwilliam Street, Tennis Court Terrace and the other surviving formerly residential buildings on Tennis Court Road were built earlier and are less grand. This character is very similar to Malcolm Street on the east side of the core. Both are narrow streets of virtually identical houses. Jesus Lane also has good late nineteenth century terraced houses built for the middle-classes, whilst Lensfield Road is unusual in providing late nineteenth century semi-detached housing.

2.5 Building Types & Character

2.5.1 Cambridge is a small city with a 'split personality'. It has a very marked distinction between the vernacular buildings of an East Anglian market town and the grand buildings of the University and its Colleges, the construction of which, has erased most traces of Cambridge's industrial beginnings. The absence of any significant surviving industrial buildings is therefore a key aspect of central Cambridge; instead, the major landmarks tend to be the churches and College gatehouses. These border the main central streets and are useful waymarkers.

2.5.2 It should be noted that the original building function often dictates its form and this can persist after the function ceases. Therefore buildings that are in one use today may well have had very different beginnings.

Commercial Buildings

- 2.5.3 Generally the commercial heart is tight and compact with virtually all buildings hard against the back of footpaths. This gives the narrow streets an intimate character. The buildings of the 'town' (as opposed to the 'gown' colleges) are usually of two to four storeys in height, though along the main streets and the market, five storey structures can be found. Within this range, however, there can be considerable variation rather than universal consistency, except where areas were comprehensively rebuilt. This adds greatly to the richness of the skyline in the main commercial streets. Traditional buildings have narrow frontages with long deep plots behind.
- 2.5.4 Pre-Eighteenth Century
These commercial buildings tend to be conversions of merchants' houses, usually of two to three storeys in height. The earliest may be timber framed and rendered and probably originally had much brighter colour-washes than are seen today. Many of these timber-frames have subsequently been cased in brick or the ground floors have been brick infilled beneath jetties with the upper storeys being cased. They have clay-tiled roofs that were traditionally a buff colour, but later patching with brown and red tiles has meant that this mixture of colours has become the Cambridge vernacular for probably the past century.
- 2.5.5 Eighteenth - Nineteenth Century
By the eighteenth century, the majority of the town buildings were brick-built, red and pink initially with gault bricks becoming most common by the nineteenth century. Stone is relatively rare for town buildings (except Robert Sayle and Bene't Street). They are usually two to four storeys in height, pre-1840/50s buildings tend to have clay-tiled roofs; buildings after this date tend to have Welsh slate roofs.
- 2.5.6 Nineteenth - Twentieth Century
Red brick made a comeback at the end of the nineteenth / early twentieth century, but post-war buildings have been in a variety of mostly buff, grey or brown bricks, concrete or painted render. The Boots (the chemists) store along Sidney Street is the major exception being constructed of stone. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Welsh slate was cheap and easy to transport and became the norm for buildings in the city, until clay tiles, or artificial versions, (mostly brown and red) enjoyed a comeback at the end of the twentieth century. The patching of clay-tiled roofs over the centuries has created the typical Cambridgeshire tradition of multi-coloured tiles.
- 2.5.7 Consequently there is no one typical building style in the commercial heart. There are areas of homogeneity - terraces constructed in a single build (such as Rose Crescent or Sussex Street) but generally it is the mixture of building types, ages, heights and materials which creates such a rich townscape within the commercial heart of the city, i.e. there is variety within an overall consistency

College Buildings

2.5.8 The colleges are generally architecturally introverted as the traditional college shape is a three-sided courtyard with the fourth side screened off from the street. The exception is St Catharine's college which only has railings dividing it from the street. The other colleges do, however, make their presence strongly felt by having imposing gate towers and decorative screen walls which allow some partial views into the courts. The exception is Downing College which has a very understated presence on both Regent Street and Tennis Court Road.

2.5.9 The scale and formality of many college buildings sharply contrast with the vernacular buildings of the town. Huge Gothic chapels (St John's and King's Colleges), Classical porticos (Emmanuel) or even French chateaux (Pembroke and Gonville and Caius) dominate the more humble town buildings.

2.5.10 Earliest College Buildings

These tended to be founded on the site of or in the buildings of large family houses or religious institutions closed because of the Dissolution. Parts of these early buildings can still be seen in the older Colleges. They were usually constructed of clunch, a hard chalk, which was the only available building stone apart from local fieldstones. Later refacing occurred in ashlar with a mixture of tiles, slates and lead used for the roofs.

