

Supplementary Guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan 2006



Castle Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Planning Policy and Design
Adopted March 2007

Cover images, from the top:

Castle Gatehouse.

Castle Gardens.

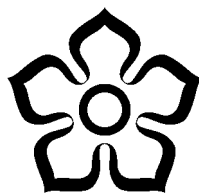
The Turret Gateway from The Newarke.

Magazine Gateway.

CASTLE CONSERVATION AREA

character appraisal

(Adopted: March 2007)



Leicester
City Council

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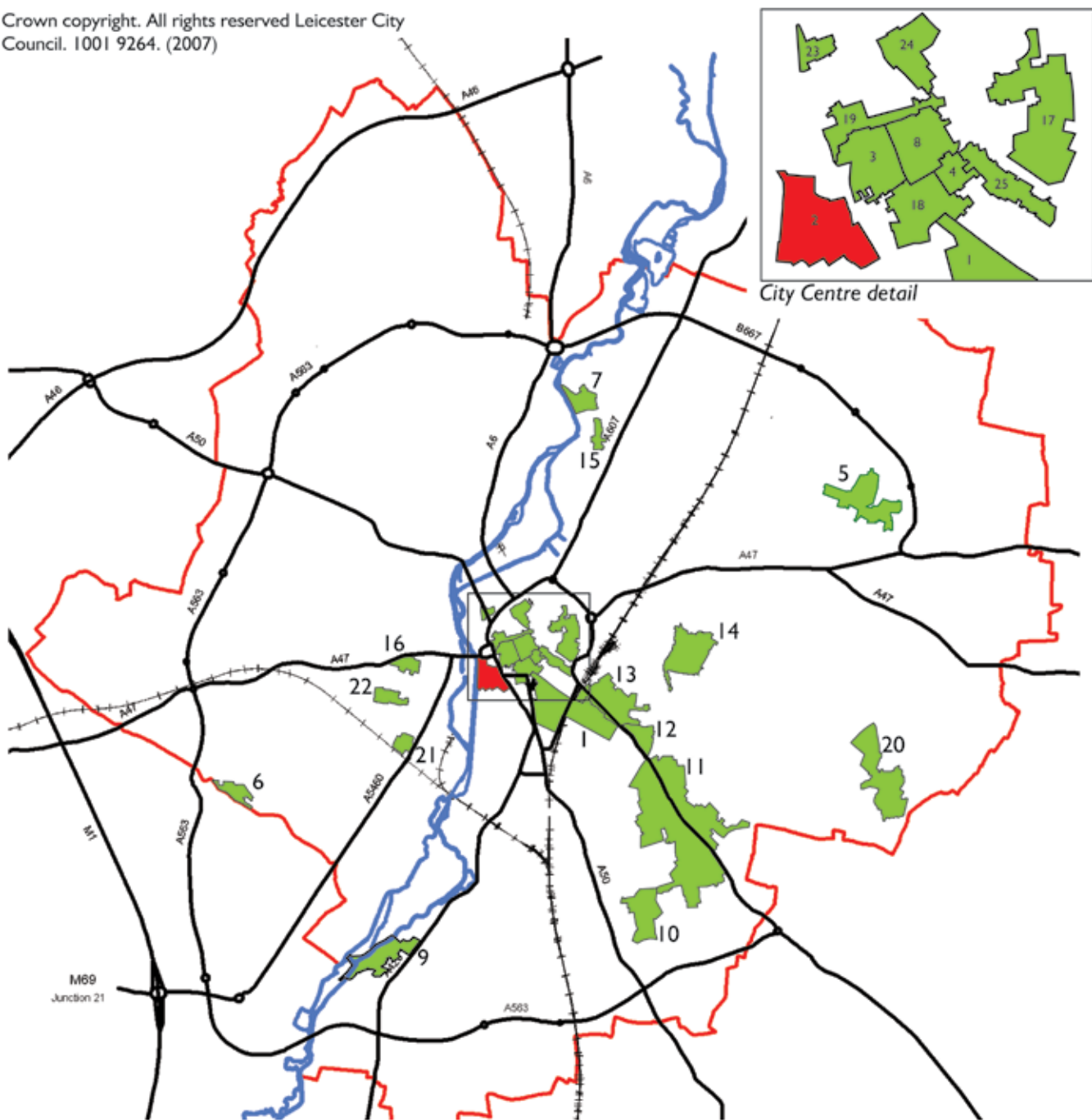
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Map I. City of Leicester Conservation Areas

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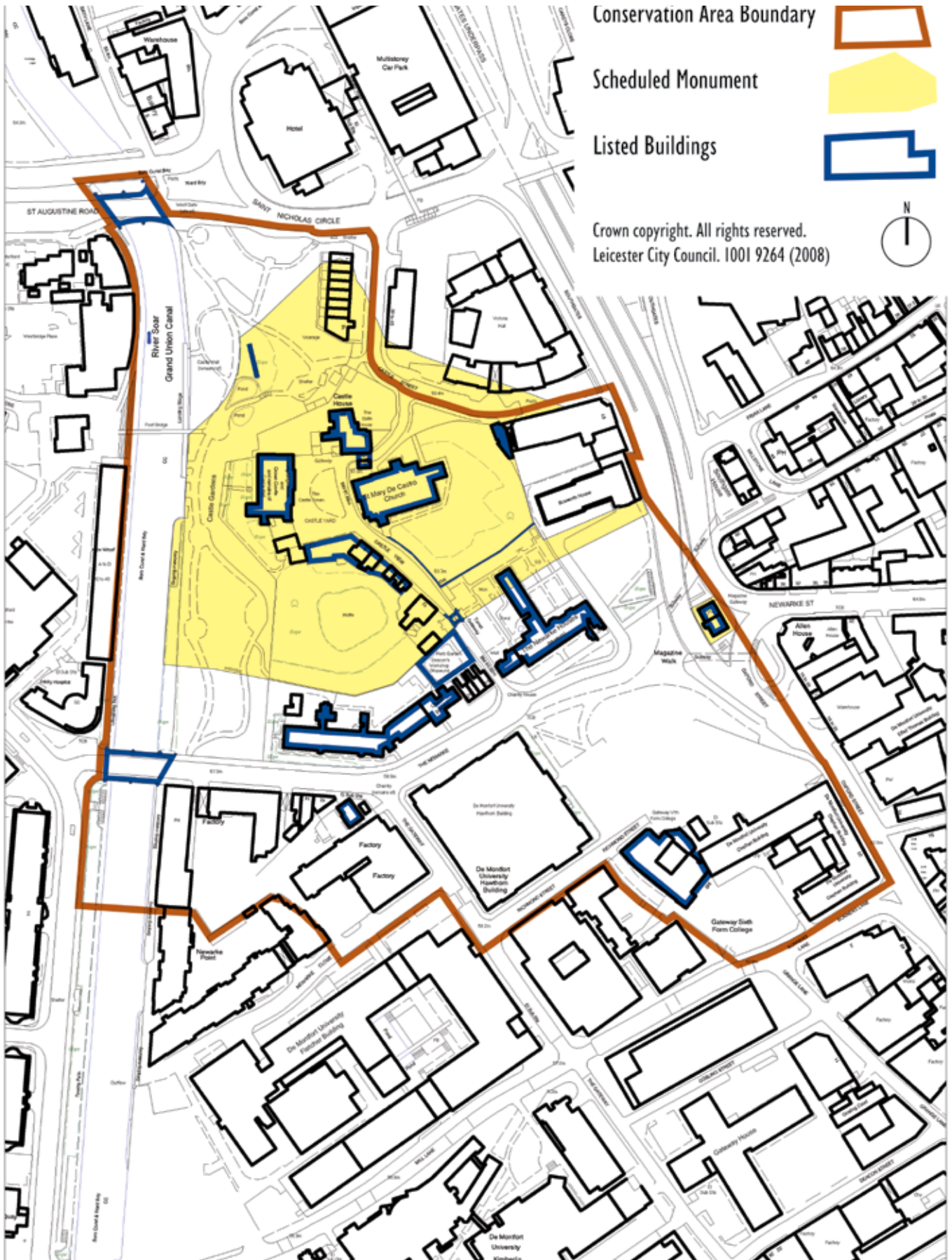
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|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. New Walk | 10. Knighton Village | 19. High Street |
| 2. <u>Castle</u> | 11. Stoneygate | 20. Evington Village |
| 3. Cathedral/Guildhall | 12. Evington Footpath | 21. Ashleigh Road |
| 4. Town Hall Square | 13. South Highfields | 22. Westcotes Drive |
| 5. Old Humberstone | 14. Spinney Hill Park | 23. All Saints' |
| 6. Braunstone Village | 15. Loughborough Road | 24. Church Gate |
| 7. Belgrave Hall | 16. Daneshill | 25. Granby Street |
| 8. Market Place | 17. St. George's | |
| 9. Aylestone Village | 18. Market Street | |

Listed chronologically



Not to scale

Map 2. Boundary of Castle Conservation Area



Map 2: Boundary of Castle Conservation Area

1.0 introduction

1.1 A character appraisal is the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of each conservation area. It defines and records the factors that make conservation areas special, thereby providing a baseline for decisions about an area's future. It also identifies features or problems that detract from the special quality and suggests, by means of management and enhancement proposals, the ways in which the special interest could be safeguarded or improved. An appraisal also reviews the boundaries of a conservation area and, where appropriate, includes amendments.

