

Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

APRIL 2026



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Summary of Special Interest

Boston has a unique history, and it is from this that it draws its individual character. This strong sense of place comes from many facets, but the following characteristics are of particular importance to the character and appearance of Boston:

- Boston is a large, nucleated settlement which is centred around the historic core of the Market Place. From this, a number of linear streets project in all directions comprising the High Street, the Bargates, Wormgate and South Street, all of which form the historic plan form of the town which is largely retained.
- This surviving medieval plan and succession of spaces, streets and lanes provide the distinctive character of the conservation area, along with the surviving design and architecture from the medieval period and onward, demonstrating the importance of the town as an internationally commercially successful trading town in the medieval period and onwards.
- The 18th and 19th century expansion into a major market town which surrounds the medieval core.
- A large number of surviving Georgian and Victorian buildings which showcase the prominence and wealth of the town during these periods.
- Areas of distinct and different character where the residential, commercial, industrial and recreational character of different parts of the town is evident. Both the River Witham and the Maud Foster Drain playing key roles in defining and directing the development surrounding them, creating a contrast between the waterfront townscape and the suburban townscape.

Summary of Issues

The Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal has identified issues that adversely impact the special interest for which the area has been designated to preserve or enhance.

- Vacant and underused buildings, including shop units and upper floors. These tend to also be in a physically deteriorating condition due to their lack of use and maintenance.
- New development that dilutes the character of the area due to its design and detailing not responding to the unique character of Boston as a place.
- The loss of traditional details and features to buildings, such as shopfronts and signage, windows and doors. The collective loss of these features and details is harming the conservation area's character.
- Concerns relating to the condition of the public realm specifically relating to street signage and shop frontage 'clutter' and modern visual intrusion.



Introduction

Boston is a historic port, located in the eastern part of Lincolnshire midway between Lincoln and Peterborough.

The Boston Town Centre Conservation Area covers 68ha. This large and varied area includes the medieval core of the town around the Market Place and St. Botolph's Church, the High Street, Wormgate and Bargate as well as areas along the River Witham corridor to the northwest and south of the town, a section of Maud Foster Drain, and the northern expansion of the town during the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Boston Town Centre Conservation Area was first designated in 1969. The most recent Appraisal was published in 2016. The information contained in the 2016 Appraisal has been reviewed and updated as part of this appraisal. The review appraises the existing character areas and condenses them into four areas, including relevant changes to those areas to update their current character and appearance. This is in order to provide a sound basis for the provision of a Conservation Area Management Plan. The Plan contains updated policies and proposals designed to secure the continued preservation and enhancement of the area which is required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990.

This appraisal provides a snapshot of Boston Town Centre Conservation Area, reviews the special interest, potential for boundary changes and establishes a management plan that will guide the ongoing management of the conservation area's special interest.



What are conservation areas?

In 1967, the Civic Amenities Act introduced the concept of recognising buildings and areas of historic interest and making provisions for the protection of that special interest. Today, the spirit of that Act is extended and incorporated into the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which makes provision for the designation of “*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”.¹

The legislation applies nationally to England, although conservation areas are themselves identified and designated by local authorities. The council can then use the designation as a reason to support or refuse development affecting a conservation area, to support its continued preservation or enhancement.

What are the benefits of conservation area status?

There are several environmental, social and economic benefits of conservation area status.

Economic:

- The protection of the special character of Boston generally means higher market values for buildings, and their appreciation in value ². Research by the London School of Economics in 2012 into the effects of conservation areas on value demonstrated that conservation area restrictions have benefits – beyond the conservation of character and appearance – as they help sustain and/or enhance the value of properties within designated areas;

- Retaining and enhancing the buildings, features, and spaces which make Boston special will ensure that residents, workers and visitors continue to enjoy a unique area and invest in its success; Retaining, re-using and enhancing the buildings, features, and spaces will also help retain and attract businesses to the historic centre of the town, making a major contribution to its long-term survival as a vibrant place and an attractive destination;
- Potential for grant funding to conserve or enhance conservation areas. This can be to repair, re-use or restore buildings, sites of the public realm. Boston has recently benefitted from this via the Boston Heritage led regeneration area.
- All the above combined will give greater economic confidence in Boston and can lead to investment in its built fabric.

Communal:

- Boston Town centre Conservation Area, designated by the Council, reflects the value placed by the community on this market town and its role in the regeneration of the local area. People are more likely to come together in community groups – and create deep local roots – in protected areas to care for and enhance the significance of their homes, business and their sense of place;
- This can also provide greater certainty to residents, businesses, and stakeholders that harmful change will be avoided, minimised or mitigated through the requirement to preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area.



Environmental:

- Green and open spaces and trees, which make an important contribution to the local environment, are protected where they contribute to the area's special interest;
- Locally valued buildings will be protected. The traditional buildings in Boston were built with lower embodied energy than modern construction is at present today. They have the potential to perform over centuries, with sensible and sustainable maintenance and repair, and reduce their operational energy use through low embodied, sustainable and healthy energy repairs;
- Conservation area controls can provide opportunities to improve the appearance and maintenance of the streetscape with appropriate cradle-to-cradle materials which are environmentally conscious (natural, compatible, repairable, re-usable, recyclable) and work in balance with traditional building materials.

Why are special conservation area controls necessary?

Designation controls are not a device preventing change or new development. Conservation area controls are necessary to ensure good quality design for new development which respect the area's character and appearance. They provide a balance between new development and the preservation of those vital aspects of the area which give it its individual identity³.

It is important these are protected to ensure that the qualities that make Boston Town Centre Conservation Area appealing are

enhanced, so that the community remains historically connected and integrated to its sense of place and investment can be encouraged in the town, therefore benefiting the local economy.

What is a conservation area appraisal?

Conservation area appraisals are in essence a tool to help people understand what is important about a place and manage change within it. Change is managed using the information about the conservation area and its character in the appraisal, and by carrying out the actions identified in the management plan.

Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there is a duty on the Local Planning Authority to determine what parts of their district are areas of special architectural or historic interest and then to designate them as conservation areas. Having established a conservation area, a management plan is needed. Section 71 of the Act requires local authorities to "formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas"⁴.



Boundary changes and Rationale

Inclusions

The following areas have been proposed for inclusion in the conservation area. They are listed in order from the southernmost point of the conservation area in Figure 1, continuing clockwise:

- 13-19a West Street and the land to the north. No. 13 forms part of the entrance to the very narrow and characterful Emery Lane and has a distinctive 20th century frontage with a shopfront with an undulating layout. The row as a whole complements the plot pattern around High Street and its side streets, and 15-19a are an attractive parade of traditional shops of different ages, materials and detailing.
- The dwellings along both sides of Tower Street. As its name suggests, Tower Street was laid out to create a striking vista of the tower of St Botolph's Church. This Victorian suburban street retains much of its traditional character and appearance, and the view along it to the tower, channelled and reinforced by the street and building lines, is one of the key views of the conservation area.
- The Cadent gasworks building and 2 Fydell Street, The Victorian era gasworks was linked to the railway station by its own siding and originally supplied the town with gas for lighting. 2 Fydell Street, a compact detached villa, is likely to have been the gasworks manager's house. The connected contemporary range of one-and two-storey gasworks buildings shares the same materials – red and buff brick and slate roofs, as the villa. Boston had its first gasworks in the 1820s, and the surviving buildings may be an 1870s rebuild or expansion.
- all of Lamb's Row, Witham Town. The lower part of this terrace was probably built for workers of one of two ironworks at Witham Town in the mid-19th century. This boundary amendment ensures that all of the terrace is in the conservation area rather than the boundary bisecting the row of four houses later added to the top of the terrace.
- all of Hospital Bridge at Maud Foster Drain. The boundary adjustment here is so that all rather than part of this 1811 cast iron footbridge is included in the conservation area.
- all of Bargate Bridge at Maud Foster Drain. The boundary adjustment includes all of this important historic classical style bridge, which was built in 1805 and widened in 1973.
- all of 49 Wide Bargate (former New England Hotel) and the adjacent car parks to the east and west. The conservation area boundary previously included about half of the three-storey part of this large multi-phase hotel building that occupies a deep burgage plot on Wide Bargate. In including all of the former hotel building on the conservation area, it is logical to also include the car parks that formerly served the hotel after being cleared and adapted from other uses in the 20th century.
- Nos. 51 and 53 Pen Street. The conservation area boundary formerly excluded number 53 and cut through the centre of no.51. It is logical to include all of this pair of grade II listed houses in the conservation area. They date from the early 19th century and are therefore



contemporary with much of the rest of Pen Street and share traditional materials such as red brick and pantile roofs.

- the Warehouse Apartments and 1-12 Threadneedle Street. The three-storey 19th century brick warehouse, modern backland apartment building and row of three 19th century cottages form a distinctive group along this narrow lane running between the burgage plots to the south of Wide Bargate. They are representative of the types of buildings and land uses that occupied the town's side and back streets,
- the Army Cadet Force Building at Main Ridge West. Historic maps suggest this replaced an earlier Drill Hall on the south side of the street, and might have been built as part of the drive to expand and improve the Arme y Cadet Force (as it was renamed) nationally at the start of the Second World War, or it might have coincidentally opened just a few years prior to the outbreak of the War. The front two storey range with English bond brickwork and distinctive brick strip pilasters, has a projecting entrance bay crowned by a broken pediment bearing to insignia of the Arme y Cadet Force. Behind this is a broad brick hall with a slate roof. The building is of historic interest and retains much of its traditional character. It remains in its original use,
- all of the setted carriageway at Spain Lane. For consistency all of the setts and stone flags and kerbs at Spain Lane have been included in the conservation area as they enhance the character of the street scene.

Exclusions

The following areas have been proposed for exclusion from the conservation area. They are listed in order from the southernmost point of the conservation area in Figure 1, continuing clockwise:

- 1 Norfolk Place and 43 Norfolk Street. These buildings, though attractive, are not considered to be of special architectural interest. 1 Norfolk Place is a modernised or possibly rebuilt end of terrace house. The rest of the terrace is outside of the conservation area. 43 Norfolk Street is a mid-20th century flat roofed detached shop unit that has been extensively modernised and altered over time.
- the loading area and entrance to Boston Shopping Park, Horncastle Road. This is a small fraction of a modern retail park development. It is not of special architectural or historic interest.
- Friary Court, Spain Lane. Only a small segment of this 1990s apartment development was ever in the conservation area, therefore for boundary review it is a case of either including all of the site or excluding all of it from the conservation area. On balance it is considered appropriate to exclude all of Friary Court from the conservation area because it is not of special architectural or historic interest, though attractive in its design.
- 11-36 South Terrace and all of Bath Gardens. This site was in the late 19th century, a 'People's Park' and plant nursery adjoining Boston Cottage Hospital of 1874. The hospital expanded as Boston General Hospital over the course of the 20th century, with the park becoming the hospital grounds. The hospital use on this site was superseded



