

THE OLD TOWN CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER APPRAISAL FOR THE CENTRAL/EASTERN PART OF THE AREA



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**THE OLD TOWN CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER
APPRAISAL STATEMENT FOR THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN PART OF THE ABOVE AREA**

3 Introduction

- 3.1. Conservation Areas represent the best of the City's built heritage. In order to make informed decisions involving this heritage Local Planning Authorities need to define the essential character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Hence there is a need to agree character appraisals, or statements.
- 3.2. The immediate practical benefits of character appraisals are that they:
 - a. Assist in determining applications for planning permission, conservation area, listed building and display of advertisements consents in or affecting conservation areas.
 - b. Assist in presenting the City Council's case at associated Appeals and Inquiries.
 - c. Form a basis for consultation as part of the Statutory Requirements to produce proposals for the preservation and enhancement of each conservation area.
- 3.3. The clearer and more robust such appraisals are, the greater their contribution will be in fulfilling each of these objectives.

Character Appraisal for the Central Eastern Part of the Old Town Conservation Area

4. Origins and Development of the Area

- 4.1. The most significant aspect of the Old Town is that its medieval street pattern is largely intact. It is typical of towns dating from the 14th Century. Alfred Gelder Street was created in 1901, as part of a programme of Street improvement, which largely created the modern pattern of traffic routes through Kingston upon Hull. The Castle Street/Garrison Road highway developed in the early 1980s, follows the broad alignment of the former Mytongate although all physical evidence of its existence has been obliterated.
- 4.2. The settlement of Kingston upon Hull began to develop from the late 13th century. It is most probable that the High Street was where the first development took place.

From time to time the improvement and transformation of the town became apparent in the constant acquisition and exchange of property among the wealthier inhabitants, and many signs of building activity.

Merchants built their houses near their warehouses on narrow plots running down to Wharves on the River. The long, thin plot pattern is still largely recognisable today, although some erosion has occurred through clearance, and subsequent redevelopment has amalgamated plots to create larger sites for modern requirements.

By the late 14th century the settlement had become an area of dense population. Plot development became more intense as there was little room for expansion. Workshops adjacent to houses were replaced by more merchants houses. Construction often took place around earlier buildings and remaining walls within or at the rear of older structures. Continuous piecemeal redevelopment over the centuries has resulted in an intricate plot pattern, and the mediaeval streets retaining their original alignment and cross dimensions. These features are still particularly evident in the lanes and staiths leading west and east from the central section of High Street.

Various 'written accounts from the 17th century confirm the distinctive character of this area of Kingston upon Hull, with its staiths, warehouses, fortifications and distinctive Holy Trinity Church nearby. Although the buildings were tightly packed along the streets there were still plenty of open spaces, orchards and gardens.

It is believed that cobbles began to be laid in some of the streets from the 16th century, using stones from ships ballast. However, the only historic stone paving which remains is that along the Bishop and Chapel Lanes and their staiths, (probably mid 19th century).

- 4.3. By the 18th century there was little room for expansion in the Old Town. The merchants began to move out, and some of their houses were converted into offices and tenements. It was during the prosperous

18th and 19th centuries that much of the mediaeval character was lost, as buildings were demolished and redevelopment took place.

- 4.4. The high level of economic prosperity in Kingston upon Hull peaked around the turn of the century. After the First World War the decline of the Riverside Wharves started to become apparent. The nature of trade began to change and total level of investment dwindled. This led to many of the buildings becoming redundant and dilapidated.

During the Second World War the majority of buildings to the south of Scale Lane, between Market Place and the River Hull were completely destroyed. Further clearance took place of dilapidated buildings, although in many cases several decades elapsed before sites were redeveloped.. This was largely because of a proposal for a major highway along the course of High Street, (in the 1945 Abercrombie and Lutyens Plan for Kingston upon Hull) which blighted much of the property. In the post war years the City Council acquired much property along the eastern side of High Street for this proposal. It is probably as a result of this that many of the historic buildings in this location remained intact, until the Conservation Area was designated and road scheme abandoned.