2.5.11 Early Purpose-built College Buildings

Some earlier buildings are of pink and red brick before this appears to have become unfashionable. No timber-framed college buildings are visible from the street. The earliest college buildings used Collyweston stone slate as their roofing material, brought down from the Stamford area. They are typically 2-2½ storeys high.

2.5.12 Later College Buildings

The college and university buildings, being of greater prestige than the town buildings, are often built of Lincolnshire / Northamptonshire limestone (with imported stone from further afield as it was easily transportable across the network of Fen waterways). Some buildings used Collyweston stone slates; however, clay tiles and Welsh slate soon became more popular with Westmorland slate also used - for example at Tree Court, Gonville and Caius College.

2.5.13 Modern College Buildings

Examples such as Foundress Court (Pembroke College), the "King's & Cat's" Development, and the Erasmus Buildings (Queens' College) utilise contemporarily fashionable building materials such as concrete, steel and plate glass.

University Buildings

2.5.14 As the University has expanded over the years and its Faculties have come into existence, it has required separate accommodation. It has converted many types of building for its use (mainly for administration), often changing the character of the building in the process, but also commissioning purpose-built faculty, laboratory and other teaching buildings.

2.5.15 Early University Buildings

Early University buildings are 'conversions' of old College buildings, e.g. Cobble Court of Henry V's original King's College (Old Schools) or purpose-built (Senate House), but are all iconic buildings. The major University buildings of this period - the Senate House and Old Schools and the Fitzwilliam Museum are all stone built and well detailed. Their scale is significant and they make a huge contribution to the streetscene.

2.5.16 Later University Buildings

Later, purpose-built, University buildings are found in the principal teaching sites within the historic city core. These are the Downing and New Museums sites, which present grand formal façades to the street (in particular, Downing Street with the Sedgwick Museum). The planning and style of some of the sites, with buildings arranged around courts and with strong gateway features borrows from the language of the traditional colleges, e.g. along Tennis Court Road, and especially the Cavendish gateway along Free School Lane.

2.5.17 The Pitt Press and the Judge Institute (a conversion of the former Addenbrooke's Hospital) are also major landmarks. As with the other iconic university buildings, these are also solidly built and well detailed.

2.5.18 Modern University Buildings

The University's most recent buildings are found dotted around the University's sites and are often designed by known architects. The University Centre, which is the catering and social centre for graduate members of the University, is a rather uncompromising building with fine views over Laundress Green.

2.5.19 University Laboratories

This type of building is found in the New Museums & Downing Sites and was generally constructed during the twentieth century. Their size varies depending upon their purpose and can therefore be between 1 and 5 storeys high. Most are of brick (but can have fine detailing, sometimes in stone) or more modern materials with flat roofs and are often marred by ad-hoc additions (air conditioning ducts, safety/access features, etc).

Modern Office Blocks

2.5.20 Examples of these post-war buildings are Bridge House, Bridge Street, St Andrew's House, St Andrew's Street and parts of Regent Street. They are steel or concrete framed, often with facing brick, large areas of glazing, flat roofs and of 2-3 storeys.

Industrial Buildings

2.5.21 As noted above, there are very few industrial buildings in present-day Cambridge. Some of the last few remaining examples can be found in the other main area of university buildings within the historic core of Cambridge - the north end of Trumpington Street (Pitt Press building), Silver Street, Mill Lane and Granta Place. These are former warehouses, mostly of approx. 3 storeys, gault brick with slate roofs, now in use as offices for the University. The other remaining examples of this type of building are found in the Quayside area.

Residential Buildings

2.5.22 The majority of housing within the core area is gault brick, two to three storeys and often built in formal terraces. The majority were built from 1825-1900. Though there are differences in plan, size and decoration between and amongst the buildings in the different areas, this typical character is very strong.

2.5.23 Large Townhouses

Some early houses do exist in the core area. Little Trinity and Peterhouse Master's Lodge are exceptionally fine, largely eighteenth century, houses. Other examples can be found on Jesus Lane (south side) and along Thompson's Lane. Their more substantial front gardens and walls and railings survive to enhance their setting.

2.5.24 Modest Town Houses

More modest town houses (mostly from the seventeenth / eighteenth centuries and some from the nineteenth century) also survive especially on Botolph Lane, Little St Mary's Lane and King Street. The most important characteristics are the variety in scale (usually between 2 and 3.5 storeys), the mixture of timber framed and brick walls, the use of clay tiles for roofing and their position hard on the footpath edge. This East Anglian market town character gives these streets great charm and intimacy.