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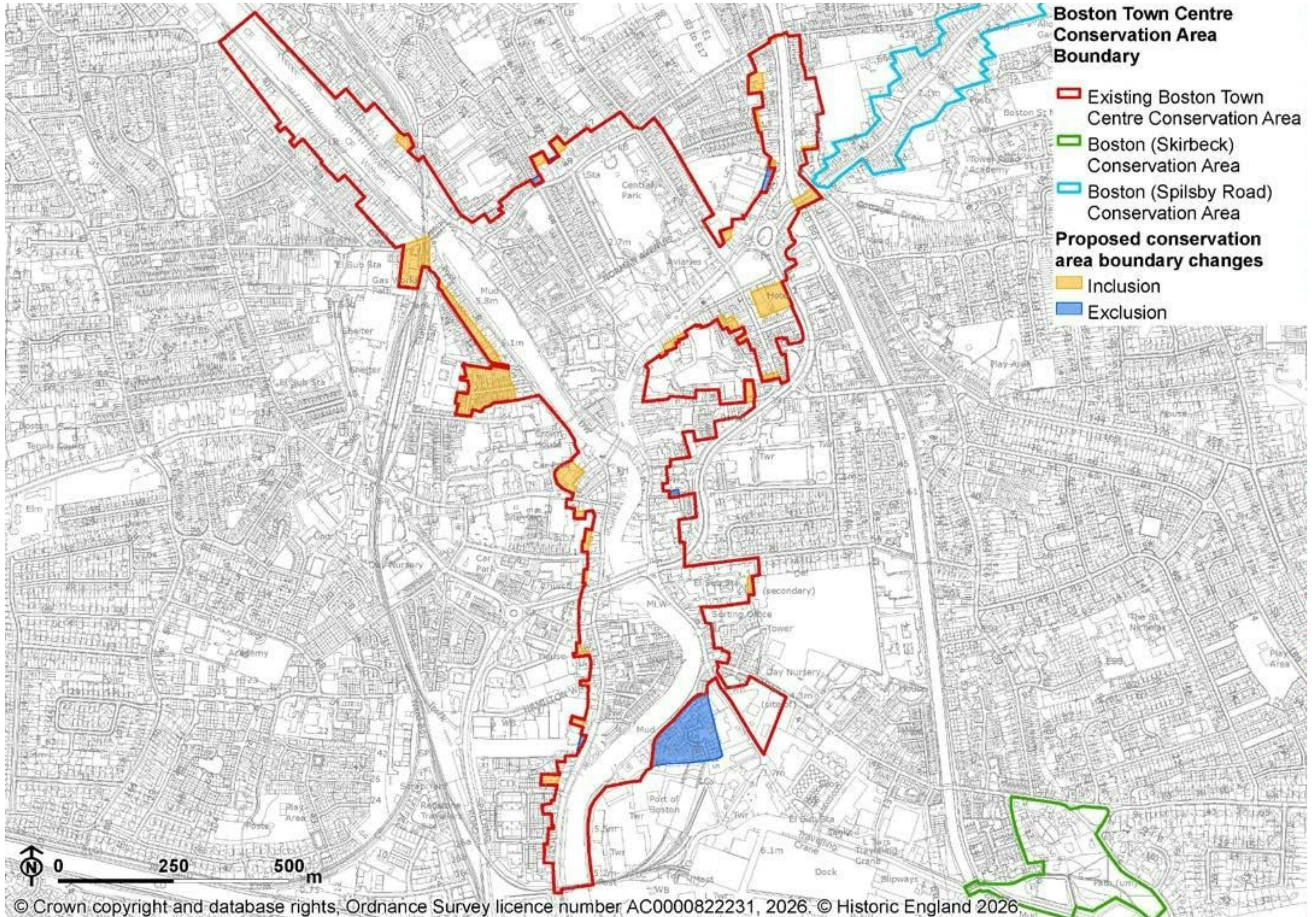
by the opening of the Pilgrim Hospital in 1971. The site was later cleared and redeveloped as housing in the 1980s. Although attractively designed and landscaped, this housing development is of no special architectural or historic interest.

In addition to the above amendments, minor adjustments have been made to the conservation area boundary so that it follows property boundaries and highway edges as much as possible so that the conservation area boundary can be read on the ground.



The Haven





Assessing the Special Interest

Geology, location, topography and landscape setting

Boston is located in south-east Lincolnshire, midway between Lincoln and Peterborough. East of the town lies the Wash. The town is surrounded by largely reclaimed freshwater fen to the north and west, and salt marsh to the east. As a result the surrounding landscape is generally low and flat. Little tree cover or hedgerows exist, due to intensive farming of the area. Such a landscape is highly distinctive, and against this the skyline of the town is evident from any approach. On a clear day it is possible to see the outline of the Pilgrim Hospital and the Boston Stump - the two tallest buildings in the town - from the southern edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds and from the A52 just east of Grantham.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project for Lincolnshire records Boston in Character Zone WSH6 - 'Townlands within the Wash Character Area', described as being largely agricultural in character, with a distinct settlement pattern with a string of nucleated villages and port centres such as Boston with burgage tenements⁵.

Boston lies on a solid geology of soft Jurassic Amphill Clays which were scoured out during the Ice Ages to form a basin with till (boulder clay) and sands and gravels. Marine alluvium has then further infilled the basin creating the gradual level ground that now surrounds the town. Much of Boston lies at 2m above sea level although higher ground is recorded adjacent to the Witham. This is due to the natural levees following the river course and the gradual buildup of deposits within the town during the medieval period.



*Setted
carriageway
of Spain Lane*



Lambs Row



Extent of the conservation area

The Conservation Area was first designated in 1969, largely confined to the medieval core of the town around the High Street, the Market Place at St. Botolph's Church. Subsequent reviews have led to the expansion of the Conservation Area to include aspects of its Victorian and Edwardian growth. This has resulted in a large and varied conservation area. A Conservation Management Plan was produced in 2017.

General character and form

Boston is a large, nucleated settlement which is centred around the historic core of the Market Place. From this, a number of linear streets project in all directions comprising the High Street, the Bargates, Wormgate and South Street, all of which form the historic plan form of the town which is largely retained. Although there have been areas of modern infill development within the main historic centre, the main historic core retains the surviving medieval plan and succession of spaces, streets and lanes provide the distinctive character of the conservation area, along with the surviving design and architecture from the medieval period and onwards. Its prominence as a wealthy Georgian and Victorian town is also evident from a large number of surviving buildings from this period with modern housing estates generally located on the outskirts of the town.

Boston's importance as an internationally commercially successful trading town in the medieval period and onwards can be demonstrated by the survival not only of many of the original street layouts and several listed buildings dating from this period. The expansion and development of the town during the 18th and 19th centuries into a major market town is also evidenced in the plan form, style and character of the buildings surrounding the



*St Johns
Recreation
Ground*



*Witham Bank
East*



*St Botolph's
Bridge
looking into
the town
centre*



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medieval core and in the development of streets of residential housing surrounding the commercial centre. Aside from the open spaces of the Market Place, Wide Bargate and Central Park, the streets of the conservation area's core have a strong sense of enclosure, which is reinforced by narrow streets which are lined with tall buildings. There are several areas of distinct and different character within the conservation area, where the residential, commercial, industrial and recreational character of different parts of the town is evident. Both the River Witham and the Maud Foster Drain playing key roles in defining and directing the development surrounding them, creating a contrast between the waterfront townscape and the adjacent urban and suburban townscapes.



Some areas, such as the Maud Foster Drain are linear whereas in others...



...the sinuous nature of the river has created curved building lines and spaces



There is a contrast of narrow, enclosed spaces with wider, more open spaces such as the Market Place



History and development

Early history

The geological sequence underlying Boston and the Lincolnshire Fens comprises a basin of soft Jurassic Ampthill Clays, which was filled due to glacial episodes with till, sand and gravels. During the prehistoric period, the Lincolnshire fens were extensively flooded, depositing marine alluvial silts over much of the fen basin, and in some areas these alluvial deposits are around 11m thick. This created a dispersed series of 'islands' of higher ground, sealed by later marine and freshwater inundations.

It is likely that this thick layer of alluvial deposits goes some way to accounting for why there is a general paucity of evidence for prehistoric activity within Boston, with prehistoric deposits potentially being masked by a thick layer of alluvium. Peat layers have also been identified within the alluvium and generally date from the Iron Age (700BC - 43AD), suggesting a rapid accumulation in peat deposits during this period. Although Iron Age pottery has been found outside of the town, there remains no evidence of settlement from this period within Boston, although later deposits may overlay this evidence.

A small amount of evidence for Roman activity have been found within the town, including deposits of Roman date being identified during excavations at Boston Grammar School⁶ and coins and pottery of Roman date identified from the area around Hussey Tower⁷. The salt-making industry was of major importance along the fen edge in the Roman period and beyond, and it has been suggested that evidence of this industry in the form of salterns are very likely to exist in the Boston area due to the marginal nature of the land at the time⁸.

Boston is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. At this time, Boston lay in an area known as Skirbeck Hundred, part of the manor of Drayton⁹. Skirbeck is recorded in the Domesday Book. Evidence of activity dating from the Saxon period is limited to the finding of coins comprising a coin of Æthelwulf (AD 839 - 858) and one of Cnut (AD 1016 - 1035) with no current evidence to suggest that this area was a focus for Saxon settlement. However, it is possible that early church sites would have been a focus for early medieval settlement and therefore the archaeological potential of these areas remains high.

Medieval period

Running through Lincoln to Boston and the Wash, the importance of the River Witham to Boston's development may be seen in its centrality to the town. This is particularly apparent where Boston's growth can be seen to have clustered around Town Bridge, this being a point where the river was easiest to ford, and it is believed that a bridge may have been present at this point from as early as 1142. Therefore, the river can be seen as highly significant to Boston's initial growth and consequent character, as three of the above routes closely follow the Witham's course, providing them with their sinuous, curving nature.

During the 12th century, the town of Boston grew rapidly, primarily attributable to its role as port to Lincoln, and its accessibility by sea to both Europe and the remainder of the country. Prior to the existence of reliable inland transport infrastructure, places accessible by sea and navigable river were important for trade, industry and the military.



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At this time, the coastline was much closer to the town and Boston was situated upon a broad estuary. Added to this was a system of inland waterways, allowing Boston to be a port for the wider midlands and further afield.

As a result of the strategic position on the east coast with easy access to the North Sea and therefore to the rest of Europe, Boston joined the Hanseatic League in the 12th century. This was a powerful trading alliance of merchant guilds or trade associations, led by the German merchants of Lubeck, dominating trade along the northern coast of Europe from the 12th to 17th centuries¹⁰, and Boston soon became an important part of the Hanse network, dominating trade with Norway and the Baltic regions.

Due to the large amount of sheep farming in the fens and the production of wool by monasteries who had strong links with the steel-yards, wool became the primary export from Boston during the medieval period with port being one of the busiest in the country. Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire was the largest and richest wool producer in northern England, and bought property in Boston in order to utilise the Hanseatic League and the wool trade. This was thought to be along Fountains Lane, the name of the street linking it to the abbey. During the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, Boston became a centre for monastic orders with four orders of friars settling in the town; the Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Augustinians.

The Dominican Friary was located around Spain Lane/South Square with archaeological evidence suggesting that this area was settled from at least the 12th century. The only surviving above ground evidence for this is in the form of the grade II* listed refectory building on Spain Lane (now the Blackfriars Arts Centre) which was originally part of a much larger building.

As a result, the town became highly affluent, and a fair was first held in 1125 with an international reputation. A royal charter of 1218 recorded the town's right to hold markets and fairs, with further charters being issued to confirm Boston's rights and privileges as a trading centre. The Market Place became the main hub with weekly markets and a Saturday market added in 1308¹¹ High Street is first recorded in 1276, following the west bank of the Witham, on land originally granted to



Narrow medieval lanes which lead from the Market Place down to the river



The surviving portion of the former Franciscan Friary on Spain Lane



Spalding Priory. South Street and Wormgate followed the east bank, while Bargate ran north-east from the Market Place. Bounding the eastern edge of the Market Place was the Barditch Drain. Although its precise purpose remains unclear, it may have been a town boundary, and as such defensive, or simply a sewer. The Barditch ran parallel to the Witham and was connected to the river at points north and south of the town. As a result, long burgage plots ran between the Barditch and Market Place that were both divided and accessed by narrow lanes. Many building lines still follow these boundaries and particularly on the east side of the Market Place, these lanes remain. Archaeological investigations in this area have identified that this was an area of industry with evidence for tile and pottery kilns within Town Fields and close to the Barditch Drain.

This prosperity led to construction of several key buildings within Boston, including St Botolph's Church whose foundation stone was laid in 1309. Building methods and materials throughout this period primarily included timber-framing, although an early use of brick can also be seen throughout the building fabric in the town. Many of the buildings from this era are illustrative of the town's medieval affluence and importance at this time. However, during the 14th and 15th centuries, the silting up of the River Witham resulted in the decline of the port and subsequently in the economic success of the town. Whilst there are some examples of surviving timber-framed buildings dating from this period, the decline in the collective wealth of the town meant that there was a decline in the development and expansion of the town between the 16th and 17th centuries.