The development of King William House in the 1970s obliterated all evidence of the ancient street and plot pattern on its site. The form and footprint of this and other post-war office development such as Oriel House, pay scant regard to the pre-existing building character and grain, though its positioning partly resulted because of the proposed road alignment.

5. Archaeological Significance

- 5.1. The whole of the Old Town Conservation Area has archaeological importance. The fact that this area has been continually inhabited for seven hundred years means that there are archaeological deposits to a depth of several metres.

In recent years several full excavations have revealed a wealth of information about life in the mediaeval Hull.

- 5.2. All sites for new development or other development affecting the sub-soil will require some form of investigation before construction work begins. The City Council will normally require a developer to demonstrate that development affecting important archaeological remains will:
- preserve archaeological remains in situ; and
 - minimise its impact on archaeological remains.

Refer to the Local plan sections 7.66 to 7.76 for the detailed City Council policies regarding archaeological issues.

6. Analysis of Component Character Zones

Important zones of special architectural and historic interest:

6.1. The High Street, Lanes and Staiths

This forms the centrepiece of the most ancient part of the Old Town.

The built form provides a strong sense of enclosure. The scale of buildings is domestic and the narrow roadway and footpaths combined with the comparatively high facades create an intimate character.

The irregular and curving alignments of High Street reveal a sequence of significant views which close in on many highly detailed and characterful buildings.

A disjointed roofscape, occasional projections and set backs in the frontage line add further visual variation and distinguish certain buildings as landmarks.

There are some examples of the use of Dutch style gable ends at 34 Scale Lane, and Oriel chambers on High Street. The role of Kingston upon Hull as a trading port with the Low Countries was probably the influence for the use of such a design feature.

The straight lanes between High Street and Lowgate form closed vistas. In several cases these are terminated at each end by distinctive buildings on the opposite sides of the streets.

The Staiths between High Street and the Wharf create framed views on to the River Hull. Fleeting glimpse views of the river can also be obtained from various other points along High Street. The flat topography of the area and the tightly packed built form result in the river being a largely hidden entity. Activity on the river can only be seen very occasionally from the High Street and the Lanes when boats pass at high tide.

Uses. Traditional and Emerging

This area continues to be part of the financial and legal district of the City, though this role has been undermined in recent years. This has resulted in much vacant office space being available, which has proved difficult to let. But there are recent examples of former offices having been converted to residential use.

Residential use, mainly non-family housing, has increased in the area since the early 1980s. Several former warehouses have been converted into flats and there has been residential infill development on vacant sites. Some of the upper floors of the older buildings are used as single flats, these often being related to licensed premises.

Several pubs and cafes contribute to the vitality of the area. They attract custom from both residents and workers, and prove welcome facilities for tourists attracted by the three museums along High Street.

6.2. The Wharves and River

This area provides a sharp contrast to the enclosed nature of the High Street. The western bank is defined by tall brick Warehouse frontages, set at the back of a predominantly timber wharf.

The Wharf has an industrial character and a limited amount of this type of activity still takes place, although mainly on the opposite river bank.

Several warehouses have been renovated through the 1980s and 1990s, the best of these being the Pacific Court student flats. However, an air of decay still prevails especially towards the southern end of the area with a number of Warehouses lying derelict and the rusting hulks of boats moored along the river banks.

The views along the river are punctuated by the distinctive landmarks of the Clarence Flour Mills, Drypool Bridge and the Tidal Surge Barrier.

Uses: Traditional and Emerging

The storage and distribution uses in the area are steadily declining. As a result there is much vacant and derelict warehouse space between the River and the lower part of High Street. None of the warehouse businesses along the western bank now use the Wharf for operational purposes.