1.2 Castle Conservation Area was one of the first three conservation areas to be designated in Leicester in March 1969 as a result of the powers to designate such areas that were conferred on local authorities by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Virtually all the buildings in the area are on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest ('listed buildings') and a large part falls within the boundaries of a Scheduled Monument, (the Castle). It is perhaps the most important of Leicester's 25 conservation areas. The 1969 boundary included the Jewry Wall and Museum, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Church, Talbot Lane and the east side of Bath Lane. The appraisal proposed that the area north of St Nicholas Circle should be excluded from the conservation area (section 6.0 refers) and that it be renamed the Castle Conservation Area. The appraisal that follows will be based on the revised boundary.

1.3 The survey and appraisal were carried out during 2006 following the methodology suggested by English Heritage. To ensure that a complete picture of the value and character of the area was built up local people, including those who live in, work in or visit the area, were asked for their views about the area, such as what they like or dislike about the area, and how they think it could or should be improved.

2.0 planning policy framework

2.1 The protection and/or preservation of historic environments are now extensively recognised for the contribution they make to the country's cultural inheritance, economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for conservation areas as places that give identity to people and communities is well established. National legislation and regional guidance reflect this.



Aerial view of the conservation area from the 2005 survey

2.2 The concept of 'conservation areas' was first introduced into national legislation in 1967 in the Civic Amenities Act which defined a conservation area as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent change but to manage change in ways that maintain and, if possible, strengthen an area's special qualities.

2.3 Current legislation is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This places a duty on local planning authorities to declare as conservation areas those parts of their area that they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest [s.69(1)]. It also imposes on them a duty to review past designations from time to time [s.69(2)]. Conservation area status also means that there are stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land including the need for planning permission to demolish a building, strengthened controls over some minor forms of development and the automatic protection of all trees.

2.4 The Council has a further duty to formulate and prepare from time to time proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas [s.71(1)]. The Council must also pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications for sites within such areas [s.72(1)]; see (section 6 and Appendix 3 below).

2.5 The City of Leicester Local Plan (saved until January 2009 in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) contains a range of conservation policies (see Appendix 5) to ensure that the most important parts of Leicester's built environment are protected and enhanced. There is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. These policies help to ensure that new developments and conservation-led regeneration reflect the character and value of the historic environment.

3.0 definition of special interest

3.1 The Castle Conservation Area is perhaps the most important of Leicester's 25 conservation areas. Despite the loss of its historic links with the city centre that resulted from the 1960s road scheme to the east, this area still contains the best, and most extensive, elements of the city's archaeology and its visible history. The Castle area is sited in the south-west corner of Roman Leicester, an area rich in archaeology, and includes an extensive Scheduled Monument (Map 2). Castle Yard, the original inner bailey of the Norman castle, is a unique space that has importance for both national and local history. Many buildings within the conservation area are listed buildings, of which five have Grade I (one) status and four have Grade II* status. The Castle Hall (Grade I) is reputed to be one of the oldest surviving aisled and bay-divided medieval halls in Europe and the Norman Castle motte (mound) is another important survival from the 11th century.

3.2 The special interest of the area also derives from the wide variety of building materials that are used in the area, many of which are traditional to Leicester. This creates a particularly rich visual environment that is full of colour, texture and pattern which is further enhanced and



ORIGINAL ENTRANCE TO OLD DUNGEON - RESTORED.



MODERN ENTRANCE TO OLD DUNGEON,
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FRITH.

John of Gaunt's cellar shown in a 19th century engraving.



The Newarke c1890. Just prior the building of the School of Art and Technology, (now the Hawthorn Building), the site is to the left of the picture.



The Trinity Hospital mosaic near to The Newarke Bridge.

softened by the green spaces along the canal, and in Castle Gardens, the street and private gardens. These features also provide valuable public open space and leisure opportunities in an otherwise hard urban environment. Most buildings in the conservation area retain their original windows, doors and rainwater goods, adding to the area's architectural and historic character and appearance.

4.0 assessment of special interest

Location and setting

4.1 The conservation area lies on the east bank of the River Soar. It covers an area of about 7 hectares (17.3 acres) and includes most of Leicester's ancient buildings and remains such as the Castle mound (the Motte) and its baileys, a medieval Great Hall, the Trinity Hospital and a Chantry Chapel.

4.2 The land on which the conservation area stands rises steeply from the river on glacial gravel terraces, a feature seen most clearly from Castle Park where the Castle motte and the Great Hall stand some metres above the level of the 'made-up' land of the park itself.

Historic development and archaeology

4.3 Gravel ridges such as the one on which the conservation area stands, have always been good places to live and build because they are dry and safe from flooding. It is not therefore surprising that there were settlements in the vicinity of the conservation area from a very early date. Evidence of Bronze Age burials and artefacts has been found in nearby High Street but whatever human activity there might have been then would probably have been transient in character. However, in late the Iron Age a permanent settlement sprang up on the east bank of the Soar and traces of a building of this period have been found north of the conservation area in the St Nicholas Circle area. Nothing can be seen above ground from these eras but the conservation area occupies what was once the southwest part of the Roman town of Ratae Corieltavorum. There is also much visible evidence of Leicester's history from Norman times to the Middle Ages around the castle and its associated medieval buildings.

4.4 The development of the Roman town probably started within a few years of the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 42 when an important road, the Fosse Way, was built to link the legionary fortresses at Exeter and Lincoln. This road crossed the Soar close to an existing native settlement which grew rapidly over the next decades, becoming a 'frontier town'. One reason for its growth may have been because a Roman fort had been built between two arms of the river. By the start of the 2nd century AD this town (that was to become Leicester) was the capital of the Corieltavi tribe and was known to the Romans as Ratae Corieltavorum. To reflect its importance the town was completely remodelled and laid out in a grid pattern, and the Fosse Way was diverted so that it ran through the town. The conservation area lies over the south-western quadrant of that town. Some of the most important features are already known and, of these, the most impressive and important is the so-called Jewry Wall beyond the north boundary of the conservation area which, in recognition of its national importance, has

been designated as a Scheduled Monument, along with the land occupied by Vaughan College and St Nicholas Church.

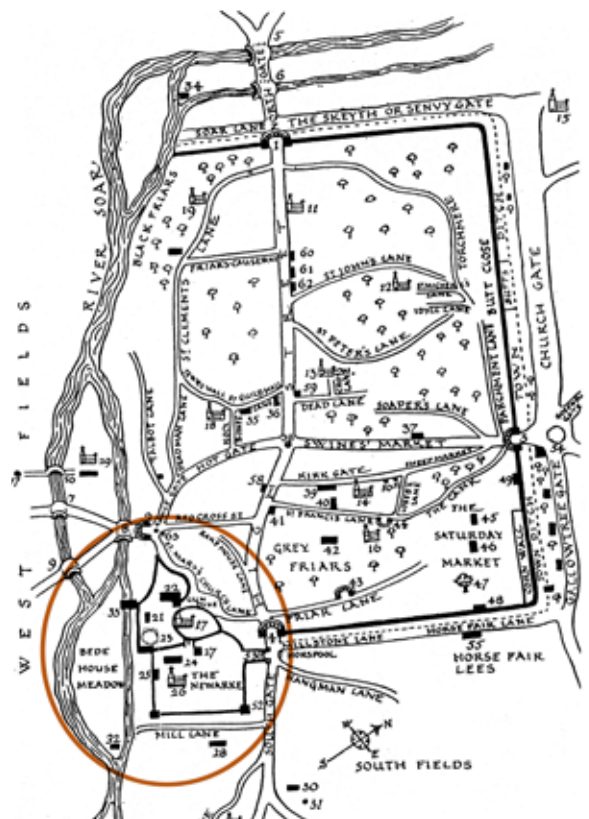
4.5 There is no above ground evidence of Roman Leicester in the Castle Conservation Area, although where evidence has not been destroyed by later building works parts of the Roman town may yet remain to be discovered. Much of the visible history in the castle area dates from the 11th century. After the Norman invasion in 1066, the new king, William the First, parcelled out the lands of the defeated Anglo-Saxons and one of his close allies, Hugh de Grentmesnil, was given large tracts of land around Leicester. It was he who built the first Castle in 1070 in a strategic position in the southwest angle of the Roman town defences, overlooking the river. At this time the Norman hold on the country was tenuous, with revolts against Norman rule breaking out in many parts of the country. The Normans therefore had to stamp their authority over the populace early on and the new castle was a highly visible expression of their power. At the time of the Domesday survey, there were 377 households in Leicester, plus a mint for striking coinage.

4.6 The first castle was of the motte and bailey type (**Fig. 1**), and, in an age when there were very few big buildings, it would have dominated the town. From the castle mound an oval defensive rampart with a timber palisade and ditch would have stretched to the north east. Within the rampart was the bailey which would have contained a well and numerous structures including a hall (the forerunner of the current Great Hall), a church (an early version of St Mary de Castro), an armoury, stables and a kitchen. A timber tower (or keep) would have occupied the top of the motte, and would have been the castle's last line of defence. No trace of the timber keep survives, but the motte still stands 9m high and 30m wide at the base.