18th century

The prosperity of the town saw a rise during the 18th century following the enclosure of the fens, subsequent extensive drainage and farming of the resultant rich, reclaimed soil. As a result, the town began to expand once more, particularly along Wide Bargate where large houses were established, predominantly to house merchants, doctors and lawyers. Initially, As the town continued to grow, new streets were laid out to the south, as well as the development of land to the north and east bank of the river.



Former merchants' houses along Wide Bargate, some with Dutch gables



Example of a 15th century timber framed building, Church Street



This growth was to some extent assisted by the newly-cut Witham Navigation and construction of the Grand Sluice, undertaken between 1764-6. Following this an inn, brewery and various warehousing, coal-yards and ironworks grew up around the Sluice, the area becoming known as Witham Town. It was also during this late Georgian prosperity that housing was first built along some of the roads out of town, effectively providing suburbs to the medieval town. Housing was also built fronting the Maud Foster Drain and along the banks of the River Witham, often set back slightly to make the most of the views across the river. The old course of the Witham and its new cutting was also developed around this time and included Castle Street and Fydell Street.

19th century

The development of agricultural engineering and the arrival of the railway resulted in the continuation of the growth and expansion of Boston. In 1848 and following the Great Northern Railway being laid to the west of the town, the company had become Boston's largest employer by 1912. To house these employees, new housing was built between the railway line and the western edge of the town. However, this caused the redundancy of many port workers, resulting in the dereliction of many of the building associated with the harbour. As a result, workers moved either west to the railway, east to Skirbeck's ironworks, or to new iron works established opposite Mount Bridge in 1870. This migration resulted in further new streets, with prosperous, new houses and terraces were laid out in the town's north west quarter. Boston's present dock was built toward the end of the 19th century.



Simple terraces at Red Lion Street



19th century housing along Haven Bank, set back from the river



20th century

At the beginning of the 20th century, new suburbs were developed on the edge of the town, beyond those built in the Victorian era. The construction of these was fuelled by the desire from those with means to have more spacious houses with large gardens. Good examples of these survive along Carlton Road, Tunnard Street and Hartley Street. The rise in private car ownership by wealthier families also resulted in the depopulation of the town centre and the increasing popularity of the suburbs with large housing estates built that extended Boston's urban spread across Skirbeck and into Fishtoft and Wyberton. In 1932 Boston's boundaries were extended to include Skirbeck Quarter and the urban parts of Skirbeck.

During the 1960s, several schemes to improve traffic flow in and around the town were started, including the construction of a concrete road bridge over the tidal part of the river and the development of the dual carriageway, the John Adams Way which opened in 1978. A bus station was added to the town in the late 1970s and through traffic removed from the Market Place and the Bargates, allowing the pedestrianisation of Strait Bargate in the early 1980s.

21st century

In 2011 a significant improvement in the appearance of the Market Place resulted in a large area that was previously covered in tarmac being partly resurfaced in stone setts. Another successful alteration to the Conservation Area has been the installation of a new St. Botolph's Bridge, replacing an earlier pedestrian bridge. Archaeology

In addition to the preserved historic townscape and the individual historic buildings that remain in Boston, the question of archaeological potential is also highly relevant to the town and the Conservation Area. Boston's varying fortune throughout its history has meant that its archaeology has suffered little from the continuing process of development that has affected other historic towns' archaeology, particularly during the post-war period. Added to this is Boston's location. Situated upon a low lying estuary in the fens, the water table remains high and conditions for preservation are highly favourable, especially of wood, leather, cloth and vegetation. Although a full archaeological investigation of the town centre has hitherto been piecemeal, providing only intermittent evidence, it is clear that Boston still contains highly important buried deposits. It is vital these deposits are conserved, and full account is taken of their significance in the future planning and development of the town. Two documents in particular set out the potential for highly significant archaeological remains within the town, the Boston Deposit Model and Baseline assessment.



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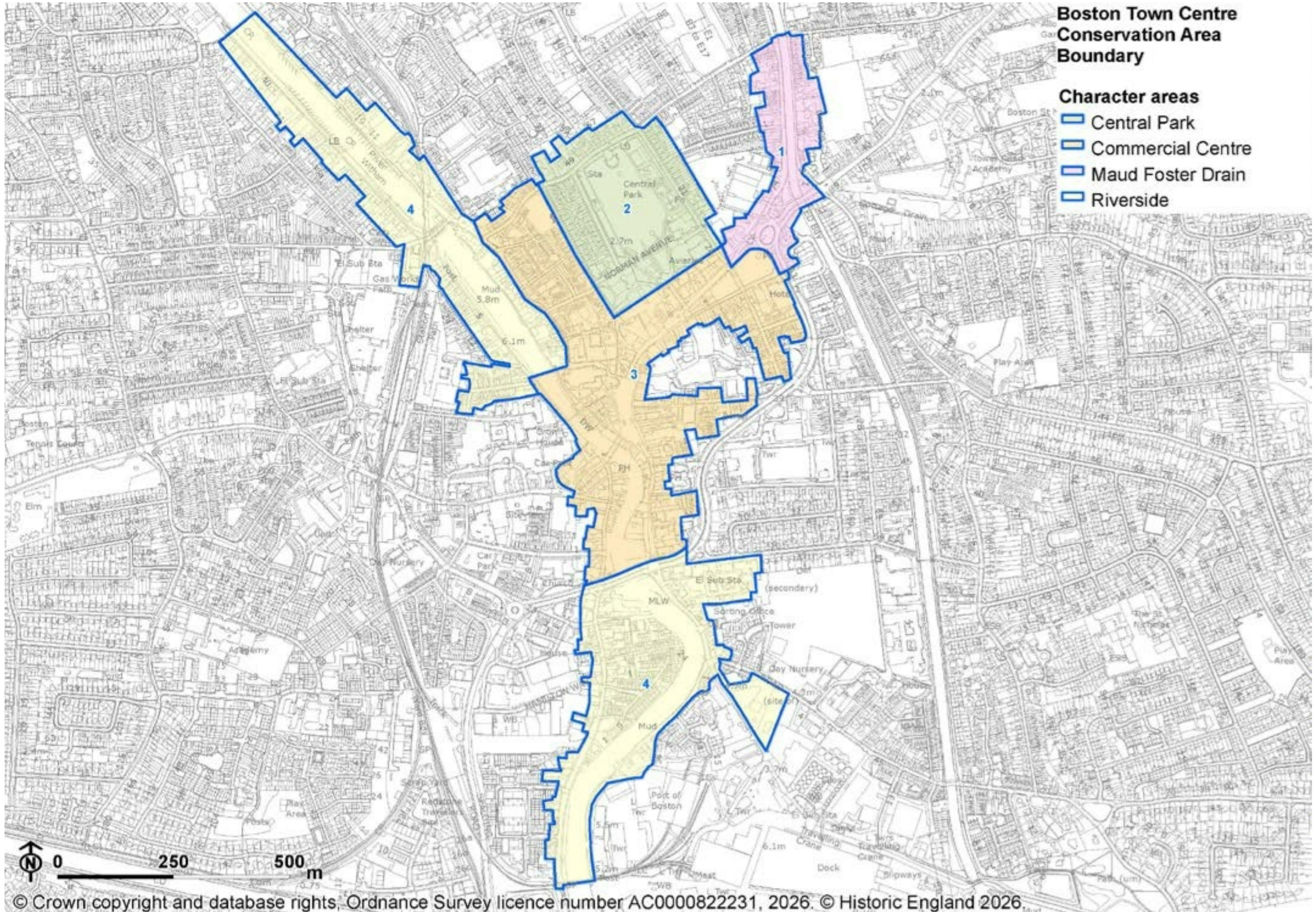
2 A.Bryant Map of the County of Lincoln 1828.
Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.



Ordnance Survey map of Lincolnshire CVIII.SE, surveyed 1887, published 1888.
Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.



Character Analysis



Character Analysis

Note on views

Whilst all senses are engaged in our experience of place, human reliance on the visual does mean that views play a major role in our understanding and perception of character, and Boston is no exception. Views come in different shapes and forms depending on whether they are designed or fortuitous; framed, contained or open; fleeting or enduring. Broadly, however, they tend to belong to one of three categories.

Static views

These types of views tend to be – although not always – designed or intentional, or at least self-aware. They are a specific, fixed point from which an individual feature or particular aspect of the area’s character can be best appreciated.

Glimpsed views

These types of views are often enclosed and fleeting, and principally incite intrigue or surprise in those that notice them that add to the experience of an area.

Dynamic views

These are views that steadily reveal different aspects of a place’s character and continually evolve as we experience them. These may be panoramic views from a fixed point or kinetic views that are revealed as the observer moves through the area. These views are influenced by both constant features (not necessarily dominant features but those that remain present throughout) and transient features (accents in the view that come in and pass out of views at different points).

There are a range of these type of views within this area which have formed incidentally as the town has expanded and developed. Some of these views will be described here but, as this is not as exhaustive list, it is important to note that these are only some of the views that might be observed within the conservation area and there will be others which are not referred to here. The main static and glimpsed views of note are included on maps and there will be many others experienced dynamically which are not shown.

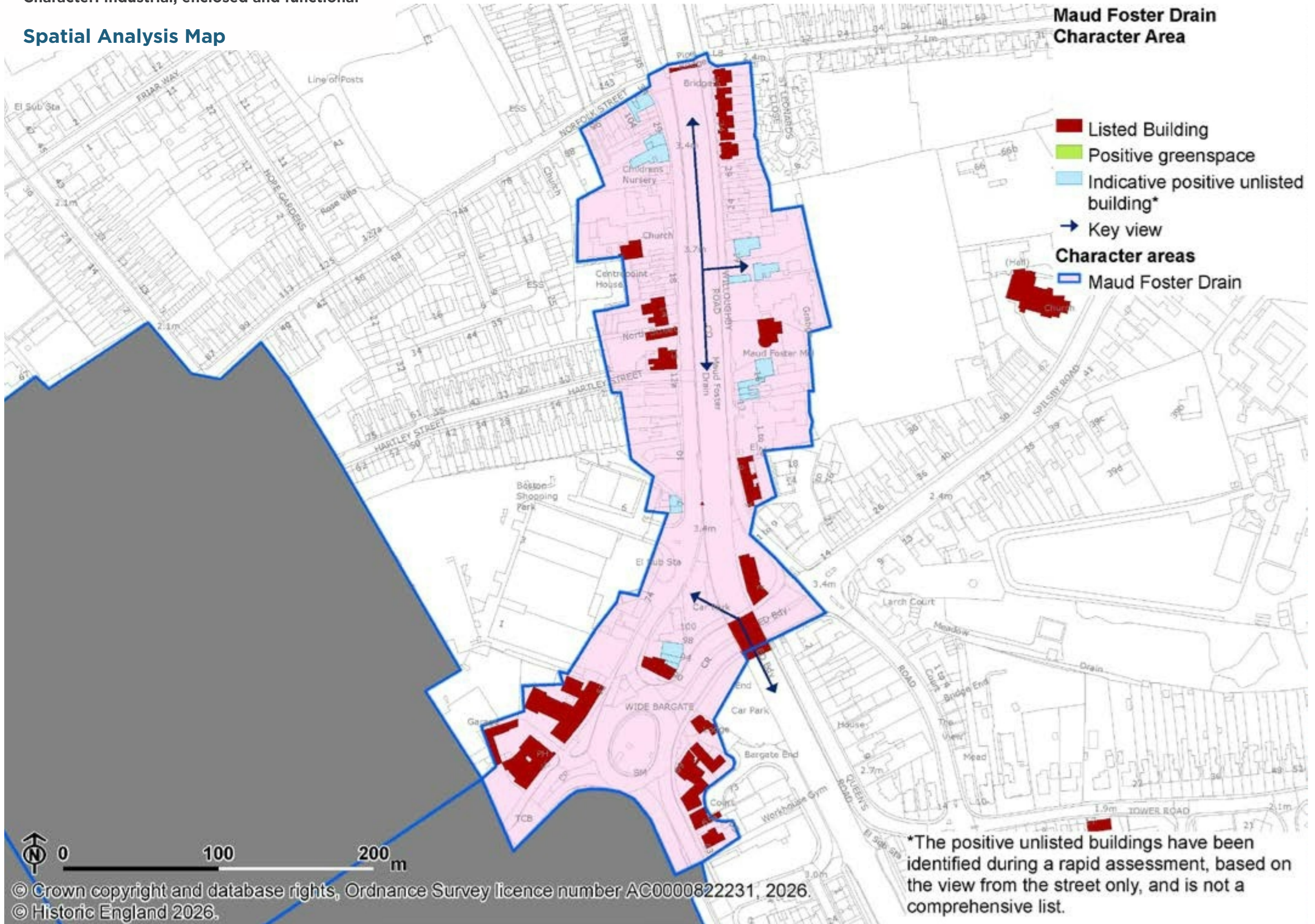
In order to aid detailed appraisal, management and understanding of the conservation area, it has been split into four character areas, as outlined below. The character areas can be defined according to historical development, building form and uses and location. Although each character area is different, they each contribute positively to the overall special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area. The indicative boundary shown on the spatial maps is not intended to represent a hard boundary between the character areas, but rather to identify where the prevailing character of a part of the conservation area changes.