This part of the Old Town's relationship with the river has changed significantly in recent years. Its functional role has now largely diminished, and increasingly it is being used as interesting backdrop for the area. The river provides a pleasing outlook from the new flats which have largely been developed from former warehouse space. The Museums Service have attempted to relate their activities to the river and have recently moored a historic Trawler, the 'Arctic Corsair', along part of the wharf.

6.3. Lowgate/Market Place

This forms a busy traffic route through the Old Town. In comparison to High Street and the Lanes, the individual building facades are wider and taller. The high level of containment and the width of the street give it a feeling of importance and city scale.

Several listed buildings occupy corner sites or form a particularly imposing part of frontage in the street scene. This includes the eastern end of Holy Trinity Church, which has a powerful presence over the southern part of Lowgate. The concentration of buildings, with historic and architectural interest, give the street a distinctive character despite the presence of some unremarkable post war infill development.

The tower of St. Mary's Church punctuates the closed views along the length of Lowgate, and the King William statue is a prominent focal point at the centre of the street.

Uses: Traditional and Emerging

This area has a large amount of office space associated mainly with the financial and legal sectors. The individual premises here are generally larger than those in High Street and the Lanes. This use is interspersed with some retail and entertainment premises at ground floor level. In recent years a number of former offices and banks have been converted into pubs and restaurants.

6.4. Lowgate/Alfred Gelder Street Junction

This takes on a different character to the rest of the Old Town, in that the street and frontage dimensions are much wider.

The area has a strong sense of place. It is well contained by several imposing listed buildings clustered around the Charles Henry Wilson Statue, which is somewhat forlornly surrounded by roads.

The buildings at this junction possess distinctive focal elements: the Clock tower and symmetrical frontage of the Guildhall; St. Mary's Church Tower and the dome of the Crown Courts.

Pattern of Uses

Public and civic buildings predominate around the Lowgate junction. Further east along Alfred Gelder Street there is a mixture of modern office and residential development.

Neutral Zones:

6.5. Liberty Lane

This is a newly created road which follows the course of two narrower yards, Hales Entry and White Horse Yard. Measures have been taken to improve the streetscape. Traditional lighting has been installed and pavements re-laid using bricks. However, there is little active frontage along the street. It is mainly flanked by surface car parking and service access to Scale Lane and King William House. New buildings at the corner of the junction with High Street would radically improve this area.

6.6. George Yard

This is a modern access road constructed to serve the Crown Courts. It takes its name from the narrow yard which used to run just to the south before redevelopment took place. The area has been redeveloped to a high standard respecting the setting of Wilberforce House, and it is unlikely that there will be any significant change in the short term.

6.7. Eastern part of Alfred Gelder Street: Crown Courts to Drypool Bridge

This is one of the main vehicular routes leading from the east into the City centre, and is characterised by a wide street.

There is a closed vista to the west, terminated by the Guildhall and former General Post Office.

This part of the street is essentially modern compared to the rest of the Old Town. Much of its infill development from the 1980s. However, there are two key buildings of listed status in this part of the street: Alfred Schofield House; formerly a Sailors Home and branch of the Bank of England dating from 1780, and the late 19th century Old White Hart Public House. The design of the new flats and offices along the street relate well to their historic context and setting, and they reflect the character of the warehouses particularly in terms of massing.

The area is now largely consolidated in development terms, apart from the site lying adjacent to Drypool Bridge. This should be developed as a perimeter block to continue the strong built edge between High Street and the River. It will also close the vista along the street looking east towards the Bridge.

Zones of Potential Change:-

6.8. Southern Part of High Street

The historic character of High Street to the south of the Scale Lane junction has been severely eroded since the Second World War. The western side of the street has remained undeveloped, and as a result there is no 'street' feeling because of the poor level of containment. The warehouses, which have traditionally been the predominant use in the area, have slowly gone into decline. Only a few premises now remain operational along the eastern side of the street.