4.7 After Hugh's death the castle was passed into a succession of medieval magnates, including both Simon de Montfort, father and son, in the 13th century and John of Gaunt in the 15th century. Hugh's heirs held various titles, the earliest being simply Earl of Leicester, although subsequently they acquired the principal title of Earl of Lancaster. In the 14th century they became Dukes of Lancaster. Many of these magnates set about remodelling the castle for their own purposes but initially to improve the defences. As the threat of the locals rising up in revolt receded, the castle gradually became less of a fortification and more of the comfortable residence of powerful aristocrats.



Fig. 1. Artists impression showing how Leicester Castle might have looked in Norman times.



Map 3. Medieval Leicester: the Castle Conservation area is shown edged in brown.

4.8 In 1101 Robert de Beaumont, second Earl of Leicester, set about rebuilding the castle in stone, partly because it had been badly damaged during the rebellion against Henry I. This included the replacement of the wooden palisades with stone walls built into the outer face of the ramparts, and replacement of the church and hall with stone buildings on similar sites. The first stone church of St Mary de Castro (literally 'St Mary of the Castle') was considerably smaller than the present building and its early Norman form was very richly decorated. Some of its exterior details can still be seen as interior features of the present church. The church was further enlarged and altered in the 13th, 14th and 19th centuries.

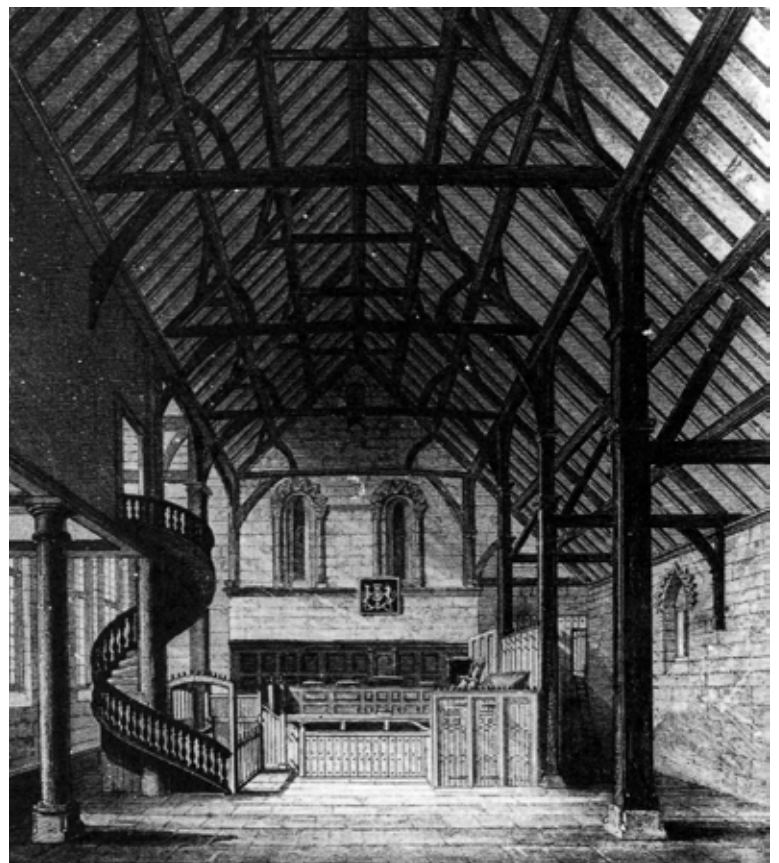
4.9 The Great Hall was also built at this time and was the core of the present Castle Hall. As well as stone walls it had a large timber roof supported on two lines of large timber posts that divided the hall into three; the main body of the hall and two flanking aisles on the east and west sides. It is thought to be one of the oldest aisled halls, and perhaps one of the oldest residential timber roofs, in Europe. Some of the original stonework and fragments of the timber posts can still be seen inside the present building. It is not known, however, whether the timber keep was also replaced in stone because the height of the motte was significantly reduced in the 19th century and all evidence has been lost.

4.10 As the castle became a more comfortable residence additional suites of rooms were added to the great hall, both to provide private accommodation for the Earl's family and a service wing. All surface traces of these have been removed but a large stone-lined storage basement, locally known as "John of Gaunt's cellar", survives below ground to the south of the hall and close to the north slope of the motte. This could well have served as storage for the castle kitchens which are believed to have been located on this site.

4.11 One of the changes brought about by the downgrading of the castle fortifications was the development of the area to the south. This process began with the foundation by Henry, Earl of Lancaster and Leicester, of a hospital just to the south of the castle in 1331. He set aside four acres (just over 1.5 hectares) south of the castle mound and the hospital was built close to the walled enclosure of the inner bailey of the castle. The proximity of the hospital to the castle walls (within arrow range) indicates that, by this date, any assault on the castle was felt to be an unlikely event. The building consisted of a church at the east end with accommodation adjoining it on the west side. What we now know as the Chantry Chapel may well be the remnants of this church. Part of the



Map 4. Robert's map of 1741. The conservation area is shown edged in brown.



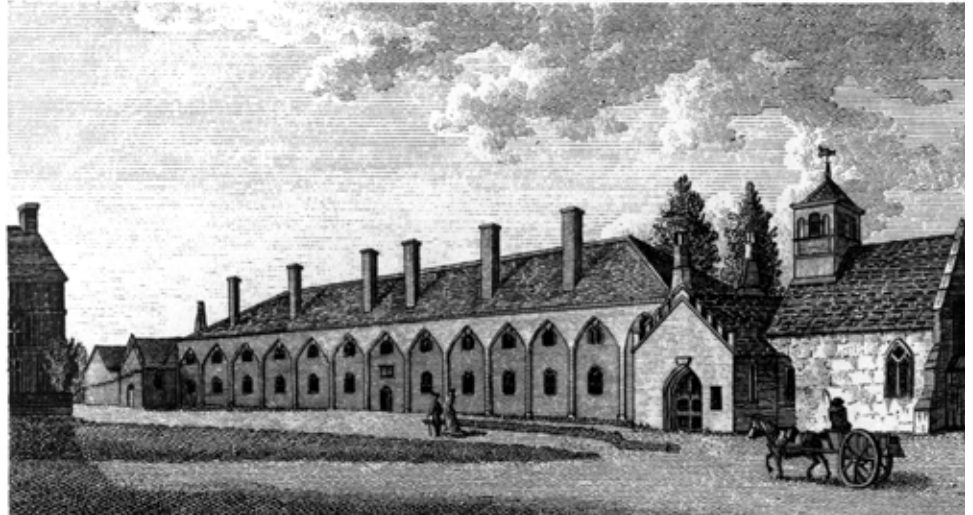
The interior of the Castle Hall before 1821

Hospital's land now forms the south end of Castle Gardens and records show that in 1322 it was known as 'A New Garden' where vines were cultivated.

4.12 Henry died in 1345 and his son, another Henry (soon to become Duke of Lancaster in 1352), set about transforming the castle. In the mid-14th century the Castle was at the height of its wealth and power. It is perhaps as a demonstration of that power that the son continued the works started by his father. He added an outer bailey on the north side of the existing bailey but his main works were planned for the south side. He not only enlarged the hospital to twice its original size but also turned the entire area south of the castle into a religious precinct (see Map 3). A key part of the plan was the erection of a new gateway with a ceremonial road leading through it to a large church, the Collegiate Church of the Annunciation of St Mary (or of the Blessed Virgin of the Assumption). The church was to be a mausoleum for the Dukes.

4.13 Henry died in 1361 before the project was completed and, being without a male heir, the Dukedom passed to his son-in-law, John of Gaunt. He completed the church and, when he died he was buried there. His son, Henry Bolingbroke, became King Henry IV in 1399. Leicester Castle was, therefore, no longer his principal residence (that having shifted to London), but it continued to be used for ceremonial purposes, such as the knighting of the future Henry V in St Mary de Castro. Medieval records show that there were also a dancing chamber and a chapel. Work also continued on the Newarke site. New gates were constructed to the north and south of a somewhat smaller castle enclosure (the latter remains as the Turret Gateway and dates from 1422-23) and the religious precinct was completed with the construction of an enclosing wall on its west, east and south sides with two gates into the precinct from the south side and east sides. Speede's map of 1610 shows this particularly well. It was these impressive defences that led to the precinct being known as the 'new-work', and that we know today as The Newarke. In 1444-45 a new northern gateway was built adjacent to St Mary de Castro to replace one that had burned down (known today as The Gate House).

Fig. 19. TRINITY HOSPITAL, 1796.



Engraving of Trinity Hospital from John Nichol's "History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester". It dates from 1796.