Character Area 1 - Maud Foster Drain

Character: Industrial, enclosed and functional

Spatial Analysis Map



Character Area 1 - Maud Foster Drain

Character: Industrial, enclosed and functional

Introduction to the area

This part of the conservation area covers the northern section of Maud Foster Drain to the north of John Adams Way, located to the northeast of the town centre. This area is defined by the linear form of Maud Foster Drain which was cut in the 1560s. During the 17th and 18th centuries the linear streets which lie parallel with the drain were established and terraced housing was built fronting onto the drain. During the later 19th century there was further development as infill and towards Hospital Bridge. The Grade I listed Maud Foster Mill is a key feature of this area.

Spatial Character and Layout

The linear form of the drain has influenced the development of the roads and spaces surrounding it with the streets either side of the drain reflecting this form, creating a character much like that of a Dutch canal town.

- Defined by straight and narrow shapes
 - The drain side is largely straight and has a well-defined hard edge of a brick wall topped by oak post and rail barriers. This hard edge is further reinforced by the buildings fronting both Willoughby Road and Horncastle Road.
 - These predominantly face straight onto the road with small front gardens.
- Long, linear plot proportions which stretch from the line of the drain in an either eastwards or westward direction, demarcated by brick walls or low fences.



View of Maud Foster Mill from Horncastle Road



Glimpsed views of the sails of Maud Foster Mill which evolve as one travels through the landscape



- Tight urban grain, reinforced by terraced/semi-detached buildings in groups of two or three.
 - There are some breaks in this unified frontage where buildings are set back from the road or used for car parking, such as at the Maud Foster Mill.

Views and Landmarks

The sails of the Maud Foster Mill rise over roof lines and provide a key focal point – whether in glimpsed views of the sails behind rooflines, or dynamic views of the whole mill building. Aside from the mill, the general scale of this character area is a fairly consistent two storeys.

The linear form of the drain and the flat landscape channel views in a distinctive manner along the drain and surrounding roads creating long-range views in a north to south orientation, dominated by the eye-catching sails of the Maud Foster Mill which are an ever-present feature of the views in this area. The bridges over the drain also allow for glimpsed views of the town to the east and west.

Built Form and Activity

The buildings along Willoughby Road and Horncastle Road face each other across the drain, characteristic of a Dutch canal town.

- There are little to no front gardens with buildings fronting directly onto the road which reinforces the parallel lines and hard urban grain of this area.
- Although the buildings are mainly of two storeys with consistent eaves height and building lines, the building form is slightly haphazard with some buildings fronting directly onto the road, others set slightly back and some at right angles to the road. This reflects the piecemeal development along the canal.
- The row of single storey almshouses at the northern end of this



Maud Foster Mill



The linear, industrial Maud Foster Drain



area adds variation in scale and profile with single storeyed buildings and steeply pitched gable porches.

The majority of buildings are residential, although a number of the ground floors of the houses fronting Horncastle Road have been converted into shops. Despite this change in use the slightly uneven rhythm of the buildings is retained with buildings either fronting immediately onto the street, or separated by a narrow row of paving which blends these shopfronts into the existing built form and grain of the residential character of this part of the character area.

Important Details and Features

Materials and details

Building styles are mainly functional with little in the way of decorative features.

Predominantly red/brown-brick with some rendering although some buildings are marked out as higher status using:

- Gault brick (such as the tower of the Maud Foster Mill)
- Contrasting yellow brick and tile bands in a polychromatic style on the row of almshouses close to Hospital Bridge

Roofs are generally natural slate or tile. Dormers are not typical, occurring occasionally but as an exception. Chimney stacks are fairly low in height with terracotta pots.

Windows and doors – multi-pane sliding vertical sash and case windows which are mainly on older buildings. Double glazing and UPVC windows are also present, particularly where they have been used to replace original sash windows. Doors are mainly functional only although some have stucco door cases and pilasters although this is not the norm.



Straight, narrow spaces characterise this part of the conservation area



Mismatch of building styles and modern amendments fronting Horncastle Road



The symmetrical facade of the Kings Arms Public House



Green spaces and trees

This area has an urban, developed character with almost no green space or trees. Where green spaces and trees do exist, they are limited to private gardens.

Public realm

Public realm is largely absent from this character area. Where it does exist, it is in the form of street name signage and modern surface materials such as tarmac and paving.

Enclosure – some low traditional brick walls and railings although the nature of many buildings fronting straight onto the street negates the need for a boundary wall or fence.

Bargate Bridge and Hospital Bridge provide crossing points over the drain. The gritstone ashlar construction of Hospital Bridge and the steep brick-sided drain and accompanying railings reinforce the industrial feel of the drain.

Areas of Loss or Intrusion

- The modern shopping development of Boston Shopping Park at the southern end of Horncastle Road which disrupts the cohesion of the street frontage seen in the rest of the character area and where the modern warehouse buildings jar against the predominantly brick buildings within the character area;
- Many of the original windows and doors of the 18th and 19th centuries have now been replaced with UPVC.

Heritage Assets

There are 21 listed buildings within this character area. Of these, one is grade I listed, and the rest are grade II listed. There are no scheduled monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the character area.



Architectural detailing of St Leonard's Bedehouses



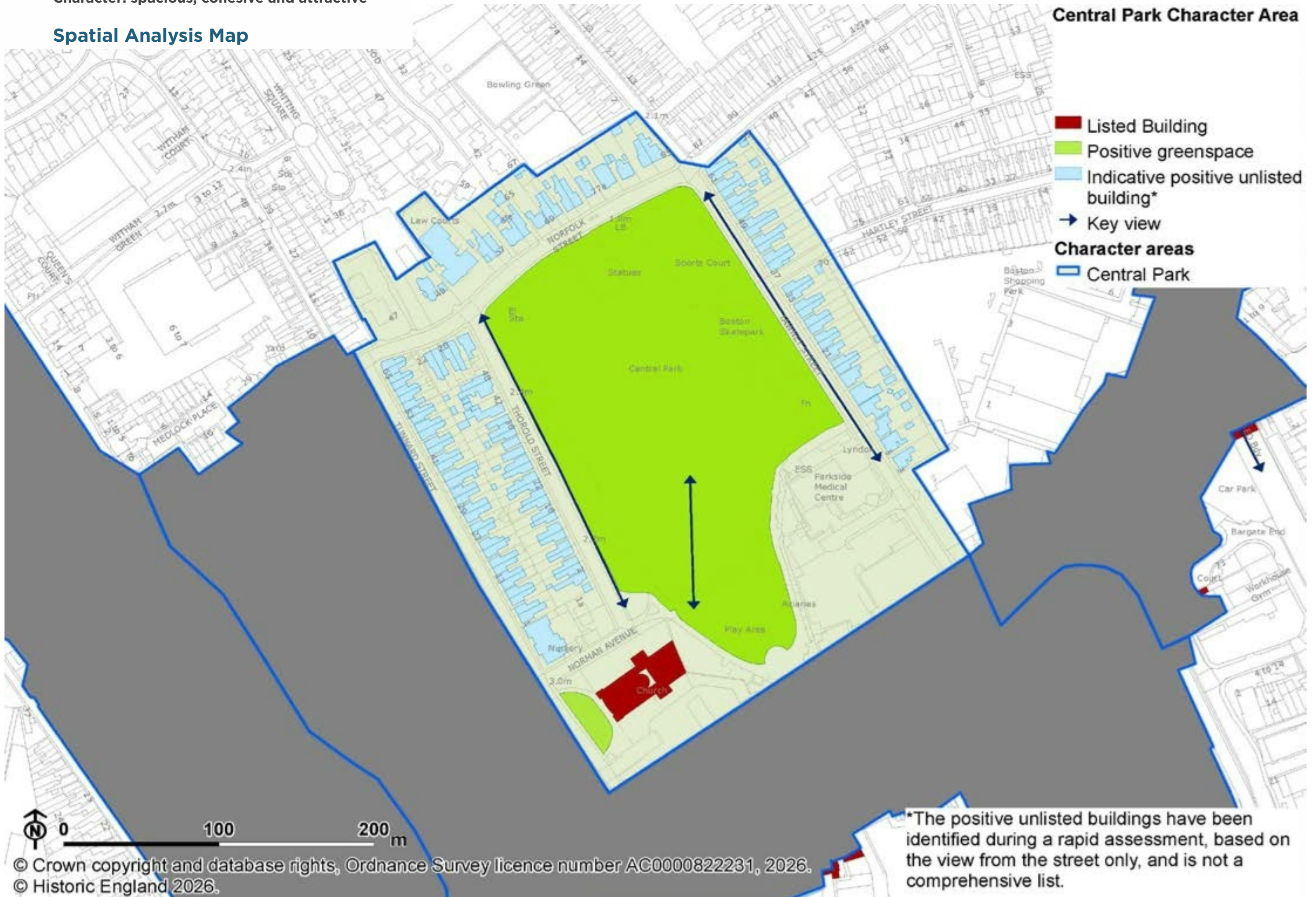
Bedehouse



Character Area 2 - Central Park

Character: spacious, cohesive and attractive

Spatial Analysis Map



*The positive unlisted buildings have been identified during a rapid assessment, based on the view from the street only, and is not a comprehensive list.

Character Area 2 - Central Park

Character: spacious, cohesive and attractive

Introduction to the area

This area is focussed on the large rectangular Central Park which is located to the northwest of Wide Bargate. The park comprises a large central grassed area with landscaping around the edges and features a basketball court and skatepark. Although the park is accessible from Norfolk Street, Thorold Street and Tawney Street, the main entrance is via Park Gate off Wide Bargate where a pair of cast iron gates and brick pillar signify a formal entrance.

Spatial Character and Layout

This area is characterised by the green and open space of Central Park. The park is well-defined and enclosed on three sides by Thorold Street, Norfolk Street and Tawney Street with semi-detached villas which face onto the park.

The park is defined by a rectangular area of open space with landscaped planting around the edge, forming the only open space of this nature within the town. This is in direct contrast to the narrow and enclosed medieval street pattern of the nearby town centre.

The enclosure created by the surrounding parallel streets create a defined formal area. The semi-detached nature of the villas along Thorold Street, Norfolk Street and Tawney Street with only small gaps in between the buildings creates a tight urban grain, reinforced by rectangular building plots. This adds to the sense of enclosure.

The relationship between the park and the houses which were built to overlook it creates a spatial hierarchy which is important, and adds to the special character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.



Views across Central Park with The Stump as a prominent feature



Hard landscaping within the park



Park Gate, entrance to the park from Wide Bargate



Views and Landmarks

The views in this character area are in the form of static, dynamic and glimpsed views. Some of these views will be described here but, as this is not as exhaustive list, it is important to note that these are only some of the views that might be observed within the conservation area and there will be others which are not referred to here.

Dynamic views are mainly in the form of kinetic views, with views of the park and the housing surrounding it gradually changing as one walks through the park and the different features within the park (such as the basketball court and skatepark) coming into view.