The area can often appear desolate, with the only noise being heavy traffic passing over Myton Bridge in the background. The remaining warehouses, offices and temporary car park uses only generate low levels of intermittent activity. The large amount of vacant land and floorspace is having a negative effect on the character and vitality of the area.

The Myton Bridge Underpass is an unattractive void of space, which would benefit from environmental improvement measures such as lighting. The need for this work is particularly important as the underpass will be a key pedestrian link between 'The Deep' and other visitor attractions in the Old Town.

The southern part of High Street is likely to see the greatest potential change in development terms. Any redevelopment should strive to recreate a street scene and draw upon the historic influences of the area.

6.9. Market Place

This zone forms part of the same visual entity as Lowgate, but this part of the street possesses a different character. The Buildings are smaller in comparison to the northern part of the street. There is the imposing gilded statue of King William (Grade 1) which dates from 1734, in the centre of the street. But the vacant sites at the corners with Castle Street and Garrison road result in a poor definition of this important junction and route through the Old Town.

The Magistrates Court building proposed for the site between Market Place and High Street will be an important landmark feature. This development should be of sufficient mass and height, to terminate the corner of the block and create an impression of a gateway into the Old Town.

7. Positive Attributes of the Area

7.1. Age Range of Buildings with Architectural and Historic Interest:

Letters identify these key buildings on the Area Plan.

Mediaeval

- A. St. Mary's Church (Grade II*) was built over a period from 1333 until the late 17th Century. The Nave and the north side are the earliest parts of the structure, and are mediaeval in origin. The Tower dates from the 15th Century.

- B. Holy Trinity church (Grade I) was built during the 14th and 15th centuries.
- C. No. 5 Scale Lane, (Grade II) is the oldest surviving domestic building in the City. Some of the original parts of the jettied timber structure date from the late 15th Century. Dunswells Forge, 153 High Street also contains fragments of a timber frame building which is believed to be medieval.

Stuart

- D. Wilberforce House, High Street (Grade I) was constructed in the mid 17th Century.
- E. 41 High Street (Grade II) incorporates part of a 17th Century house and the rear of 52 High Street is believed to date from around 1660.

Georgian

Buildings from this period are rare in this part of the City.

- F. Maister House, 160 High Street (Grade II*) 1743-44.
- G. Pease Warehouse (Grade II) which dates from 1745-60
- H. 23, 24 High Street, 1760 (Grade II).

The majority of buildings of architectural interest in the area date from 18th, late 19th and early 20th Centuries; the main periods of economic growth and prosperity.

- I. The historic warehouses that line the river frontage and some sections of High Street mostly date from the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Victorian and Edwardian

Key buildings include:

- J. The Hull and East Riding Museum, (Grade II) formerly the Corn Exchange 1866;
- K. Various banks, chambers and offices along Lowgate, some of an ornate design;
- L. The Guildhall (Grade II*), 1906-14; and
- M. Former General Post Office (Grade II), 1907.

Most of the Listed Buildings in the area are in Lowgate, the Lanes and central part of High Street. These are complemented by a large number of buildings which are less than 100 years old, which have considerable architectural merit. It is the grouping of these buildings in largely unbroken street facades that makes the area distinctive and special.

7.2. Scale of Built Form and Streetscape

The piecemeal nature of development through the area has resulted in a very disjointed roofline, this feature in itself adding interest and character. Most buildings are 3 or 4 storeys high, though the warehouses structures beside the river are generally slightly taller. There is variation in the internal ceiling heights and facade designs of individual buildings, and these create a differing impression of scale. A smaller and predominantly domestic scale exists around parts of High Street and the Lanes. The buildings along Lowgate and Alfred Gelder Street tend to have wider and more ornate frontages. They take on a grander scale which is associated with many public buildings and are also an expression of the confidence of the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

7.3. Contribution Made by Open/Green Spaces

The character of the area is essentially a hard urban townscape, although a small number of green spaces have always existed such as Wilberforce House with its front courtyard and St. Mary's Churchyard. In mediaeval times many properties would have orchards and gardens at the rear.