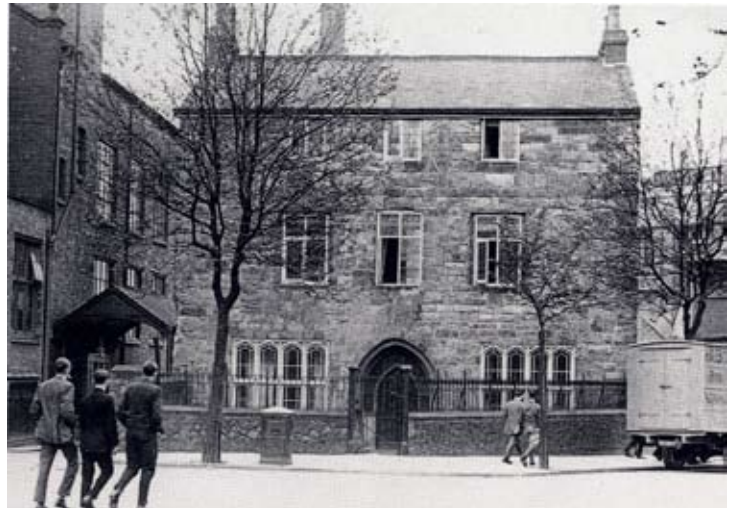


A view taken in the early years of the 20th century showing the Old Castle Inn located next to the Turret Gateway



The Newarke Gateway c1900.

4.14 However, the castle's importance began to wane in the 15th century as a result of the Wars of the Roses. No longer occupied or maintained, its apartments had deteriorated to such an extent that Richard III chose to stay at a local inn before the battle of Bosworth in 1485. The Great Hall, important as the seat of Law in the city since it was first built, was gradually adapted and altered the better to accommodate the legal proceedings that became its primary function. It was extensively remodelled and refaced in brick in 1695 to provide 'modern' Law Courts for the town. The greatest damage to the building came in 1821 when a first floor was inserted and a new wall erected in place of the 12th century timber columns of the western arcade. When the new Magistrates Courts in Pocklington's Walk were built in the 1980s, the Great Hall became vacant.



St. Mary's Vicarage, The Newarke, showing the top two storeys prior to their removal in 1947.

4.15 The Newarke area fared somewhat better. The Collegiate Church had been richly endowed by the Dukes and continued to prosper for over 200 years. The Chantry House (now part of the Newarke Houses Museum) was added in 1511-12 by William Wygston, a prominent Leicester wool merchant, to provide accommodation for two priests who prayed for his well-being in life and death. Another chantry house was erected nearby and survives as the building known as St Mary's Vicarage. Skeffington House, the central block of the museum, followed between 1560 and 1583 and is named after Thomas Skeffington, sheriff of Leicester, who had ordered its building. It is shown clearly on John Speede's map of Leicester of 1610. The house was substantially altered around 1730 by William Wright, Recorder of Leicester, when a grand staircase was inserted and the house was redecorated in the classical style. The entrance gate and overthrow also date from this time. However, following Wright's death the house was let and fell into decline. The building's fortunes were restored in the 1790s by William Oldham, a Leicester Alderman, as a speculative development. He added 'East House' at the right hand end and altered the front elevations to create the symmetrical Gothic appearance that it has today. Some small 18th century cottages survive on the west side of Castle View.



Skeffington House, The Newarke: a view of the rear garden dating from 1867.

4.16 The Collegiate Church survived Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, although it was surrendered to the Crown in 1545. Henry was reluctant to destroy an institution so closely connected with his Lancastrian ancestors so it continued to function and it was his son, Edward VI, who dissolved the college in 1548, seized the property and pensioned off the clergy. Not long afterwards the building was demolished. The hospital, however,



Map 6. The Ordnance Survey Map of 1903/04: The Castle Conservation Area is shown superimposed. Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited. All rights reserved, 2008. Map not scale.

survived to be renamed Trinity Hospital after it was granted a new charter in 1615.

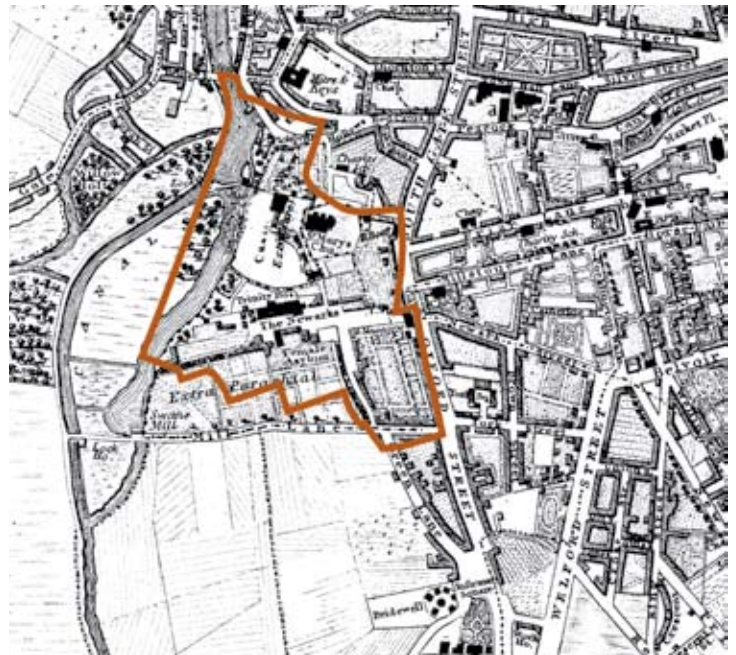
4.17 The precinct thus became a secular suburb with the dwellings being occupied by people unconnected to the religious life. Fragments of these survive, incorporated into later buildings (see Appendix 2) and parts of the church were still visible early in the 20th century when an Arts & Technical School was built on the site (now De Montfort University's Hawthorn Building). Two small stone arches from the church remain, incorporated into the basement. Elements of the Trinity Hospital also survive, although a fire and major alterations in the 18th and early 20th centuries, including the replacement of the western end at an angle to the original building line, have meant that only the chapel at the eastern end contains much medieval fabric.

4.18 The walls of the Newarke were well constructed and still in reasonable repair at the outbreak of the Civil War in the 1640s. They defended the garrison when it retreated from the town to the castle and the Newarke where they suffered a brief bombardment from the south. Realising that their position was indefensible, the garrison soon surrendered. Although the walls survived until the early 19th century they had been falling into disrepair. They were therefore partially demolished to leave only two upstanding structures. One of these, known locally as Prince Rupert's Tower, was sited on Bonners Lane and probably formed part of the south gate into the Newarke. It was demolished in 1935. The other was the Magazine Gateway that, by the end of the nineteenth century had been incorporated into a barracks and survived more or less intact. An archaeological investigation in the Herb Garden behind Trinity Hospital uncovered a mass grave which may have been one of the graves in which the dead of the 1645 siege were buried.

4.19 By the 18th century the Castle Mill, on a site dating back the 13th century and situated not far from today's footbridge over the canal, had been taken over by the Flowers family, one of whom was John Flowers (born 1795) the well known local water-colourist. His paintings of Leicester in the 18th century evoke a strong sense of Leicester's character at that time. Some Georgian houses were built in Talbot Lane and The Newarke during the 18th century at the same time as similarly fashionable houses were being built in the Friar Lane and Millstone Lane area of the town. The small cottages on Castle View also date from this time. Election riots in 1832 caused extensive damage to the Turret Gateway and later, the Castle Gatehouse was converted



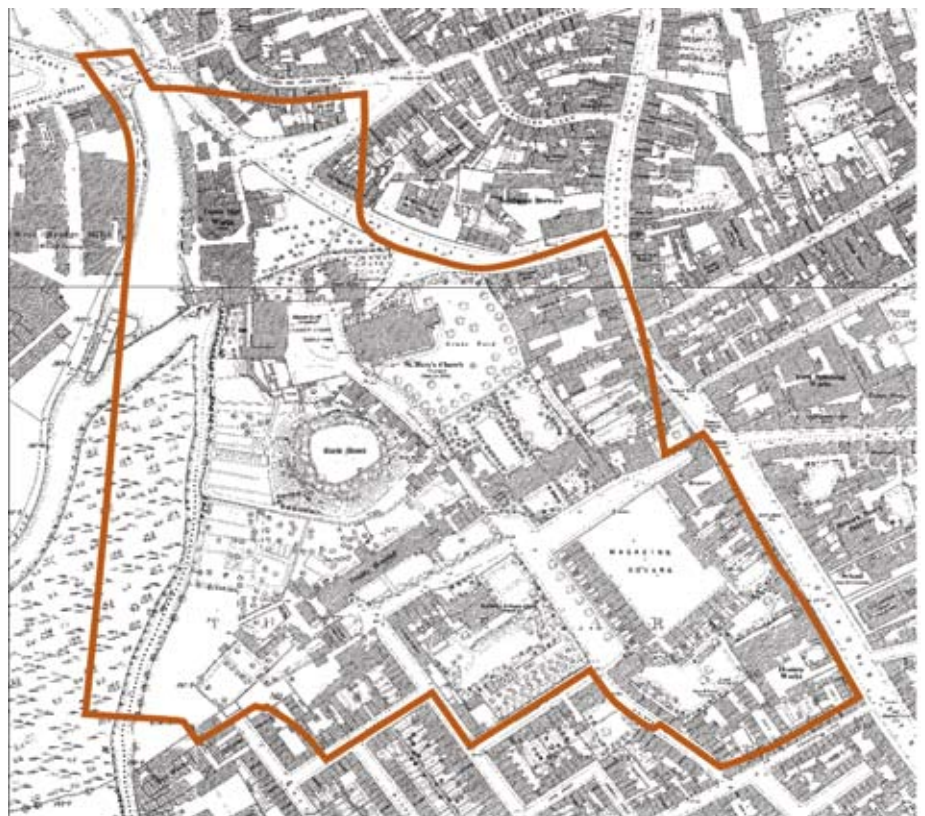
The River Soar prior to the construction of the Mile Straight in the late 19th century.