2.5.25 Terraces

Plainer terraces such as Malcolm Street or Tennis Court Terrace are generally characterised by their repeated use of similar details (panelled doors, sash windows, etc). The most modest houses in scale are those on Lower Park Street or Tennis Court Road which are right on the footpath edge. All terraces tend to have small front gardens, even the later, larger and grander houses for the wealthy such as those on Park Parade or Jesus Lane. Large front gardens are not a feature of the core area. These later terraces and earlier examples such as Scroope Terrace and Park Terrace have much freer use of ornament

2.5.26 Nineteenth / Twentieth Century Semi-detached

The character of the north side of Lensfield Road is rather different, with the exception of Bene't Street. The houses were built as semi-detached, they were built later in the nineteenth / early in the twentieth century and consequently there is greater use of red brick and tiles for roofs and they have more generous front gardens. They often have high quality detailing in joinery and often have casement windows.

2.5.27 Twentieth Century Residential

The one area of more recent residential development in the city is the north side of King Street. This was built in the 1960s-70s. Although the street architecture is rather bland, the sense of enclosure along King Street is maintained and the buff brick of the walls attempts to blend with the earlier gault brick buildings. Much of the accommodation is tiered back behind a façade of shops and restaurants to reduce the scale and retain the vitality of the street.

Religious Buildings (Non-College)

2.5.28 Churches tend to be set behind railings and low walls. Their churchyards add welcome greenery to what are otherwise very built-up streets. They tend to be stone built with various roof coverings. Their spires and towers are landmarks within the city centre (Emmanuel United Reformed Church, St Michael's Church, All Saints' Church, Great St Mary's Church and Holy Trinity Church).

Municipal Buildings

2.5.29 These are buildings such as The Guildhall, the County Hall (Hobson Street) and Old Police Station (St Andrew's Street). They tend to be grand buildings, imposing in scale and 'classical' in style. Usually constructed of ashlar and brick. Later examples from the 1960s onwards are the Police and Fire Stations along Parkside.

2.6 The scale of streets and spaces

Streets

2.6.1 In terms of a street hierarchy, the main commercial streets together with Pembroke / Downing Street are the most generous. The historic main routes tend to be very straight, allowing long vistas along them. Below this is a network of narrower streets (e.g. Green Street, Botolph Lane) and below this narrow passageways many of which are of great historic interest (Senate House Passage).

2.6.2 A major characteristic of much of the core area is that the streets are narrow and intimate regardless of whether you are within the college hinterland, the commercial core or residential streets. Although the colleges contain open courts, most are not visible from the streets outside and buildings and high walls increase the sense of enclosure. The net result is a very tight, intimate urban character.

2.6.3 Primary Streets / Urban Spaces

The market is clearly the most significant public space, though its scale and shape have changed numerous times in the past, and the originally adjoining 'specialist' markets give no real idea of their past use other than through their names. Senate House Hill is now a popular space especially with visitors, and has helped to spread the tourist mass and relieve King's Parade.

2.6.4 King's Parade is relatively wide as a consequence of the sweeping away of buildings on the west side of the street in the nineteenth century. Other streets in the core widen in places. Trumpington Street changes from being tight and intimate near Peterhouse to a wide space with set-back iconic buildings outside the Fitzwilliam Museum / Judge Institute. It is fortunate that the road between these buildings is wide, as both buildings require significant breathing space.

2.6.5 The feeling of space continues when moving south due to the set back nature of St Peter's Terrace and Scroope Terrace. The south end of Trumpington Street turning onto Lensfield

Road, although university owned, retains its domestic character. It is important that this character is retained in the future as some of the buildings return to other uses.

- 2.6.6 St Andrew's Street and Sidney Street are also reasonably wide in places. The former is wider in some places due to a mercifully never-realised road-widening scheme. Other areas of 'space' in the city include Quayside and Fisher Square which is rather forlorn but should be enhanced with the construction of the Grand Arcade, whilst Lion Yard is the core area's 'shopping mall'.
- 2.6.7 Despite the scale of the buildings, they are usually close to or on the footpath edge, so Downing Street, in particular, has the character of a very grand canyon. Within the New Museum and Downing sites, although there are some fine individual buildings, their settings are generally compromised by poor planning, lesser quality buildings, a mass of car parking and other paraphernalia.
- 2.6.8 Secondary Streets
Free School Lane, although strongly defined by a wall of quite grand college and University buildings, has much more of a backstreet feel due largely to the width of the street and the parking along it.
- 2.6.9 Tennis Court Road, at the northern end, has grand facades - some set behind railings - whilst the new medical teaching laboratories at the southern end tend to be set back but still dwarf the surviving former residential buildings. The street, with the solid wall of Downing College marking its eastern side has a very canyon-like feel, especially around Bridget's Hostel.
- 2.6.10 Silver Street has much of the canyon-like character of Downing Street, only narrower. This area has a mix of college, University and minor retail uses, but traffic dominates. Possible changes of use, particularly at ground floor level, might create a more open and lively feeling.
- 2.6.11 Passageways
Rose Crescent, Market Passage, Sussex Street and All Saints Passage are very narrow & intimate in character; some are remnants of earlier street patterns or yards of inns.