In recent years new open spaces have been created in the tight urban form, for example Nelson Mandela ornamental garden on High Street. The whole area is considerably more open than in the earlier part of the 20th Century. Sites have been left undeveloped for use as temporary car parks, following wartime bomb damage and demolition. However, the proposed development site at the corner of High Street/Liberty Lane has been landscaped to improve its appearance.

There are several examples of planting around recent developments. Small pockets of trees and shrubbery have had a softening effect on the hard features in the townscape:

- Square at the front of the Crown Courts, Lowgate;
- Pease Court and other residential developments in High Street;
- Car Parking in Liberty Lane;
- Approaches to Myton Bridge; and
- Alfred Gelder Street/Saltshouse Lane.

There are other locations where small scale planting has been introduced into otherwise hard surfaced yards (the Sailmakers Arms, off High Street).

7.4. Vistas and Key Views In and Out of the Area

An overall panorama of this part of the Conservation Area can be seen from Myton Bridge, and along the eastern bank of the river. A range of key landmarks can be seen on the skyline from these locations and from the east of the City. The Guildhall, church towers and the modern Crown Courts are all prominent features. In the foreground the imposing warehouses along the wharf provide a distinctive edge to the area, though unfortunately some of these are derelict. The view of the area is also marred by the rear elevation of the King William House multi-storey car park.

7.5. Materials

Brick has always been a predominant building material in Kingston upon Hull. The town had some of the earliest brick kilns and tileries in the country, which were operational from about 1304.

The majority of buildings in the Old town are of red brick construction, with stone reserved for the more impressive buildings such as The Hull and East Riding Museum in High Street, The Old Customs House in Lowgate, St. Mary's and Holy Trinity churches and the Guildhall. Ashlar dressings still form important features in some of the lesser buildings. There are also some examples of Terracotta detailing.

The use of painted and rendered brickwork is also common on buildings in the area. Applications of white, cream and terracotta paint are most commonly used, these toning well with other characteristic materials in the area.

The roofscape is characterised by clay pantiles or plain tiles for the older and more modest buildings. Welsh Slate is the more abundant roofing material in the area, its use became widespread from the 19th Century, following the development of rail transport. There are various applications of leadwork, for example the roof of St. Mary's Church. It is also used to a lesser degree in other buildings as a detailing material.

Although there is a commonality in the types of materials used in the area, there is a variation in their texture and shades of colour. This further contributes to the visual appeal of the environment.

Red brickwork with good aesthetic qualities, and slate or tiles should continue to be the main materials in any new construction. Any new development should pay regard to the way materials have been applied nearby. This is especially the true for the small scale developments. Grander buildings can, as they often did in the past, use other materials while at the same time having regard to their surroundings.

7.6. Surface Treatments: -Extent and Quality of Traditional Paving:

It cannot be assumed that any of the granite setts represent the original street surfacing, but some, particularly where the setts are more rounded, may date from the first half of the 19th Century or earlier. There are examples of Aberdeen granite setts, the staiths being the best examples. A substantial section of historic paving also exists along Bishop Lane.

There are several sections of Yorkstone flag paving through the area. The oldest sections which are generally rougher and more uneven are present outside the Guildhall and Wilberforce House, Bishop Lane, behind St. Mary's church and for a short distance along the eastern side of Lowgate. The material has been used recently to re-pave parts of Lowgate, where it was felt to be more sympathetic to the setting of the historic buildings such as Holy Trinity Church and the former GPO.

Stone setts were laid along much of the length of High Street, and Scale Lane in the early 1980s, replacing old wooden blocks which were found to be unsuitable for modern safety requirements. This has been complemented with red brick pavements, which harmonise well with the surroundings. Although brick had never been used as traditional surfacing material in the area, it was chosen because it could withstand the weight of traffic overrunning the pavements in the narrow streets. The small blocks are also better suited to the narrow pavements, as opposed to larger flagstones.