Map 5. Fowler's Map of 1828: the Castle Conservation area is shown edged in brown.

into a dwelling. The building that joined it to St Mary de Castro was demolished sometime around 1848.

4.20 By beginning of the 19th century the land north of the Great Hall had become a garden (**Map 7**) and a canal linking Leicester to Loughborough was complete by the 1820s, with a lock close to the position of the new footbridge from Castle Park to Westbridge Place. A new iron bridge was built to replace the medieval West Bridge across the Soar in 1841. By 1844, as Leicester began to industrialise and its population grew, new streets of tiny houses had been built in the south quarter of the Newarke precinct (Asylum Street, Middle Street, Gray Street etc) and officers' houses and a parade ground had been built at its east end around 1863. The Portland Shoes factory was built in 1889 on Asylum Street (now The Gateway) and on Castle Street a factory for Strettons Ltd was built in 1892, with an extension at the east end in 1901.



Map 7. The Ordnance Survey Map of 1886: The Castle Conservation Area is shown superimposed. Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited. All rights reserved, 2008. Map not scale.



Not to scale

4.21 Transport was also changing as a result of the Industrial Revolution and the development of both the canal and railway systems had a substantial effect on the environs of the conservation area. The construction of the Great Central Railway (which opened in 1899) not only required that it be driven through an already built-up area, it also required major alterations to the Soar and the mill race. Thus, from about 1890, the West Bridge lock, the mill race and mill race weir were abandoned and filled in, the ruinous mill buildings were demolished and a new 'cut' built in 1889 to create the Mile Straight. The Newarke was extended westwards over a new bridge that was opened in 1898. To the north the West Bridge was also replaced in 1891 to further improve west-east traffic links.



Artist's illustration of the Portland Shoe factory originally drawn for a shoe box label. In the bottom right hand corner the artist has shown St. Mary's Vicarage, (compare with images on pp 13 and 25). The former factory and offices now forms part of the De Montfort University campus and is known as The Portland Building.

4.22 In The Newarke, part of the Trinity Hospital was demolished and rebuilt on a new alignment to accommodate the extension and widening of the street around 1902. Several Georgian houses, including Sir Lawrence Carter's house of 1777 (the rear part of which dated from 1690) were also demolished for the same reason and the front garden of Skeffington House was considerably shortened, (**Map 6**). Castle Gardens were laid out and opened in 1926, replacing allotments and a smaller garden to the north. A new building for the School of the Arts and Technology was built on the site of the former Collegiate Church just after the turn of the century, to be completed with the construction of a new wing facing The Newarke in the 1930s. During the Second World War the Chantry House narrowly missed

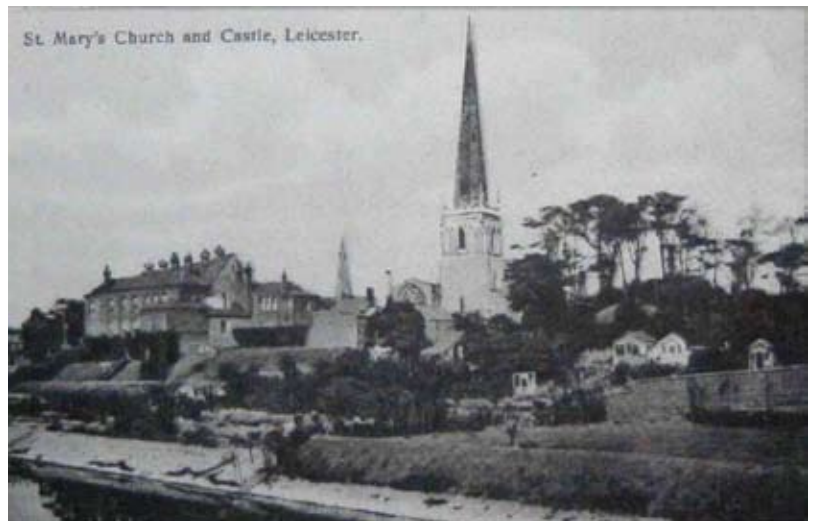
destruction when a bomb exploded in its garden in 1940. It was restored by the 1950s. The upper storeys of St Mary's Vicarage on the corner of The Newark and what was then Asylum Street (then used as a storage building for the adjacent Portland Shoes factory) were removed in 1947. Around that time a bus station was provided on the south side of the Newark.

4.23 However, it was the construction of the St Nicholas Circle gyratory system and the Southgates underpass that had the greatest effect. Not only did this traffic scheme sever the area's physical connections with the town that had served it for many centuries, it also introduced a barrier to movement between the city centre and the conservation area. The medieval street layout was swept away, together with the militia cottages, the Drill Hall and the parade ground to the south west of the Magazine Gateway. The Gateway, saved after considerable public outcry, ended up as an isolated island in the middle of these new roads and the cottages and parade ground site were redeveloped in the early 1970s by the construction of the James Went Building. This building, that had used as its design theme the punch card, the state-of-the-art computer technology of the time, is itself being replaced by a new academic building. A row of townhouses was also built in 1969 at the north end of Castle Street, and the nine storeys of Bosworth House on Southgates dates from about this time.

4.24 Most recently new student flats have been built between Castle Street and Southgates and a new academic building, the Centre for Excellence in the Performance Arts, is under construction on The Newark.



The Newark and Magazine Gateway photographed in the late 1960s when the area was still in use as a bus station by "Midland Red" services.



St. Mary de Castro and the Castle Hall seen from across the river c.1920. At this time the area was an allotment garden and some of the huts are visible in the picture.

Character Analysis and character zones

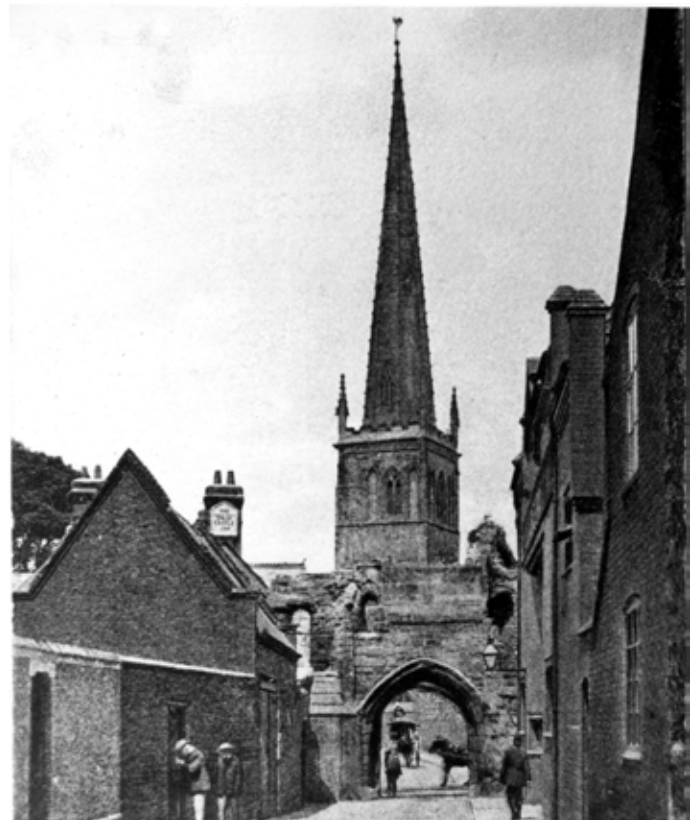
Purpose

4.25 The aim of conservation area designation is the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of an area of architectural or historic interest. However, the townscape, character and appearance of each conservation area will be unique. For example, the architectural styles and building scales may not be the same, the street patterns and spaces might be wide and open or narrow and winding. The areas may have adapted to changes in fashion in different ways and their character may be influenced by less tangible factors such as the different uses in the area, or the sounds, smells, busyness or tranquillity experienced by

the passer-by. It is important, therefore, that the different characters as well as the physical appearance of each conservation area is defined and described in order that informed decisions can be made about any future changes to the built form or the uses of buildings.

4.26 Townscape is one element of the character of a conservation area. It is created by the weaving together of the elements that go to create the urban environment – the buildings, trees, spaces, water, traffic, advertisements etc. The quality of that townscape is determined by how well these elements fit together and the effect that their combined power has on the viewer. Good townscape might evoke a sense of drama, anticipation or surprise while poor townscape can intimidate or disturb.

4.27 The townscape of the conservation area is very varied due to the many changes that have happened to the built environment over the years. It ranges from the quiet enclave of the Castle Yard dominated by the spire and mass of St Mary de Castro to the large academic buildings and bustling campus of De Montfort University to the south. The area is linked together by a series of different open spaces – the area in front of the Hawthorn Building on Magazine Walk, the Castle Yard and its narrow approaches, and Castle Gardens.



The Turret Gateway c. 1900.

4.28 There are, however, three distinct zones or enclaves - Castle Park, the Castle Yard/Castle Street area and The Newarke area. The appraisal of the townscape, architectural character and key buildings will therefore be undertaken for each separate zone.