Spaces

- 2.6.12 In terms of a space hierarchy, the outer open spaces are the most open and widest expanses of green space. Further in towards the city centre, are the smaller park spaces and below this level are the churchyards, other small gardens/green spaces and glimpsed college grounds.
- 2.6.13 Outer Open Spaces
The spaces that encircle the core area mean that from the west (The Backs), north (Jesus Green) and south (Coe Fen / Sheep's Green), the historic core is seen across open ground. This gives wonderful views of many city buildings and means that the core has strong edges. The transition between the relative peace and space of the open ground and the bustle and intimacy of city streets is very marked.
- 2.6.14 Jesus Green was originally part of the area now known as Midsummer Common and was

used for grazing of cattle (as Midsummer Common still is). The space was divided by the construction of Victoria Avenue in 1890 and shortly after this the site was laid out for recreational purposes.

2.6.15 The Backs are tree-filled riverside grounds jointly owned by several colleges. They were originally meadows liable to flooding and so were used as common pasture.

2.6.16 Coe Fen / Sheep's Green is prone to flooding and is therefore only really suitable for grazing. The land remains today as a semi-natural space and is an important part of the setting of the core area.

2.6.17 Smaller Park Spaces

Christ's Pieces / New Square and Parker's Piece have the feel of municipal Victorian spaces that, although busy with vehicular/pedestrian traffic, provide a welcome respite from the urbanity of the commercial heart of the city.

2.6.18 Christ's Pieces was used for grazing cattle until Jesus College sold its interests in the land to the Council in 1886 when it was drained and planted. New Square was designed as a formal square for the setting of the surrounding terraces. Christ's Pieces and New Square form a link between the historic city centre and the Grafton Shopping Centre.

2.6.19 Parker's Piece was acquired by the city from Trinity College in 1613 at which time it was in use as grazing land. Its name is derived from Edward Parker, a cook by profession, who held the lease of the land at the time of the transaction.

2.6.20 Churchyards / Small Green Spaces

Where these spaces occur, a much greener and more open feel than is usual in the city is created, as there are hardly any street trees to relieve the built forms. Trinity Street achieves this in a more constrained way with the green space outside Trinity College and the churchyard of the original All Saints Church providing a rare public breathing space. The churchyards of the Round Church and St Clement's on Bridge Street and St Botolph's and Little St Mary's are also small oases. Added to these are the glimpse views of the trees in the college grounds and river corridor, the grounds of Grove Lodge and the King's College and Trinity College lawns and trees.

2.6.21 The trees in Grove Lodge garden are an important transition between the hard urbanity of the core area and the leafier areas of Brookside and the Botanic Garden in Newtown. They are also a useful counterpoint and backdrop to the Fitzwilliam Museum and complement the scale of Trumpington Street. The court in front of the Judge Institute and the front gardens of St Peter's Terrace make a formal green contribution to the street.

2.6.22 These small green spaces can also accentuate the character of a street, as, for example, in Tennis Court Road. The canopies of the trees in Downing College's grounds, in addition to providing welcome greenery, add to the feeling of enclosure.

2.7 Details

2.7.1 The quality of the architectural detailing of many Cambridge buildings adds great texture and variety to the Cambridge townscape. Large buildings, such as the Fitzwilliam

Museum, do not just contribute scale, grandeur and high quality materials but also delicate carving and features such as the fine walls and railings at street level. Even more modest buildings such as the timber-framed shops on Magdalene Street have interesting, if rather graphic, carvings often depicting the early use of the building (e.g. the upper storeys of no 25).