Various types of concrete flagstones are used to surface most other pavements in the area. These are present along parts of Lowgate, Alfred Gelder Street and southern part of High Street.

8. **Negative Features**

This section of the appraisal identifies which features detract from the special character of the area, and sites where positive change should be encouraged.

8.1. Inappropriate Heights, Mass, Form and Relationship to the Grain of the Area

There are several modern office developments such as Oriel House, Lowgate House and King William House which were poorly designed in relation to their historic surroundings, although at the time they were built this was not considered to be an important issue. The design of some of the modern warehouses in the southern part of High Street also detracts from the character of the Conservation Area. These post war developments generally fail to respect the scale, mass, form, roof patterns or materials that were traditionally used in the Old Town.

Developments occurring since the Conservation Area was designated have a greater respect for these elements, although perhaps paying too little regard to the width and appearance of the historic frontages.

The design of any new development along the southern part of High Street and the historic wharf, should:

- Be of similar height, mass and form to the warehouse structures;
- have a roof pattern which reflects the alignment of the historic plots. (A mixture of gable ends and hipped roof forms should be used to achieve a varied roofscape); and
- New frontages should have narrow diverse elements, which respect the scale and grain of the area. It is likely that when redevelopment occurs the narrow individual plots will probably have to be amalgamated so that sites can be developed for new uses.

Newly created courtyards at the centre of perimeter development should see a high degree of enclosure, and be reached by a narrow lane or archway.

(See the Appendix for a full list of other sites having redevelopment potential.)

8.2. Loss of Historic Frontage Lines and Street Configuration

It would be desirable to revert to the historic building line when new development takes place around the perimeter of the High Street/Liberty Lane/ Scale Lane block and the Oriel House site.

This would recreate the historic street dimensions and maintain spatial characteristics, these being the most distinctive aspects of the Old Town.

There are situations where it would no longer be desirable to follow the historic building line. Before the area was cleared, the southern part of High Street was extremely narrow. Modern access requirements and building standards dictate that it would no longer be appropriate to revert to such a width. However, in any new development the facades should be largely continuous and extend to the back of pavements, as is the case through much of the area. A high level of containment should also ensure that the characteristic closed vistas and pleasing townscape are preserved and enhanced.

There may be opportunities to introduce new larger spaces as breaks within the narrow streets. These 'squares' must have high level of containment from buildings around the perimeter.

8.3. Vacant and Dilapidated Buildings

There are several vacant chambers and other office buildings along the High Street and Lanes. (See the Appendix for a full list.)

These properties would benefit from little more than minimal repairs and redecoration. This would make the properties and the area as a whole more attractive to prospective occupiers.

Conversion to residential or other uses are being encouraged to reduce the relatively high levels of vacancy. This diversification will help the vitality of the area outside office hours. Some of the properties in the Old Town are unsuitable for modern office requirements, and are therefore difficult to let for this purpose. In some cases, selective demolition and a flexible approach towards car parking standards may have to be taken to encourage re-occupation.

The derelict nature of 52- 58 High Street is detracting from the Conservation Area. The buildings are in a prominent location, being visible from Lowgate along Liberty Lane, and the site is in need of enhancement. The listed structure at 52 High Street would need to be retained in any scheme which involved the redevelopment of the southern part of the site.

8.4. Appearance of Car Parking Facilities

Most of the surface car parking utilises bomb sites, and sites which have resulted from demolition. The appearance of these and of the King William House multi-storey car park detracts from the historic surroundings. The surface parking has not been designed as part of the urban fabric of the area, and the sites used are generally of a poor environmental quality. Boundary treatments are often temporary and of a basic functional type, such as standard concrete bollards, steel mesh or railings and untreated timber board which tends to attract fly posters. Barriers and height restrictors at entrances also tend to be of an unimaginative design and low aesthetic quality.