Whilst the majority of the town is hidden from view, the view of The Stump over the treescape is particularly striking.

The approach to the park along Park Gate feels enclosed due to the dense urban grain, with only glimpsed views of the park through the main gate. These views hint at what lies beyond, and encourage the onlooker to progress along Park Gate and into the park. In the summer, the dense foliage of the mature trees lining the park afford only glimpsed views of the houses fronting the park from within the park itself, whereas in the winter these views are more dynamic due to less tree cover.

In terms of static views, the houses fronting Central Park were built to have intentional views over the park. Many of the houses have large bay windows on the ground floor which allow for views of the parkland beyond and creating a pleasant backdrop when viewed from within the house. Vistas along Norfolk Street, Thorold Street and Tawney Street are also important. Static linear views along these streets are channelled by buildings and tree lines and further reinforced by kerblines, park railings and box hedges in the front gardens of the villas along these streets.



Linear static views along Thorold Street, channelled by the buildings, box hedging, kerblines and park railings.



Narrow glimpsed views between buildings



Built Form and Activity

In general, there is a sense of uniformity in the buildings surrounding the park with consistent building heights, building scale and materials.

- Building types and scales comprise single villas, semi-detached houses and occasional short terraces
- These are largely on the same alignment parallel to the street with small front garden areas, and with narrow spaces between the plots, creating a regular rhythm
- This is also further reinforced by a continuity in building heights with the majority of the buildings surrounding the park being of two storeys.

The main use of buildings within this character area is residential, with non-residential development discouraged. However, at the junction of Tawney Street and Wide Bargate some of the commercial influence of Wide Bargate has extended northwards and there are several commercial units at this junction and along the southern part of Tawney Street.

Important Details and Features

Materials and details

Consistent use of materials and decorative details have been used to create a cohesive streetscape.

- Buildings are comprised mainly of red-brick with a fine finish and bonding with slate roofs and tall chimney stacks with yellow or red terracotta pots
- Windows are consistently multi-pane sash windows with a single pane sash pattern. Bay windows on the ground floor are common with detailed architraves.
- House names on stone tablets are commonly used on pairs of semi-detached dwellings



Cohesive building line along Tawney and Thorold Streets



Public realm within Central Park



Including paths and signage



- Doors are commonly reset within an entrance porchway with decorative architraves, some with stained glass door panels and fanlights.

These residential buildings, whilst attractive and composed, are classic examples of Edwardian architecture on an individual level. However, it is this which has created the special character of the area - the overall effect of the long sections of these semi-detached houses along Thorold Street and Tawney Street where there is a consistency of scale, style and use of materials. This creates a harmonious effect, reinforced by the parallel and linear building and plot lines. Although it contains some semi-detached villas in a similar style, the building plots and lines along Norfolk Street are generally more disjointed than Thorold Street and Tawney Street which somewhat reduces the harmonious sense of buildings along the northwestern edge of the park. The importance of the maintenance and preservation of this effect has been recognised in the use of an Article 4 order that covers the buildings along Norfolk Street, Thorold Street and Tawney Street.

Green space and trees

The open nature of the public park and the mature tree planting surrounding the edges of the park are a key feature of the character of this area.

Public realm

Central Park is one of the key areas of public realm within the conservation area and contains multiple examples of street furniture such as benches, metal sculptures, a skate park and basketball court all of which reinforce and allow for the intended public use of this space.

The park is lined by railings, with two main entrances off Norfolk Street and Park Gate, both of which are marked by entrance gates and brick pillars. The park also contains one of the six buoys as part of the Boston Buoys Art Trail, a trail of art installations which

were erected in 2021 to celebrate Boston's heritage as a port town by repurposing old maritime buoys.

Areas of Loss or Intrusion

- Tawney Street and Norfolk Street are busy thoroughfares as secondary routes through the town centre and are often blocked with traffic which again erodes the residential and harmonious character of this character area
- Modern alterations in the form of extensions and UPVC windows and doors, particularly along Norfolk Street which is not in keeping with the character of the buildings along Tawney Street and Thorold Street.

Heritage Assets

There are no designated heritage assets within this character area.

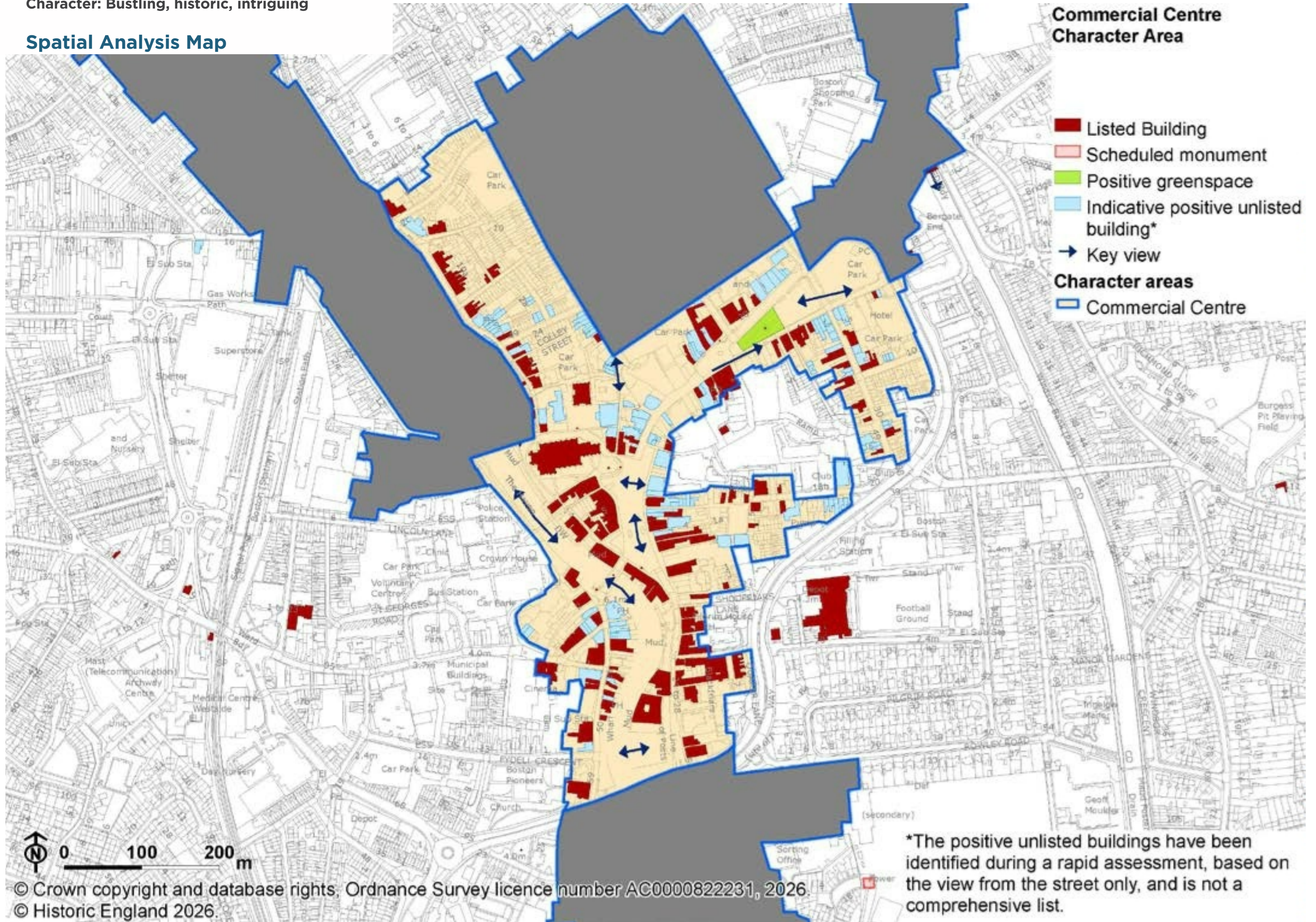


Outdoor gym feature within the park



Character: Bustling, historic, intriguing

Spatial Analysis Map



Character Area 3 - Commercial town centre

Character: Bustling, historic, intriguing

Introduction to the area

The areas of the Market Place and Wide Bargate, and the streets radiating from these, form the main commercial centre of the town, including Pen Street, Wormgate, Red Lion Street, Pump Square and the High Street. These streets form a mix of commercial and residential uses with a range of spatial layouts, building types, building materials and character of open and green spaces.

Spatial Character and Layout

This area is characterised by the surviving medieval plan and succession of spaces, streets and lanes, lined with buildings representing the medieval period and onwards.

The Market Place and Wide Bargate form the two main open spaces in an otherwise tightly packed urban townscape.

Market Place

- Broad, irregularly shaped public space with distinct sub-spaces:
 - Separate, semi-enclosed space at the north-west corner where the built enclosure of the street 'peels back' to expose the chancel of St. Botolph's church and the Stump, and the churchyard thrusts forward to become a more formal, paved public space surrounding the Ingram Memorial.
 - Fish Hill at the south-west corner, slightly off-set from the main Market space, which acts as a foreground to the Assembly Rooms and an invitation to explore the narrow lanes to the west.



Variation in building height, style and design in Market Place



'Backland' environment behind the facades fronting Market Place



Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

- Well-defined enclosure formed of dense building lines in broad, sweeping curves
- Long, narrow plot proportions and narrow lanes preserve the form of burgage plots.
- Narrow lanes opening off the Market Place:
 - The lanes form a striking contrast in scale, hierarchy and sense of enclosure with the large, open and dominant Market Place. There is also a contrast between east and west:
 - The east side is punctuated by narrow, straight, almost parallel pedestrian lanes running perpendicular to the line of enclosure.
 - The east has a very dense built form and tight grain with little open space aside from Pump Square.
 - The west side forms a looser network, with more pockets of open space.
 - On the west, sinuous Church Street and Wormgate follow the alignment of the river with irregular, curving lanes connecting back to the Market Place.
 - The western streets tend to bend sharply and widen out at the transition from one street to the other.
- Wormgate retains its narrow, gently curving medieval line with long burgage plots down to the river on its west side.
 - The ends of the Wormgate and Witham Street plots meet the grassed bank of the river directly, with no public access or built river frontage.
- Pump Square is a small, semi-formal open space in an area of otherwise dense urban grain, with a pronounced sense of enclosure.



Gently curving Wormgate with a cohesive feel



Varied building styles and shopfronts along High Street



Gently curving Strait Bargate



The Bargates

Leading off the north-east end of the Market Place, comprising Strait Bargate, opening into Wide Bargate.

- Streets including Strait Bargate, New Street and Bank Street are fairly narrow thoroughfares, adding to the group of gently curving streets that demarcate the Market Place.
- Curving street alignments create interest, with relatively confined and changing views.
- Strait Bargate, with its hard urban character, opens suddenly into the tree-lined open space of Wide Bargate, creating an exciting contrast.
- The mature trees and landscaping of Memorial Gardens provide a welcome softening in character and lead the eye to the elegant stone war memorial.
- The sense of openness continues beyond the Memorial Gardens with the car parks occupying the Green and Cattle Market.
 - In John Adams Way, which forms the wider, eastern end of the space, the buildings are sited more widely apart.
 - The large space here allows the building frontages lining it to be seen from afar, drawing attention to the treatment of upper floors and roofs.
- The curved street line turning north into Horncastle Road marks the transition with the Maud Foster character area.



Emerging from Strait Bargate into Wide Bargate



Approach to the War Memorial in Memorial Gardens



High Street, South Street and South Square

South of the Market Place, this part of the area retains its historic quayside character, with the survival of several warehouses, an open quay (now parking) and tall 18th century former merchants' housing.