Prevailing and former uses

4.29 The buildings within the conservation area are the tangible evidence of Leicester's past. Many have been lost over the centuries but, of the buildings that survive, many are of the highest quality in terms of both their significance in the development of Leicester as well as their original designs. This is particularly true of the Castle Hall, which represents the historic seat of Law in the town.

4.30 Historic maps of Leicester show that the appearance of the conservation area has changed several times. From its early days as the densely developed heart of a Roman town, it had split into two by the 12th century, with a jumble of medieval streets in the north and east and the more spacious castle enclave in the south. Whole streets from the medieval period have been lost, such as most of Castle Street and all of The Hollow, Bridge Street, Applegate Street and St Nicholas Square. From being the seat of power and authority over the town from the 11th century, the Castle area became a quiet enclave with few houses by the 18th century. By the end of the 19th century it had changed again, becoming a bustling area full of narrow streets of houses, shops, factories, public houses and places of worship. The role of the ancient Castle Hall remained, however, as the seat of Law until the late 20th century.

4.31 There are now few clues in the townscape to the origins of The Newarke area as a religious precinct. It remained mostly undeveloped until the 19th century, barring the construction of a few homes for wealthy residents of the town in the 17th and 18th centuries. Following construction of the first College of Art and Technology in 1897 the area is now almost entirely given over to education use. The Trinity Hospital, after over 600 years, ceased to be used for residential purposes in 1995 when it was bought by the De Montfort University to be used as offices. The church, however, retain its ecclesiastical functions and forms the focal point for the annual Castle Park Festival that celebrates Leicester's history.

Architectural character and key buildings

*Buildings and land that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area are shown in **bold**. If a building is not included it should not be taken to indicate that it is not important to that character or appearance.*

Castle Gardens

4.32 The land now occupied by **Castle Gardens** was created from marshland around the mill race that served the site of the Castle Mill. In medieval times the outer bailey of the castle ran above the right hand bank of the stream, and a small fragment (Grade II listed) can be seen north of the ponds and to the east of the main path through the park. More than half the park forms part of the Castle Scheduled Monument (Map 2 refers). The mill race was filled in during the canalisation of the Soar at the end of the 19th century and part of the made land was used as allotments until the park was laid out in the 1920s. Today, the trees have matured and paths wind past rockeries, ponds, as well as flower and shrub beds. A commemorative statue to Richard III occupies a prominent position close to the north entrance to commemorate the king who left Leicester for Bosworth Field by the West Bridge and whose body was returned to the city by the same route.

4.33 Many original flowerbeds, once planted with colourful carpet bedding, are now less formally planted with shrubs and bulbs. Trees enclose the park on all sides with deep shrub beds forming an almost continuous boundary to the canal. This has the unfortunate result of restricting access to, and views of, the canal, its wildlife and passing narrow boats. A small performance space has been created towards the south end of the park with two lines of pleached Lime trees planted in curving lines on either side. Seats are scattered around the park and the north and south boundaries are defined by decorative fencing, the design theme of which is taken from Early English pointed window arches and adds to the visual patterns in the area. The canal boundary railings were erected circa. 2004. The pedestrian



Statue of King Richard III by the sculptor Richard Butler located within Castle Gardens close to the St. Nicholas Circle entrance.



Castle Gardens from across the Mile Straight by West Bridge Place.



The spire of St. Mary de Castro and the 15th century Turret Gateway framed by the former Chantry House to the right and the small terrace of late Victorian houses on the left.

footbridge linking the park to Westbridge Place is undergoing extensive refurbishment, including full disabled access. Views to the back of the Castle Hall have recently been opened up by judicious pruning and replanting. Part of the canal 'Mile Straight' forms the west boundary of the park, and a narrowboat landing stage, popular during the summer months with boaters, has been installed by British Waterways.

The Castle Yard and Castle Street area

4.34 The Castle Yard is the core of the conservation area and contains the largest number of early buildings in any of the city's conservation areas. Castle Yard, Castle View and most of Castle Street form part of the 'Leicester Castle and Magazine Gateway Scheduled Monument' site (see Map 2) in which all the buildings are also listed in their own right and also have significant 'group value'. The townscape and environment are of the highest quality with brick, stone and half-timbered buildings set around, and enclosing, a tranquil open space softened by surrounding trees. There are exceptional views within, and out of, the Castle Yard in any direction. The variety of building materials and styles adds visual and historical interest. Buildings are of two or three storeys and cluster around the tall spire and nave of the St Mary de Castro church, creating a tightly grained townscape. The church is an important local landmark, and rises high above its well-treed churchyard to punctuate the skyline. The views of the spire from the north end of Castle Street and from Richmond Street are of particular drama and value.



The tower to the former Stretton's Hosiery factory, Castle Street.

4.35 However, the quality and legibility of the approach to the area from the north are poor and give little indication of the historic nature of the area. The views to St Mary de Castro from the west have been partially obscured by the new bulk of the student housing at Victoria Hall, thereby breaking the visual link with other historic city centre sites. From within Castle Street the view north to St Nicholas Circle is of discordant rhythms of steel and concrete. At the foot of the slope Castle Street sweeps round towards the ring road to the east and the townscape becomes more tightly grained, hemmed in by tall buildings on either side. However, the street and pavement surfaces at the junction between Castle Street, the eastern gate to Castle Gardens and the vehicle access to Castle House are in poor condition and would benefit from renewal and redesign.

4.36 Adjoining the eastern boundary of the churchyard is the tall Arts and Crafts style Grade II listed red brick **tower** of the former Stretton's factory. Its corbelled turrets, trefoil windows and a chateau-style roof make particularly effective foils to St Mary de Castro to the west. These two buildings frame the churchyard where centuries of burials have raised ground level about 1.5m above present day street level. The rows of finely carved slate headstones grouped among the trees add further visual texture and interest and the low ashlar boundary wall forms a strong edge to enclose the space and separate it from the adjoining public seating area. The adjoining factory, **61 Southgates**, dates from 1892 is robustly constructed in red brick with projecting brick piers separating the windows to create a façade with a strong vertical emphasis. The eastern end dates from 1901 and acknowledges its important location on Southgates (or Southgate Street when it was built) with a more Classical style decorated with gables, deep moulded stone bands, circular and half-round second floor windows and stone columns with Ionic capitals. The corner with Castle Street is built in a curve above the main entrance which is further emphasised with ornate stone frames around the windows and coloured glass in the upper lights of the first floor windows. The nine, five and four storey mass of Bosworth House to the south dates from 1972.

4.37 From Castle Street a narrow road way rises up to pass through an arch beneath the half-timbered first floor of **20 Castle Street**, part of **The Gate House, 22 Castle Street** (Grade II* listed).



The Castle Hall, Castle Green. The brick facade was added towards the end of the 17th century.



Castle House dates from the mid 14th century and was extended to the north and west in the 18th century.



Castle House - the Georgian wing to the north.

These brick, stone and timber-framed buildings were built as the gate to the inner bailey of the castle and were altered and extended in the 18th century when the sash windows were installed. The rear part is faced with brick and the boundary to Castle Green is built in random rubble and brick while the front garden sits behind a modern brick wall. On the south side of the archway a small front garden is enclosed by a low stone wall with cast iron railings and gate.

4.38 The Gate House adjoins another Grade II listed building, **Castle House, 24 Castle Street**. This is an 18th century building in red brick with sash windows, a moulded eaves cornice, a doorcase with a semi-circular fanlight and a small porch supported on two Tuscan columns. The house is surrounded by a high brick wall that is pierced by modern cast iron gates, thereby offering a glimpse of the secluded garden.

4.39 The first building that is seen on entering Castle Yard (the original bailey of the Norman castle) is **Castle Hall**, a Grade I listed building and a rare survival of a medieval aisled hall. It faces onto Castle Green and appears to be a small two storey red brick Georgian building. However, this is one of the oldest buildings in Leicester and is the main secular building in the conservation area. The original 12th century building was a timber-framed hall for Leicester's new Norman overlord, who would have used it for entertainments, feasting and the administration of justice. The timber hall was replaced in the 12th century by a new hall built in Dane Hills sandstone, with walls 1.4m (4.5 ft) thick. This hall was divided into three parts - a central nave and two side aisles separated from the nave by enormous timber arcades. It would have had a fire in the centre of the floor and an entrance at the southeast end, with service rooms such as kitchens and storerooms on the south side. Parts of these survive and one, known locally as **John of Gaunt's cellar** and Grade I listed, remain visible.

4.40 The hall remained largely untouched until the 17th century when the front façade was remodelled around 1695. This was when the building gained the present brick façade on the Castle Green frontage with a grand central entrance surmounted by a Classical pediment and new symmetrical arranged windows. An attic range was also added. The 'modern' Law Court fittings that were also installed at that time left the early medieval form of the hall largely intact. However, the greatest damage to the interior space occurred when the building was remodelled again in 1821. The space was divided both horizontally and vertically into smaller courtrooms and offices and the west aisle posts were truncated and replaced in stone. It is not therefore obvious to the casual visitor that he is entering a medieval hall and the building, no longer in use, is rarely visited. The rear of the property is a mix of random granite rubble and brickwork and rises high over Castle Gardens. The façade is pierced by shallow pointed arch windows and mock arrow slits with decorative brick eaves courses, tall chimneys and white clay chimney pots.