- 2.7.2 There are buildings with fine shopfronts (e.g. along King's Parade, Trinity Street, Bene't Street, Trumpington Street, and in particular, 21 Market Street), interesting shop signage (the former Peck and Sons Chemists on the corner of Fitzwilliam Street), old lanterns (Rose Crescent and Senate House Passage), plaques and odes, hanging signs, clocks and sundials which all add points of interest to the street.
- 2.7.3 The colleges add numerous architectural incidents and eye-catchers to the Cambridge scene. These include the gatelodge of Sidney Sussex College which encloses the east side of Sidney Street, the wonderful Gate of Honour to Gonville and Caius College on Senate House Passage and the rhythmic chimneys of Trinity College along Trinity Lane. Modern buildings such as Trinity Hall Library right by Garret Hostel Bridge and modern features such as the sundial on Pembroke College's Foundress Court buildings maintain the tradition.
- 2.7.4 University buildings also display good craftsmanship and fine detailing such as the carving of a mammoth on the Sedgwick Museum and the 1930s animal roundels on the street railings of the Biology Department on Corn Exchange Street.
- 2.7.5 Railings and bollards (many designed and manufactured in the city) historic telephone and post boxes, the 'Richardson Candle' streetlights and even the cast-iron street name plates all have an air of quality and distinctiveness which adds much to the character of the core streets. The Senate House and Great St Mary's Church railings are particularly fine.
- 2.7.6 There are also areas where the paving materials in the street add texture and interest to the townscape. Senate House Passage is a prime example as are many of the forecourts to the colleges with their cobbles, setts and York stone paving.
- 2.7.7 Many areas of York stone paving survive, as do sandstone and granite kerbs, gullies and cross-overs. There are even patches of insitu concrete paving with brass date plaques in some areas. These are all of interest and should be retained.
- 2.7.8 One of the most unusual survivals in Cambridge, however, is Hobson's Conduit and in particular the runnels alongside Trumpington Street. Although they have been moved and patched in the past they are unique and worthy of protection.
- 2.7.9 Streetscape works in recent years have tried to respect the tradition of quality detailing. The setts in Green Street, the totem at the top of Magdalene Street, the bronze flowers in the Bridge Street pavement, the new stone paving and 'tactile' models on Senate House Hill have all helped create interest and individuality within the city streets. This tradition of interesting details is also continued by the Blue Plaque Scheme which commemorates famous people and events in the city.

2.8 Key Characteristics

THE CORE AS A WHOLE

- Strong edges between landscape and buildings / different uses.
- No industrial buildings or areas, but ghosts of both.
- Few but prominent 'landmark' buildings (generally structures with tall features such as church spires, towers, chimneys)
- Limited number of access points
- Narrow intimate streets.
- High quality, well-designed buildings.
- Buildings as deliberate 'eye-catchers' in the streetscene.
- Quality detailing and small-scale features.
- Contrasts - of landscape and buildings, tranquillity and activity, planned and ad-hoc developments, between buildings of different scale and building materials.

THE COMMERCIAL CORE

- Importance of the market as the main space of any scale, other than King's Parade.
- A hierarchy of mostly 'traffic calmed' streets and passages.
- Busy and vibrant streets with 'active' frontages.
- Relatively low vernacular buildings mostly of 2-4 storeys.
- Buildings on the footpath edge.
- Small pockets of greenery (churchyards) but very few street trees.
- A few surviving hidden courts, or sensitive college infill behind retained buildings on street frontages

COLLEGES

- Many have a 'country house' setting in the landscape.
- Introverted, seemingly impenetrable buildings and high walls.
- Limited number of access points and little natural surveillance of streets.
- Street presence through gatehouses and landmark buildings (particularly chapels).
- Buildings of particular styles as opposed to vernacular buildings
- Screen walls and glimpsed views into tranquil courts.
- Huge contribution to the skyline and roofscapes in streets.
- Trees and shrubs contribute background greenery to commercial core.
- High quality materials and well-detailed buildings.

UNIVERSITY

- Prestige buildings in specific styles with outstanding detailing and materials.
- Formality of planning and design.
- Canyon-like streets of large buildings.
- Teaching campuses with fine frontages but semi-industrial laboratories behind.
- Internal courts with a mass of buildings (New Museums Site) or dominated by cars (Downing Site)
- Ad-hoc additions and extraction flues, etc.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

- Early buildings either extremely fine (Little Trinity), or vernacular (Little St Mary's Lane, Botolph Lane).
- Enclaves of homogenous buildings.

- Formal terraces usually with small front gardens.
- By nineteenth century, consistent use of gault brick for walls and Welsh slate for roofs.
- Higher quality housing in nineteenth century to south of core, more modest to north and east.

GREEN SPACES

- Huge contribution to life and setting of core area.
- Fine views and vistas across spaces.
- Importance of trees as background to core area buildings.
- Attractive routes and entrances to the core.
- Peaceful contrast with business of the city streets.