- North-south streets echo the attenuated 'S' bend of the river.
 - Narrow plots are aligned perpendicular to its course.
 - Plots are interspersed by a series of parallel lanes following a similar pattern to those off the Market Place, narrow and reflecting historic burgage plots.
 - The form and scale of plots east of the river reflect the medieval origins of the area containing the guilds and traces of monastic presence.
 - On the east side, courts such as Spain Court open off the lanes, creating a less dense, quieter character than the lanes off the Market Place.
 - Lanes on the west side of High Street vary in character. The widest, Emery Lane, is a busy shopping area lined with two storey buildings and retail frontages. Hatter's Lane, by contrast, reveals the backs of buildings and largely single storey rear premises.
- High Street follows the west bank of the river, a narrow medieval street winds along beside the Haven on its west bank.
 - At the north end, buildings turn their backs to the river creating a sense of enclosure which is reinforced by the narrow street pattern.
- Small public spaces are created where the street line opens up to the riverside at quaysides, some with informal forecourts to the more prominent commercial, public or industrial buildings:
 - In front of the White Hart Hotel and former Midland Bank, beside the Town Bridge;



Strait Bargate leading to the Memorial Gardens



The Stump, viewed from Tower Street



- At Custom House Quay off South Street, in front of the former Custom House;
- On both sides of the river, at the Haven and Doughty Quay, flanked by former warehousing.

John Adams Way forms a barrier at the eastern and southern edges of this part of the conservation area and bisects the historic High Street, although the layout and form of the original medieval streets is still able to be understood.

Views and Landmarks

The Stump rises above all roof lines to tower over the centre of the town and provide a key focal point.

There is a marked absence of any other taller structure to compete with the Stump, with the general scale of the town a fairly consistent 2-4 storeys.

Open areas at quaysides and forecourts create views across the river to both backs and frontages opposite, and laterally along the river. These create a sense of pause and relief from narrow, enclosed spaces and routes, and opportunities to appreciate picturesque groupings of river, bridges and buildings.

A few current and former public, commercial or ecclesiastical buildings such as Centenary Methodist Church, Red Lion Street are slightly taller than the prevailing scale and provide local landmarks. The curving, narrow street forms and sense of enclosure generally mean these act as eye-catchers only at relatively close range.

Other views are also short-range, relying on the gradually-changing alignment of streets to reveal picturesque compositions of spaces and buildings of architectural interest.



The Haven and the Stump, looking north-west from Town Bridge



Glimpsed views down Dolphin Lane



Built Form and Activity

The frontages of plots are generally narrow throughout the central area. Building heights create a characteristic variation and hierarchy between principal, secondary and tertiary streets and spaces.

- In the Market Place, the Bargates, the north part of High Street and South Street buildings are generally three storeys.
 - The west side of Market Place has a fairly consistent eaves height and building line, creating a formal effect.
 - Roofs display a variety of pitch, often fairly shallow so the roof is partly concealed behind the cornice viewed from ground level.
 - Elsewhere there is greater variation in height and roof form, although remaining within 3-4 storeys and a consistent building line.
 - Variation in architectural expression creates interest and individuality, but within a relatively narrow range of difference.
 - Most buildings are relatively simple Georgian and Victorian classical terraces, interspersed with occasional Victorian gothic revival, Art Deco or modernist examples. These are the exception, acting as features or eye-catchers rather than the predominant character.
 - Buildings at the east end of Wide Bargate have a slightly more haphazard layout, larger plots and footprints, reflecting their historic industrial and supporting functions such as mineral water works and inns.
- Away from these main thoroughfares, back streets such as Church Street and Wormgate are narrower, with smaller scale buildings and shops fronting onto both sides, their backs turned to the river.
 - These streets are quieter and more pedestrian-orientated.
 - Buildings are two or three storeys, in terraced form, rising from the back of the pavement with eaves lines generally parallel to the street.



Smaller scale of Wormgate and The Lanes, narrow spaces predominate



Setted carriageway of Wormgate with tall buildings creating enclosure



- Buildings adapt to the meandering street line through slight setting back or jutting forward, angled or curved corner entrances such as at 19 and 31 Church Street.
- The streets largely have a cohesive feel, despite a few breaks in the frontages caused by demolition of some of the original buildings.
- The lanes are lined with less formal elevations, either the side walls of frontage buildings or storage, warehousing and outbuildings.
 - Their scale steps down from the formal frontage of the main streets and spaces, indicating hierarchy and historic use.
 - Enclosed, traffic-free courts such as Spain Court have a more intimate quality.

Important details and features

Materials and details

Predominantly red-brown brick for walling, generally with a finer finish, proportions, bonding and pointing to principal/ street elevations and coarser brick to side and rear elevations.

Some buildings are marked out as of higher status using:

- Contrasting yellow brick
- Stone - usually a blonde sandstone or limestone - used as cladding or decorative detailing of door and window surrounds, string courses, cornices
- Stucco (smooth, artificial stone render) finish to the full or partial front elevation, or marking out door and window surrounds.
- Polychrome brick, details such as relieving arches in yellow/ black and rubbed or moulded 'specials'



Window and door details in the commercial centre



Door detailing with brick architraves



Roofs are generally natural slate or tile. A few examples of slate laid in diminishing courses survive. Examples of traditional terracotta tile – flat tiles and pantiles – survive but have often replaced with profiled cement tile. Dormers are not typical, occurring occasionally but as an exception. Moderately tall chimney stacks with yellow terracotta pots.

Windows and doors – multi-pane sliding sash and case windows in a variety of sash patterns, diminishing in height reflecting storey heights and hierarchy. Ornate timber or stucco door cases often with applied classical pilasters, cornice and portico.

Good range of historic and reproduction timber shopfronts with traditional features, proportions and detailing – fascia, pilasters, stallriser and moulded windows and doors. These are important both in architectural terms and in some cases indicating original or historic uses or occupiers of buildings and units.

Green space and trees

The central area has a fairly hard, developed character within which landscaping and trees act as localised highlights and relief rather than the predominant character. Planting and trees are generally limited to:

- Formal spaces: War memorial gardens; Herbert Ingram memorial; Pump Square
- St Botolph's churchyard, Centenary Methodist churchyard
- Riverside/quays
- Car parks: repurposed gap sites and backland areas where trees have been planted to relieve the hardness of the spaces.
- Small, private back gardens visible in glimpses between buildings and along back lanes – e.g. backs of High Street, Wormgate.



There are some bay windows at ground floor, with sash windows on upper storeys



Green space around St Botolph's churchyard



Public realm

Common street name signage and some information boards, especially in the Market Place. There is also a large amount of street furniture, some of which feels cluttered and unorganised which creates an untidy appearance. This is further exacerbated by spaces that are dominated by cars and car parking in open spaces within the commercial centre.

Hard landscaping predominates within this area, mainly due to the need to accommodate multiple uses in Market Place (through-route, pedestrians, events, markets, fairs etc). Traditional surface materials are common throughout, including setts, flags and kerbs.

There is also a keen sense of enclosure formed by some remaining traditional brick boundary walls, fences, railings etc., particularly in backlands, but becoming increasingly rare, often having been replaced.

Areas of Loss or Intrusion

Small gap sites in otherwise tight-grained streets with coherent frontages, such as Colley Street/ Archer Lane. Often used as ad-hoc surface car parking.

Backland areas, traditionally gardens, quaysides and some of the more formal spaces such as Pump Square, have become dominated by car parking.

Out-of-scale later 20th century insertions such as Waterfall Plaza.

Some inappropriate shop fronts and signage along Strait Bargate and the Market Place.

Neglected/vacant buildings and unused upper floors, especially in the lanes off the Market Place and the Bargates.

Heritage Assets

There are approximately 115 Listed Buildings within this character area. Of these, three are grade I listed, nine are grade II* listed and 103 are grade II listed. There are no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the character area.



Door and window detailing along Tunnard Street



Enclosed back street lined by a range of historic building types



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Similar styles and stonework of St Botolph's Church, Sessions House and Barclays Bank



Timber framing at No. 30 Church Street with the Stump in the background



Brick building in the 'Fen Mannerist' style

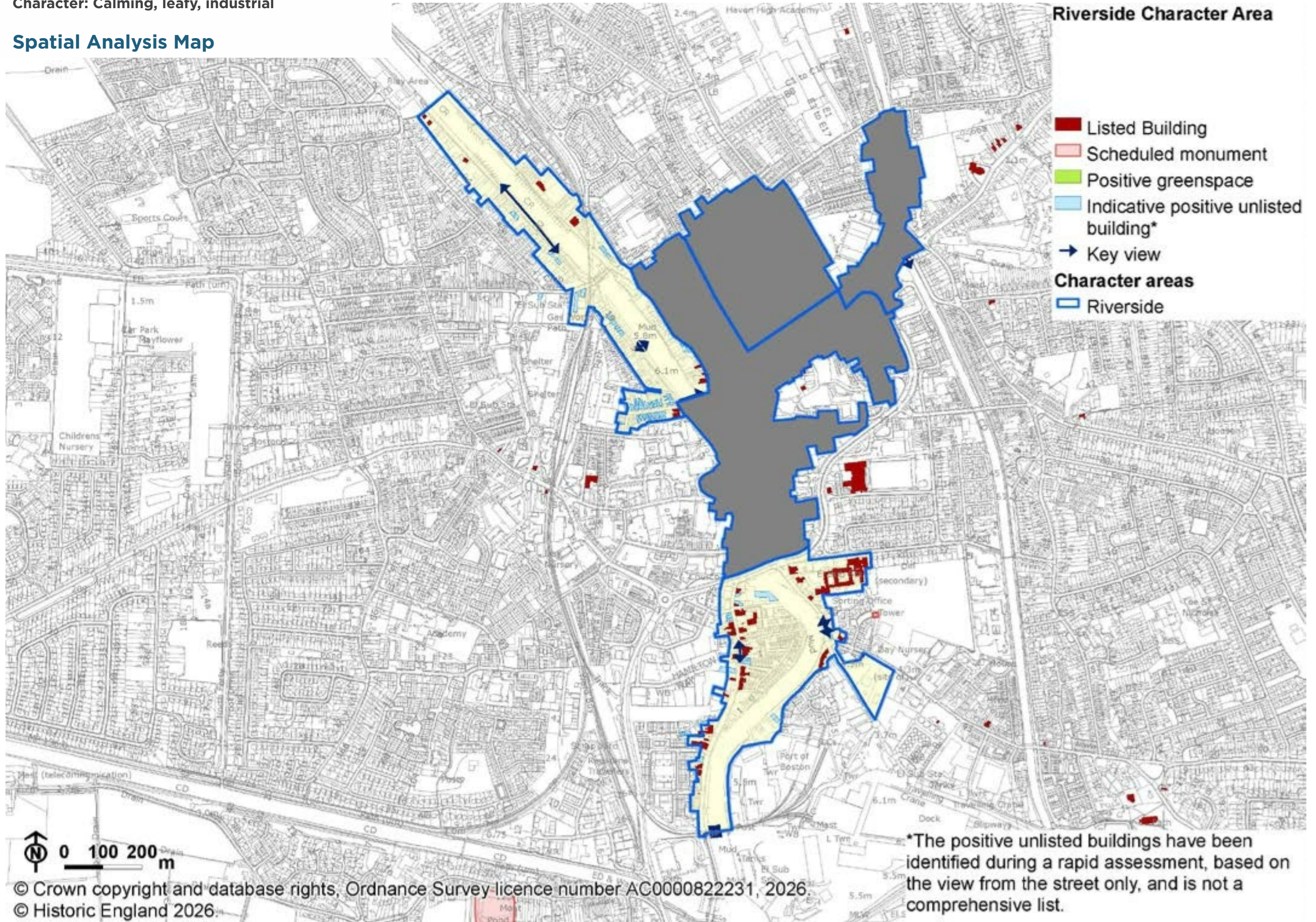


Traditional shopfronts lining Wormgate



Character: Calming, leafy, industrial

Spatial Analysis Map



Character Area 4 - Riverside

Character: Calming, leafy, industrial

Introduction to the area

The Haven, Witham Banks, London Road and South End form the main riverside development within the town. This character area covers two, separate areas but both are associated with the River Witham, with settlement following the course of the river both to the northwest and south of Character Area 3. These streets are mainly residential although there are some commercial uses with a range of spatial layouts, building types, building materials and character of open and green spaces.

Spatial Character and Layout

This area is characterised by the shape and sinuosity of the river which has influenced the development of both past and present Boston.