The rear elevation of the Castle Gatehouse seen from Castle Green.



The Castle Motte or Mound seen from the south west.



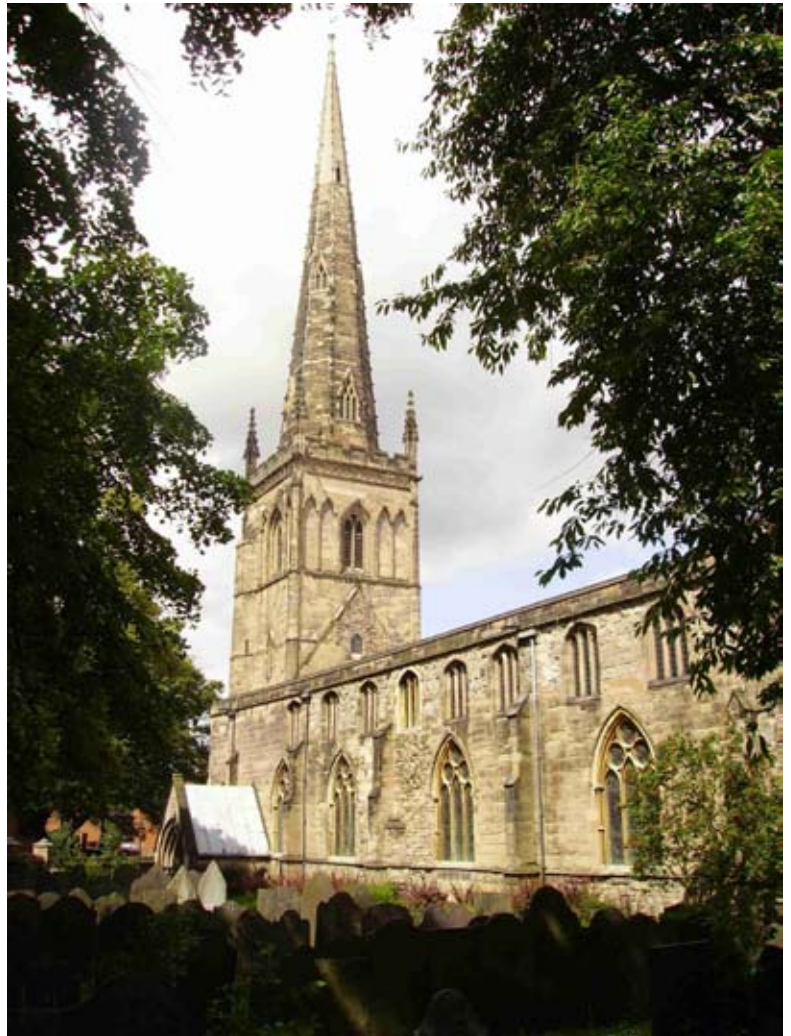
Part of the Castle Hall interior showing some of the original 12th century timbered roof structure.

4.41 To the south of Castle Hall, and hidden behind high boundary walls and other structures, stand the steep-sided remains of the **Castle Motte** (Mound), part of the Castle and Magazine Gateway Scheduled Ancient Monument. This is the location of the original castle keep (illustrated at Fig.2) and the mound on which it stood was originally higher than it is today, having been reduced in height and levelled in the 19th century to provide space for a bowling green. All traces of the original building that stood on the top of the motte have therefore been lost and, as the sides of the motte are covered in trees, the conical shape of the motte is no longer obvious. The construction of houses and gardens to the north and east in the 18th century effectively severed the intimate relationship between the motte and its bailey, and today, the only access to the motte is from Castle Park.

4.42 Also on Castle Green stands the church of **St Mary de Castro**, a Grade I listed building that has seen many alterations and extensions since it was built in the 12th century. It is one of the few churches in the country that still occupies its original position within the outer bailey of the castle it served. The history of its various rebuildings and alterations is visible across its exterior where a variety of architectural styles from Norman to the 19th century can be seen. The location of this building makes it an important feature in the townscape – it pushes forward into the open space of Castle Green, deflecting the eye and obscuring what is beyond. The tall 14th century spire introduces a strong vertical element into the space and adds visual interest with a series of crockets, lucarnes, a crenellated parapet and tall corner pinnacles. The tracery in the large west window is juxtaposed with a small Norman doorway that is decorated with zigzag carving over its round-arched opening. A similar, but more highly decorated, doorway provides access to the north aisle and, above that, an arcade of pointed arches breaks up the mass of the nave. The church and its grounds are tightly enclosed by high **random rubble and brick walls** (Grade II listed) from Turret Gateway to the west tower and by low limestone ashlar walls with decorated pier caps and railings from Castle Green into Castle Street. Beyond is visible more zigzag decoration around the recessed Norman windows in the north wall of the chancel.

4.43 From the Castle Green a narrow cobbled road leads past two groups of small 19th century red brick

22



St. Mary de Castro from the south east corner of the churchyard.



St. Mary de Castro; one of the Norman semi-circular arched windows to the south elevation.

houses known as **5,6,7,8 and 9 Castle View** (all Grade II listed). The first, and larger, group is formed of the two houses at 5 and 6 Castle View that have central paired doors with simplified Classical-styled doorcases and square traceried fanlights, sash windows in segmental arched openings, moulded eaves cornices and tall chimneys with pots. Separated by a small walled yard with a gate, the next three tiny houses form a small terrace which steps down the slope towards Turret Gateway. Built in the mid-late 18th century these simple brick buildings have two windows and plain doorways. Decoration is kept to a minimum with only a plain band of moulded bricks between the ground and first floors. Outside shutters at ground floor level are a feature of all these buildings.



Deacon's Workshop adjacent to Turret Gateway. This early 18th c building was possibly a store. It was reconstructed in the 20th century and used for a time to display Samuel Deacon's clock collection.

4.44 The former public house at **12 Castle View** is built in the Gothic Revival style in random rubble with stone quoins, a slightly jettied window in a large gable with plain bargeboards and mock timbering-framing at the north end and a small gabled oriel window at the south end. To either side pairs of large gates hang from matching random rubble piers, the gabled heads of which echo those on the piers around the nearby churchyard.

4.45 To the south lies the 15th century **Turret Gateway** (Grade I listed) that marks the entrance from the inner bailey of the castle to the new religious precinct created by Henry, first Duke of Lancaster in the mid-14th century. Although in ruins this four-centred stone archway creates a dramatic transition point between the busy De Montfort University campus to the south and the quiet space of the Castle Yard. The approach to the Gateway is down a narrow cobbled street with garden walls on either side. The garden behind the Newarke Houses Museum can be glimpsed on the east side through wrought iron gates set in an arched opening. The north boundary of the garden is formed by the 4.5m high stone wall built in the 15th century to separate St Mary de Castro from the religious precinct. To the left a small gate gives access to a small, secret herb garden and a reconstructed clockmaker's workshop, **Deacon's Workshop** (Grade II listed), complete with clock dated 1771.

The Newarke area

4.46 The townscape of this part of the conservation area is varied with many interesting views into, out of and within it. The view from The Newarke and Richmond Street to the Turret Gateway frames



Trinity Hospital (now Trinity House), showing part of the medieval chapel and hall with its distinctive 14th century Gothic arches.



The former Trinity Hospital viewed from the restored Herb Garden to the rear. The original chapel is to the far left of the picture.

the spire of St Mary de Castro, while a curve at the end of the tree-lined vista westwards along The Newarke closes the view. Beyond the curve the townscape opens up to reveal a vista to Bede Park, the Mile Straight and the new canal side housing and commercial developments on Western Road. From the university campus and Magazine Walk a glimpse can be had of the Cathedral spire, framed between tall buildings. In contrast, and greatly to its detriment and that of the townscape, the truncated upper portion of the Magazine Gateway can be seen isolated above the retaining walls of a pedestrian subway. The protective barriers around the tower further damage the setting of this building.

4.47 The townscape on the north side of The Newarke is finely grained, with groups of domestic scale two and three storey buildings forming a strong built edge. Public and private space is well defined by fences, gates and hedges while the skyline is broken by gables, crenellations and chimneys. Brick, stone and stucco facades add further visual interest and texture. The urban form becomes more open on the south side of The Newarke where the building scale also increases, reflecting the change in character from domestic to purpose-built education facilities. However, the environment around Bosworth House on the east side of the Newarke Houses Museum does not enhance the conservation area, being laid to road and car parking. It also has a rather gloomy approach to the main door and rear car park down a slight incline that has a high retaining wall along its western edge.

4.48 All the buildings on the north side of The Newarke are listed as being of architectural or historic interest. They range in date from the late 14th century to the early 20th century and their varied scale, building materials and roof heights create interesting visual rhythms and patterns. The oldest features are to be found in the **chapel** (Grade II listed) attached to the former Trinity Hospital Almshouses where a 14th century chancel arch, lancet windows and an arcade supported on octagonal piers. The **Trinity Hospital** (Grade II listed), originally a seventeen bay hall, was rebuilt in 1901 in stone random rubble and red brick with an arcaded façade, deep bay windows with crenellations, tall brick chimneys, a bell-cote and a moulded eaves cornice. The grand entrance has paired pilasters, a segmental pediment and carved spandrels either side of the arch over the door.