While some sites have been properly surfaced and marked out with bays, many have broken and uneven surfaces. Vehicles are parked in a haphazard way on some sites, resulting in a cluttered appearance.

The design of the Wilberforce Court office development concealed the parking spaces in the basement area and central court. This is an example of how to prevent the negative visual impacts of vehicles from the street scene. (See the Appendix for full site list.)

8.5. Appearance of Yards and Vacant Plots

There is a similar problem here to that which exists with some of the car parking sites in that they are not designed into the urban form of the area. Some of the boundary treatments are of an inferior environmental quality (low breeze-block walls, mesh and palisade security fencing, barbed wire and timber board fencing). Some basic cosmetic improvements to vacant sites would improve their image, but in the long term redevelopment is required to integrate them into the urban fabric.

It is accepted that ancillary structures like cycle racks, bin stores and car park cabins are necessary features, but they are often poorly designed and too conspicuously placed. (See Appendix for full site list.)

8.6. Surface Treatments

The aesthetic quality of the surface treatments deteriorates along the southern part of High Street. Large expanses of asphalt look inferior in comparison to the other materials used in the Old Town. Some of the carriageway has been widened to facilitate the Warehouse operations. However, the width is now largely surplus to requirements for this type of use, and the street could be remodelled to reflect the historic character of the area.

The use of coarse textured paving stones (Marshall's Saxon) in Lowgate is not an ideal choice of surface material. Its mellow rustic character is not well suited to the character of the Old Town Conservation Area. The appearance of this product quickly deteriorates becoming worn and dirty.

In the future the use of Yorkstone or Red brick paving (Ketley Brown Brindle Paving Blocks) should be the preferred surface materials for pavements in the area.

The choice of colour for Tactile Blister Paving at pedestrian crossing points should be carefully considered. Generally, Red Blister Paving is used for controlled crossing places: pelican, zebra or light signalled crossings. Buff Blister Paving is specifically for uncontrolled crossing places. At locations where the red coloured paving is considered inappropriate on aesthetic grounds, these distinctions should be relaxed. In some cases the use of Buff or Natural blister paving would tone more effectively with the surroundings. The use of raised metal studs on the paved surface, is another method of identifying crossing points to the visually impaired. This can provide a more aesthetically pleasing solution, and should be given consideration in the future.

8.7. Traffic Problems

There are several locations in the area where the heavy traffic is detracting from the quality of the environment. Vehicles are often backed up along Lowgate and Alfred Gelder Street, with a detrimental effect to the setting of some important listed structures, particularly St. Mary's church and the Charles Henry Wilson statue. There is a need to reduce the impact of traffic passing through the area to improve the environmental quality for the pedestrian. This could be partly achieved by creating new areas of public space. This would be highly desirable in the vicinity of St. Mary's Church, the Guildhall and the City Hotel.

Nevertheless the presence of traffic does add to the urban character and vibrancy of this part of the town. It would be inappropriate to remove the flow of traffic completely, and the use of extensive modern traffic calming measures could also detract from the historic character of the street.

In the southern part of High Street, Heavy Goods Vehicles have no designated parking bays for unloading. They are often forced to mount the pavement along the eastern side, which has caused many of the paving stones to break. On the western side there has been a proliferation of concrete bollards to prevent this occurring, but these detract from the street scene. This part of the High Street would benefit from remodelling and enhancement work, because it will see an increased role as a pedestrian link following the opening of The Deep.

Parking bays could be designated along one side of the street, if the width of the pavement was reduced. The use of narrow brick pavements would make it more characteristic with those elsewhere in the Old Town.

8.8. Design of Street Furniture, Traffic Equipment and Signage

The street enhancement work along High Street and the Lanes has kept the street scene free of visual clutter and intrusion. Traffic signs, lighting columns and boxes housing electrical equipment have been carefully positioned, so as not to detract from the street scene.