The Haven and Witham Banks

- Ribbon, linear development which runs alongside the River Witham
- Strips of open spaces in front of the development fronting the river, formed by steep banks which lead down to the river with tree planting
- Characterised by straight and defined spaces
- Plot proportions are generally large with detached or semi-detached dwellings. Plot lines are linear, at right angles to the parallel line of the river.



Haven Bank with large grassy riverbanks and overlooking houses



Bridge and river infrastructure creates an industrial feel to some areas of Witham Bank



Linear plot lines and paths along Witham Bank, reinforced by the line of the river



- The buildings along Haven Bank have a tight urban grain due to them mainly being semi-detached or some rows of terraces with small gaps between buildings
- There is a looser urban grain along Witham Bank due to larger plot sizes and more detached buildings, reflecting the increase in both plot size and dwelling size moving away from the town centre and creating a softer and more open character as one moves away from the town.
- The grassy banks leading down to the river on both sides, and the river itself, create an open grain and a sense of spaciousness.
- The gently curved nature of Witham Place forms a contrast with the straight linear forms of Haven Bank and Witham Bank. Witham Place forms a continuation of the medieval line of Wormgate, although much of the line of the long burgage plots down to the river have now been replaced with larger plots which are occupied by modern bungalows on the western side of Witham Place

London Road and South End

South End follows the line of the river to the south of the John Adams Way and leads into South Terrace.

- Curved streets which follow the line of the river, with changing vistas across the river to the western part of the town
- Spaces and plot lines are irregular creating a disjointed and haphazard sense which is reinforced by the mix of building types and uses in this area. This is a reflection of the piecemeal redevelopment and subsequent infill of the numerous former timber yards which were originally on the banks of the river.



Urban grain along London Road in differing styles, reflecting the development, expansion and alteration of buildings in this area



The contrast between the tight, urban grain of the High Street and the opening out of London Road with the river



Large warehouse style buildings dominate South Street, reflecting the historic relationship with the river



Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

- In general, this is an area of dense urban grain, particularly close to the river frontage. St John's Recreation Ground occupies a triangular parcel of land to the east of St John's Road and is the only green space in the area.
- London Road extends southwards off the High Street, culminating where it crosses the South Forty Drain.
- The contrast between the narrow, enclosed space of the High Street and the more open, riverine space of London Road is evident just south of St Anne's Wharf where the space opens up and feels less enclosed due to the presence of the river.
- The form of London Road is gently curving, parallel with the western line of the River Witham. To the rear of London Road is a grid pattern of streets comprising mainly modern residential development.
- In the northern part of London Road, plot lines tend to be larger and irregular, again as a reflection of the piecemeal and infill demolition and redevelopment of former warehouses and shipyards in this area.
- In the southern part of London Road, plot lines are more regular, linear and narrow, in long, linear plots which extend westwards, bisected by more modern streets.
- Urban grain along London Road is dense fronting the river, although there are pockets of open spaces formed by gap sites and car parks.



Early 20th century housing along Haven Bank set back from the river



19th century houses fronting the river and with raised basements to allow views across the river



The backland environment to the rear of Witham Place, viewed from Haven Bank



Views and Landmarks

There are a range of types of views along the riverside which have formed incidentally as the town has expanded and developed. Some of these views will be described here but, as this is not as exhaustive list, it is important to note that these are only some of the views that might be observed within the conservation area and there will be others which are not referred to here.

The various bridges of Town Bridge, St Botolph's Bridge and the Grand Sluice/Fydell Street are all important landmarks in their own right but also provide panoramic views up and down the river, allowing the onlooker to appreciate the relationship of the town and the river. The view of The Stump is especially prominent in views from Town Bridge and the Grand Sluice, forming a key component of static views from these bridges.

The paved paths along Haven Bank and Witham Bank allow for dynamic, kinetic views of the river and development on opposite bank as the observer walks along the path. For example, when walking along Haven Bank towards the town, various buildings within the town reveal themselves, such as the view of The Stump, Botolph's Bridge and the Assembly Rooms.

Built Form and Activity

The relationship between the buildings along the riverbanks and the river is an important element of this character area. Buildings are mainly in residential use, although there are areas of purpose-built commercial premises.

Along Witham and Haven Banks, buildings are generally two storeys, some with basements.



Former warehouse at the Grand Sluice, now in residential and commercial use



Modern alterations and infill along Witham Bank



Sluice bridge



- Areas of consistent building lines and eaves height, such as in the series of 19th century semi-detached villas and terraces with elevated ground floors above semi-basements which creates a cohesive feel
- In other areas, housing is set back from the river, separated by the Haven Bank and footpath. Here, there is more variation in building styles although two storey buildings dominate with some built at a lower level to that of the footpath creating a difference in roof heights along the Haven and Witham Banks.

The way in which the buildings face, whether they are set back from the river or front onto it all reflect the changing attitudes towards the river and its location, telling the story of how the river was viewed by those who lived near it during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. During the 19th century the backdrop of the river, as viewed from either the bay window or the upper storeys of the houses that front it, would have been an attractive prospect -suggestive of the wealth and status of its inhabitants. However, in more recent times the river was seen as unattractive and industrial and therefore more recent housing was built below the level of the Haven Bank in order to try and disguise the river, as seen in the early 20th century row of terraces along Haven bank.

This change in attitude towards riverine views is also reflected on the western side of the river along Witham Place. Here, the principal elevations of the modern housing along Witham Place faces away from river with the rear gardens fronting the river. This has created a 'backland' environment characterised by a mismatch of garages, sheds and warehouses which can be viewed from the opposite side of the river.



*Shopfront of
No. 8 London
Road*



*No. 16 London
Road, Carl
Dunham
Butchers
shopfront*



This area is characterised by smaller houses, more closely grouped make up the Witham Bank East, apart from two large late 18th century houses with large front gardens

Along South End and London Road building plots are narrow. Terraced buildings predominate, mainly in two or three storeys. There is also a variation in building heights and roof pitch creating a mixed layout and plot size, reflecting the historic use of this area for shipyards and warehousing during the 18th century. As a result of the piecemeal and infill of development in these areas from the 18th century there is a range of building styles comprising 18th century former merchants housing along London Road to modern development along South End. On the whole, buildings front straight onto the street, creating a hard urban edge. The architecture is of a more function and plain style with sash windows and little decoration although there are a few exceptions.

Whilst this is an area where residential housing predominates, there are small pockets of commercial and industrial buildings. The area around the Grand Sluice has a more industrial character with the Grand Sluice and the Grand Sluice Railway Bridge both being defining features of the industrialisation of this area. Both the layout of these structures which meet at divergent angles across the river, and the concrete, steel and cast-iron used in their construction, means that they stand out from the predominantly red-brick structures of the surrounding buildings.

Important Details and Features

Materials and details

Predominantly red-brick for walling. Generally, there is a finer finish, pointing and bonding to the street elevations, with coarser brick to the side and on the rear elevations. Some buildings are marked out as higher status through the use of buff gault clay

bricks with red dressings and stucco.

Roofs are generally natural slate or tile with a few examples of slate laid in diminishing courses. Examples of dormers are rare and occur occasionally. Chimney stacks are tall, some with decoration of brick banding and red and yellow terracotta pots.

There is a range of types of windows and doors, reflecting the range of styles and ages of the various buildings. Sash and case windows are common, often diminishing in height reflecting storey heights and hierarchy. Bay windows are a common feature of the 19th century houses along Witham Bank.

There are also a small number of historic shopfronts along London Road, some with traditional features, proportions and detailing, although modern rendering and UPVC windows have disguised some of the original shopfront detail.

Green space and trees

Whilst there are some areas of hard landscaping, the riverside location of much of this character area adds some green and open space in the form of the riverside banks and mature trees that line the river. In some areas, such as along Haven Bank, trees have been planted in rows which adds to the linear and defined layout of spaces in that area. These green spaces are an important part of this character area. In the riverside areas to the south of the town the hard, developed character dominates and there is little in the way of green spaces or tree planting, aside from St John's Recreation Ground.



Public realm

Despite there being large areas of grassed riverbanks, such as those at south Terrace, there is little to no provision for any public realm along the riverbanks, particularly in the areas around London Road and South End.

There are a number of areas of dock furniture along the riverbanks, such as at the Grand Sluice where there are mooring bollards, railings and walkways associated with the sluice.

Areas of Loss or Intrusion

The lack of uniformity or cohesion along London Road due to modern infill between older buildings, some of which is unsympathetic to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Underuse and vacancy of buildings and unsympathetic alterations of unlisted buildings, especially those along London Road, including a loss of features and details such as original shopfronts and windows and doors.

Heritage Assets

There are approximately 37 listed buildings within this character area. Of these, three are grade II* listed and 34 are grade II listed. There are no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the character area. A short distance outside of the conservation area near Haven Bank is Hussey Tower, a Scheduled Monument. The Tower is an important part of the broader, rich historic landscape of the town.



Mature trees giving some green relief along the riverbanks



This is echoed on both sides of the river, creating a tranquil space



Large grassy banks also provide green spaces/relief



Condition of the conservation area

Boston Town Centre Conservation Area is currently on the Heritage at Risk register as there has been significant loss of historic detail and inappropriate changes to the buildings of the conservation area. In a minority of cases buildings are vacant, visibly underused and/or exhibit signs of neglect and decay. However, there have been recent improvements in the commercial core character area as a result of schemes such as the Townscape Heritage (National Lottery Heritage Fund) and Healing the High Street (Boston Town Deal).

There are still signs of neglect such as vacancies within buildings and lack of maintenance. The character of the public realm is currently undermined by street clutter and signage, advertisements, highways design and paving materials, and the loss of historical details or surfaces.

As indicated by its at risk status, the overall condition of the conservation area is considered very bad, but is improving due to recent programmes of improvement and investment.

In 2009, the Boston Town Centre Conservation Area was added to Historic England's National Heritage at Risk Register. It remains on the list and is currently described as:

Condition: Very bad

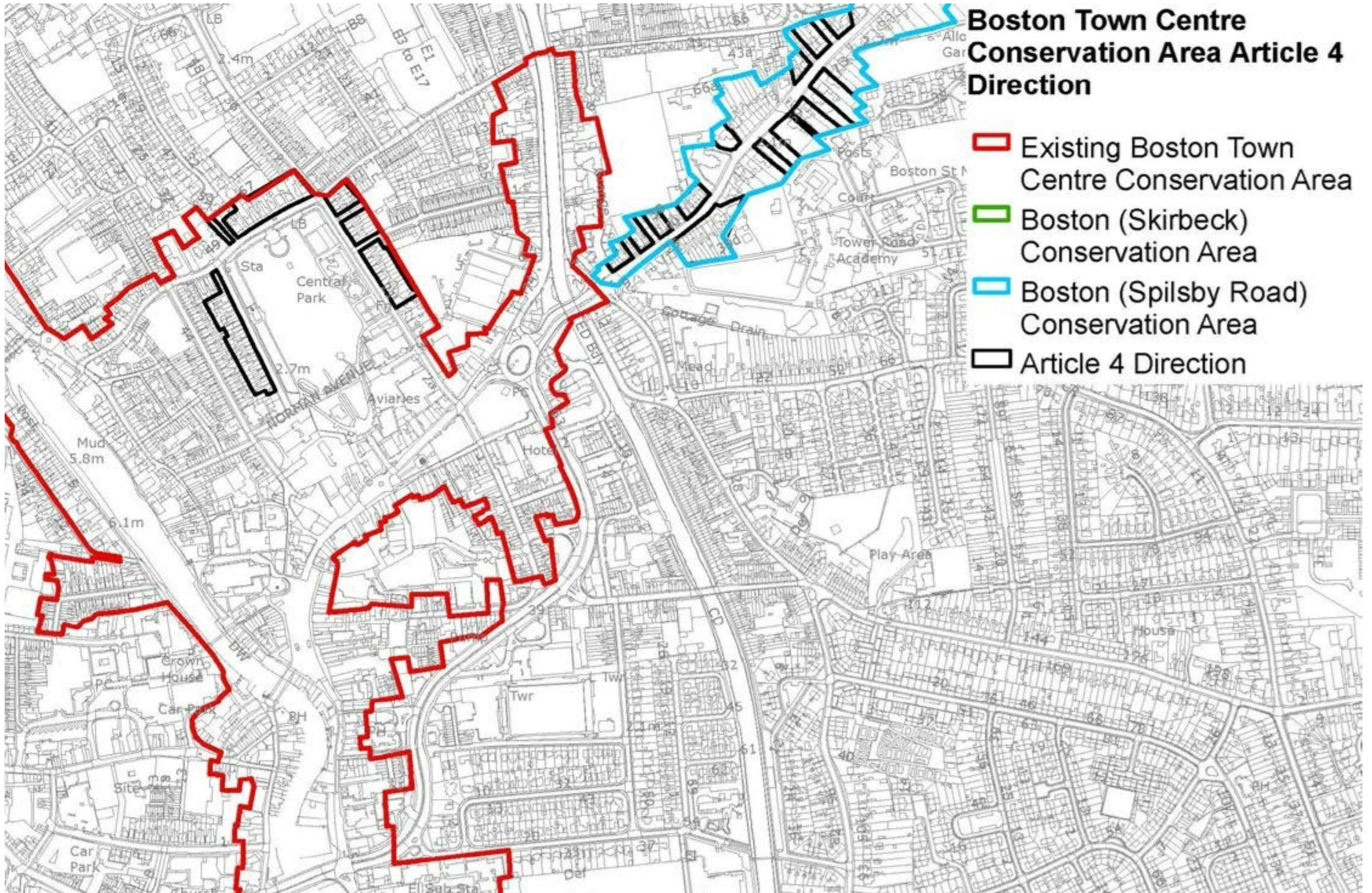
Vulnerability: Medium

Trend: Improving

The area has been included on the Heritage At Risk Register due to a number of reasons including loss of historic architectural details, physical deterioration of buildings due to lack of investment and high levels of vacancy, as well as clutter specifically relating to signage and public realm.

This appraisal provides a snapshot of Boston Town Centre Conservation Area, reviews the special interest, potential for boundary changes and establishes a management plan that will guide the ongoing management of the conservation area's special interest.





Existing Article 4 Direction

An Article 4 Direction is a tool that can be used by the Council to restrict Permitted Development Rights. They do not prevent development altogether, instead they ensure proposals which may threaten the character of an area, require planning permission. The Article 4 Direction for Central Park was put in place on 26th September 1988 and has remained in place since. A copy of the full Direction can be requested by contacting the local planning authority but is summarised as follows:

If your house is one of those included in the Boston Central Park Article 4 Direction you will need planning permission for any works:

- The enlargement, improvement or other alteration which involves the construction of an extension or alteration of any wall which fronts a public highway, including rendering, cladding alteration to windows and window openings, masonry details, facing brickwork, roof materials, doors and door surrounds.
- The erection construction of an external porch or enclosure of a porch fronting a public highway.
- The construction of hardstanding for a driveway in front of the property or fronting a public highway.
- The painting of the exterior of any building [other than maintenance].

For completeness, the properties included are those identified on the map figure above and are as follows: 2-52 Thorold Street, 57 and 61-85 (odd nos.) Norfolk Street, and 11-61 Tawney Street



Conservation Area Management Plan, Policies and Action Plan



Conservation Area Management Plan, Policies and Action Plan

What is a Conservation Area Management Plan?

A Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) provides a framework to assist the Council and all stakeholders in the onward management of the Boston Town Centre Conservation Area. It explains how the special character of the town will be preserved or enhanced through recognition of threats, proactive management and local commitment, supplemented with programmes and guidance. The Action Plan will set out a series of identified opportunities and aspirations that could be pursued in the short, medium and long term for the improvement of Boston Town Centre Conservation Area.

Objective 1: Take appropriate action for the designated assets on the national Heritage at Risk register within the conservation area

Rationale: Although a large number of the properties that were formerly on the Heritage at Risk register and identified during the 2016 conservation area appraisal have now been removed from the register, the Grade II* listed Shodfriars Hall is still included, as is the Boston Town Centre Conservation Area as a whole. For Shodfriars Hall, there is an immediate risk of further and rapid deterioration or loss of historic fabric. A solution to this has been agreed to and now needs to be rapidly implemented in order to preserve the building and its fabric and remove it from the Heritage at Risk register. In terms of removing the CA from the HaR Register, the implementation of this CAMP is an important step, as is continuing the heritage-led regeneration approach used in the Boston Heritage led regeneration area and Market Place improvements.

Objective 2: Control loss and replacement of architectural detail within the conservation area

Rationale: Article 4 Directions are used to bring under planning control a range of works that are authorised by the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). They remove all, or selected permitted development rights of householders to make changes to their properties considered to have potential to negatively impact the special interest of the area.

The purpose of an Article 4 Direction would be to control future change to buildings covered by the direction to stem and ultimately reverse unsympathetic alterations that have taken place to Boston's historic building stock and the negative impact this has had on the conservation area. There is an existing Article 4 direction in Central Park, but it is recommended that this be extended to cover more areas within the conservation area.

The need for an extension to the existing Article 4 Direction has arisen from incremental change of traditional timber windows, roof coverings, doors and rainwater goods. The loss of these features has been identified during the appraisal as a harmful change to its special interest. Increasing pressures to improve energy efficiency has also seen a notable increase in applications for solar panels (roof mounted or otherwise) and air/ground source heat pumps, both of which have the potential to harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.



We strongly recommend that the Article 4 Direction is extended in Boston. The reversal of the incremental loss of traditional features and inappropriate extension of buildings would provide a significant enhancement of the conservation area. Extension of the article 4 is not part of this conservation area management plan and will require its own engagement.

Establish an Article 4 Direction removing the following classes of Permitted Development Rights:

- Class A - the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house.
- Class B - the enlargement of a house consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof.
- Class C - any other alteration to the roof of a house.
- Class D - the erection of a porch outside any external door of a house.
- Class E - the development or construction a building or structure incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse within its curtilage.
- Class F - the provision or replacement whether in full or part of hard surfacing for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of a dwelling house.
- Class G - the installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a dwellinghouse.
- Class H - the installation, alteration or replacement of a microwave antenna, such as a satellite dish, on a house or within the curtilage of a house.
- Part 2 Class A - the erection, construction, maintenance,

improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.

- Part 3 Class M - the conversion of a Class E (commercial, business and service) building to a dwellinghouse
- Part 3 Class N - the conversion of an amusement arcade or centre, or casino to a dwellinghouse
- Part 3 Class O - the conversion of a Class B1(a) (office) building into a dwellinghouse
- Part 7 Class A - the extension or alteration of a commercial, business or service establishment
- Part 7 Class G (a) - the provision of a hard surface within the curtilage of an office building to be used for the purpose of the office concerned.
- Part 14 - Regarding the installation or alteration etc of solar equipment/standalone solar equipment/ground source heat pumps/water source heat pumps/flue for biomass heating systems/flue for combined heat and power on domestic premises/air source heat pumps/wind turbines/standalone wind turbines on domestic premises.

The removal of the above-mentioned rights should be applied to the following streets:

- Tunnard Street
- Norfolk Street
- Witham Bank
- Haven Bank



Objective 3: To preserve or enhance Boston Town Centre Conservation Area's Green/Open Spaces, Public Realm, Street Furniture and Views

Rationale: Green space and landscaping form a significant part of the conservation area. This includes trees, public and private gardens and areas of unused open space (such as along the riverbank) and it is important that these features are preserved and enhanced during the decision-making process.

Public realm has previously seen a scheme of enhancement around the Market Place and has resulted in an area of positive floor/streetscape and public realm. A guide on Shopfront Design has also been produced in order to advise private property owners on the requirements for high quality materials and design for historic buildings. This should continue to be utilised as this has been hugely successful in the design of recent shopfronts which have appropriate and good-quality design, adding to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Further enhancement of the public realm should be encouraged following the blueprint set by past enhancement, ensuring natural materials and traditionally designed features reinstated. For example, there are opportunities for public realm enhancement along areas of the riverbank (such as along Haven and Witham Banks) where benches and seating could be added to allow and encourage the enjoyment of these spaces by the public.

Where historic public realm features and boundary treatments are found their retention should be encouraged through planning controls. Historic spaces and important views positively contribute to the character of the conservation area and should be preserved, for example, views along streets, views taking in old buildings, boundary features and mature, especially veteran trees.

Advertisements in conservation areas will require detailed consideration given the sensitivity and historic nature of these

areas or buildings. Any advertisements, of whatever type in the conservation area must not harm its character and appearance and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings. Free-standing signs and signs on street furniture must not create or contribute to visual and physical clutter.

Objective 4: Ensure appropriate action is taken through available planning enforcement tools to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Boston Town Centre Conservation Area

Rationale: Unauthorised works and breaches of planning control can cause significant harm to the quality of both the built environment and surrounding spaces within a Conservation Area. Examples include unauthorised alterations to a building or the use of non-approved materials, or development that materially differs from what has been approved all of which can individually or cumulatively erode the special character of a conservation area. Where expedient, enforcement action is pursued by the District Planning Authority and is undertaken by the Compliance and Enforcement Team. The Council's Conservation function works with the Compliance and Enforcement Team to tackle any breaches of planning control and will use the appraisal and this management plan as a means of justification for the expediency of any action taken.

Policy The Historic Environment - Proposals within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a Conservation Area should preserve (and enhance or reinforce, as appropriate) features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting. Proposals should, where relevant and practical, remove features which are incompatible with the Conservation Area.



Objective 5: Continue to address traffic management concerns and travel infrastructure throughout the town

Rationale: There are several car parks within the Conservation Area (such as the carpark on Red Lion Street and the informal parking in the Market Place) which adversely affect the streetscape and quality of the historic environment. In some cases minor alterations to the visual appearance could improve the sense of 'intrusion' into the special quality of the area. However in other areas it remains a question as to whether cars and car parking should be allowed at all, other than for through traffic or loading/unloading purposes. On the whole, it would be beneficial to improve pedestrian and cyclist priority by looking at ways to remove vehicle through traffic to change the ambience of spaces from being car dominated to being more adaptable and encouraging pedestrian dwell time.

Objective 6: To ensure the design of new development is of high quality and complimentary to Boston Town Centre Conservation Area

Rationale: Boston has a varied character, and it is important that new design within the conservation area respects its character and appearance. New buildings should be of an appropriate size, scale and design, reflecting settlement form, views, open spaces and the general context of their location and immediate setting. Similarly boundary treatments should also respect and reflect traditional features.

Appropriate design and features should be used for new builds, materials should match or be compatible with the historic local material palette, or where a modern alternative is proposed this should complement local materials and not be out of character with local material themes. The use of uPVC alternative doors and windows should not be permitted within the conservation area.

New design should be underpinned by an assessment of the character of the area and the impact of the new design upon the significance of heritage assets. This should be evidenced through a suitably heritage assessment provided by applicants as part of any planning application for development in this area.

High quality new design can be secured through planning control, however the use of the new design guide, would ensure that developers have published guidelines to steer the initial design before entering the planning process. The Local List should also be used to aid in identifying and articulating the importance of non-listed buildings and structures within the conservation area to improve decision-making, accessibility and connectivity.

The design of shopfronts has the potential to impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where documentary evidence exists, this should lead design of shopfronts, particularly when looking to reinstate or replace a shopfront. Where no historic precedent exists, the host building should lead the design taking a lead from the host buildings proportion, scale, style, features and form.



Objective 7: To improve the activity and diversify the town centre centre

Rationale: In general, the activity within the town centre could be improved if more people lived within the town centre itself. There are many opportunities for this, notably in the conversion/reuse of vacant flats above many of the retail outlets. There are also opportunities for the town centre to diversify to include a leisure and evening economy, in addition to the predominant retail use. A bustling and lively leisure and evening scene and an increase in people living within the town centre are both symbiotic – one would encourage the other. This, in turn, would also help to tap into the tourist and visitor potential of Boston, both of which are untapped. Boston has a clear and distinctive history and is an attractive tourist location – with opportunities to develop and enhance this, facilitated by the improved activity and diversification of the town centre.



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Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

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