However, there is ample scope for improvement in Lowgate where traffic signage and other street paraphernalia detract from the street scene. The level of clutter could be reduced by rationalising the number of signposts, using wall mounted and smaller sized traffic signs. There are a variety of bollard designs, these generally being of a standard design. Their presence and the use of galvanised railings make the street scene appear messy and uncoordinated.

The selection of a suitable colour scheme, i.e., black, for street furniture and other street paraphernalia would bring a degree of cohesion, and create a smarter, more traditional appearance. The design of any new street furniture should be carefully chosen to reflect the historic character and raise the profile of the area.

The High Street, Lanes and Staiths are poorly illuminated at the present time. Any scheme to improve the street lighting in this area must be of a sensitive design. The use of wall mounted lights might be preferable where columns are not already present in the street scene. In some cases the use of appropriately designed lighting columns can add character and scale to the street scene.

9. Conclusions

9.1. Maintain and enhance the medieval street pattern.

9.2. Maintain and enhance the intimate character of the narrow streets. Improve the degree of containment where possible.

- 9.3. New development should pay regard to the traditional plot grain and historic building line.
- 9.4. Improve block definition by encouraging gap sites to be infilled and new perimeter blocks to be created in any new development. All designs should be sympathetic to the character of the buildings in the vicinity, and pay regard to the height, form and materials used in neighbouring buildings. Any infill development should have a characteristic high frontage situated at the back of the pavement.
- 9.5. Preserve and enhance the distinctive skyline and panorama of the area. The area is particularly visible from the A63, and projects a strong image to passers by and visitors to the City.

A strong frontage should be preserved along the River Hull and High Street. Any new development at this area should reflect the mass and form of the warehouses.

- 9.6. Maintain diversity of uses and promote opportunities for conversion and re-use of vacant office/industrial space to residential use. This would help reduce the relatively high vacancy rates, and help the vitality of the area. The representation of leisure, entertainment and cultural uses could be increased.
 - 9.7. Car parking areas should be integrated into the urban form, i.e., they should be located within perimeter blocks, or in newly created street spaces which are contained by building frontages. Where this is not possible car parking should be enclosed by an attractively designed containing wall and railings.
 - 9.8. Improve the appearance of surfacing and boundary treatments of yards and vacant plots.
 - 9.9. Use quality surface materials: Yorkstone, granite, concrete setts, brick and clay paving blocks with well designed street furniture which are sympathetic to the historic context. Surface materials should tone with, and effectively complement the surrounding buildings.
 - 9.10. Enhance the setting of the buildings along Lowgate, and around the Alfred Gelder Street junction by reducing the detrimental effects of traffic.
 - 9.11. Keep level of clutter from signage and street paraphernalia to a minimum and reduce where possible, e.g., Lowgate. The use of lighting columns to attach signs, wall mounted and smaller sized traffic signage would all help achieve this objective. Street paraphernalia should be painted black to give a smarter and more traditional appearance.
 - 9.12. Street Lighting should be well designed and achieved in the most subtle way possible. In certain locations, e.g., High Street and the Lanes, the use of wall mounted lighting might be preferable, where they are not already present in the street scene.
 - 9.13. Continue to promote repairs to vacant and dilapidated buildings. Minimal repairs and redecoration would encourage prospective occupiers and raise the profile of the area.
 - 9.14. The introduction of planting in newly created spaces should be positively encouraged. Such a measure could also soften some less visually desirable elements in the area. However, planting should be avoided in the traditional streets where it has never formed an integral part of the townscape.
10. Approved by the Development Management Committee 8th September, 1999

Addendum

- 24.08.2001 **Ye Olde Black Boy Public House, High Street** - Added by the Secretary of State to the 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' at Grade II.
- 21.05.2007 **Nos.62 & 63 Market Place** - Added by the Secretary of State to the 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' at Grade II.
- 12.07.2017 **Standidge Buildings, Chapel Lane** - Added by the Secretary of State to the 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' at Grade II.