4.49 Adjoining the Trinity Hospital, and forming the west corner of Castle View, four late Victorian red brick Gothic Revival houses at **15-21 The Newarke** sit behind a well-kept privet hedge and Gothic railings. Their tall moulded chimney stacks punctuate the skyline and the street frontage is enlivened by blue brick detailing and dormers. The houses are covered by an Article 4 Direction that requires that planning permission is obtained for any alterations to the buildings or their grounds. The east side of Castle View is occupied by the **Chantry House** of 1511, a Grade II* listed building originally built by William Wigston, a wealthy wool merchant, as a chantry chapel for two priests. This three storey building is now part of the Newarke Houses Museum



The rebuilt wing of the the former Trinity Hospital dating from 1901.



Skeffington House, (Newarke Houses Museum) The Newarke: the fine rusticated piers and ornamental gates provide an imposing entrance to this fascinating building.

and is built in stone random rubble with ashlar quoins and windows, moulded brick eaves course, leaded windows, a Tudor arch doorway with fanlight and labels and two stone buttresses on the front façade.

Skeffington House (Grade II* listed) adjoins its east end and forms the rest of the Newark Houses Museum. This building dates from around 1600, although the front was altered in the 19th century when, amongst other works, the windows were 'Gothicised'. The pale stucco façade stands out against its surroundings and the three central gables with ball finials, crenellated parapets and tall chimneys add further visual interest. The front garden is enclosed behind railings with a central gate and rusticated gate piers. The forward projecting east wing encloses the garden at one end and draws the eye back into Magazine Walk.

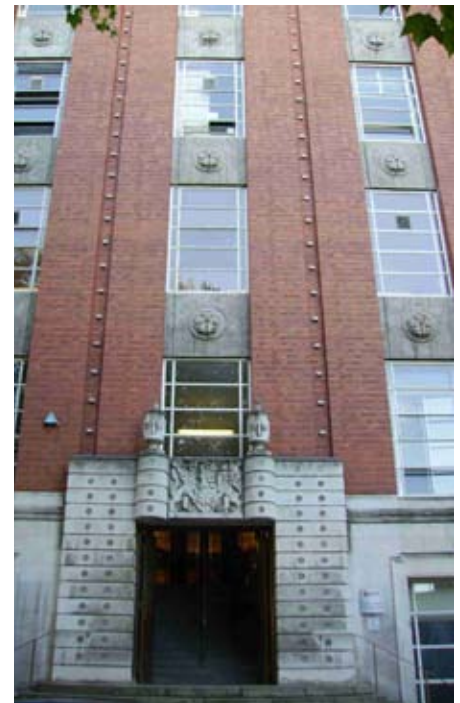


The remaining single-storey section of St. Mary's Vicarage; compare with the photograph shown on page 13.

4.50 The south side of The Newark is dominated by large buildings, most of which were built in the twentieth century. The exceptions are the remains of what is known as **St Mary's Vicarage** (Grade II listed) and The Newark and Richmond Street 1896 elevations of the Hawthorn Building, originally the Municipal Technical and Art School. St Mary's Vicarage probably began life in the 16th century as one of the chantry houses connected to the 14th century Collegiate Church of St Mary (two arches of which remain in the basement of the latter). The single storey vicarage stands on the corner of The Gateway and The Newark, although



its value as a visual 'stop' to views westwards was diminished when the upper floors were removed in 1949. However, the masonry front wall, central pointed archway and nineteenth century 'Gothic' windows continue to be of townscape value and an important visual link with the area's history. The building was refurbished in 2006 by the De Montfort University to provide a music studio.



Above: The 1931 extension to the Hawthorn Building, The Newark and above left: part of the original Technical School on The Gateway, (formerly Gateway Street).

4.51 The **Hawthorn Building** is built in bright orange Leicester bricks with stone decoration in the form of windows, mouldings, stone bands, moulded string courses and gate piers with decorative pyramidal capstones. The corners break forward to articulate the façade which is enclosed behind an original cast iron fence. The importance of the main entrance off Magazine Walk is emphasised by steps leading up to and through a large decorated half-round recessed archway that is highlighted with horizontal stone bands and cartouches and a cornice above supported on carved stone brackets with shell motifs at either end. Ornate cast iron gates hang under the arch beyond which steps lead up to the entrance doors. Towards the northern end a decorative stone cartouche commemorates the laying of the foundation stone. The building was extended in brick and Portland stone to cover the whole of its square site in 1931, the extension being designed in typical massive 1930s style with steel windows and stripped down Classical decoration on The Newark elevation and in a

style similar to the original Technical School on The Gateway elevation. The mass and scale of this four and five storey building dominates the streets around it and towers over the trees and buildings nearby.

4.52 The building has many features that add interest, pattern and variety to the street scene. The rhythms and patterns of The Gateway elevation are created by stone frames around the ground floor windows and strong vertical brick piers separating the large rectangular steel windows. There are horizontal stone bands at first floor and third floor levels with a moulded stringcourse above. A full height bay feature with a pedimented gable projects forward of the building line near the north corner. On The Newarke elevation curved shallow steps lead up to the main copper-clad entrance doors on The Newarke, beyond which rises another stone staircase to the main entrance proper. The entrance is defined with a rusticated Portland stone surround decorated with vertical incised circles and a central coat of arms between two half-round barrels supporting swagged urns. Further definition is added by two narrow vertical channels that rise up the brick face of the building from the stone-clad ground floor. The channels are themselves decorated with small white stone projections resembling brick headers. Concrete panels beneath the central windows are decorated with raised cinquefoils to further define the entrance which has two tall concrete lamp columns (with replacement, but incongruous, lamp holders) set towards the front of the pavement.

4.53 The Gateway is also the location of another orange-red brick and stone building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Formerly the Portland Shoes factory, the oldest part of **The Portland Building** is the three and a half storey section at the north end that dates from 1888. It has two splayed bay oriel windows at first floor level, a projecting eaves cornice supported on brackets, original cast iron rainwater pipes with a decorated hopper head and small dormer windows. The entrance at the left hand end is elaborately faced in ashlar limestone blocks with Ionic columns above which two kneeling Classical figures support a broken segmental pediment. The extension on the south side that wraps the building round into Newarke Close is a simple design of strong brick piers separating large timber and steel windows. The brick piers project above parapet level to create skyline interest with moulded heads above the third floor windows. As with the Hawthorn Building, the site is surrounded by a contemporary cast iron fence.



The Newarke Bridge completed in 1898 and constructed using large ashlar blocks.



The west door of St. Mary de Castro with its highly decorative wrought iron hinges and gate finials.



Portland stone carved relief panel to the façade of the Hawthorn Building.



Classical figures above the main entrance to the Portland Building, The Gateway. It dates from 1888.

4.54 Beyond St Mary's Vicarage nos. 12-16 Newarke Street have been demolished, leaving an unsightly gap in the townscape. The remaining buildings west of the gap site on Newarke Street comprise the three and four storey group between **16 The Newarke and the canal** (the former William Baker factory). Plainly built between 1905 and 1915 they are of some townscape value because of the way they enclose the street space and form a strong built edge at the back of footway. The facades add pattern in a series of strong verticals formed by brick piers and windows, a pattern that continues around onto the canal frontage. The south-western boundary of the conservation area is at the point where the **Newarke Bridge** of 1890 crosses the canal 'Mile Straight'. The design of the bridge was taken as another opportunity during the construction of the canal to add decoration and visual interest to a functional structure. As at West Bridge to the north, this bridge is designed in the Gothic Revival style but uses ashlar blocks for its two wide elliptical arches, solid parapet and saddleback coping stones rather than the iron and cast iron of West Bridge. However, the theme of octagonal crenellated turrets is continued but with different decoration, this time with inset panels with cusped arches.

Building materials and the public realm

4.55 The conservation area contains a wide variety of building materials and these generally reflect the needs or fashions of the time when buildings and streets were constructed. The materials help to create the individual character of the area and its buildings and their loss can erode that character. The most common material is **brick** which has been used since the 18th century when brick facades, such as that on the Great Hall, became fashionable or cheap enough to use for modest houses such as those at 15-21 The Newarke and 5-9 Castle View. It is also used at 20-22 Castle Street as infill between the studs of the timber-framing. Blue bricks are also used for decorative patterns on facades (15-21 The Newarke) and for garden paths (20 Castle Street). **Stone** is another common feature in the conservation area, whether it is used in a building, such as St Mary de Castro, Trinity Hospital or the Great Hall, for decoration, as on the Hawthorn and Portland Buildings, or for roofing. In buildings the stonework, usually limestone, is laid in courses but other buildings and structures use granite rubble laid randomly such as 12 Castle View and the churchyard walls. Stone, in the form of red and grey granite setts and kerb stones, is also a particular feature of Castle View and the Castle Yard, where York stone slabs have also been laid around the Castle Green. Some buildings have stone slate roofs, others are more commonly covered in Welsh slate.

4.56 **Timber** is another common material in the conservation area. It is evident as structural timber, as at 20-22 Castle Street, or in windows, doors and as decoration. St Mary de Castro has an ornately carved Victorian Gothic Revival west door. Most timber windows retain their original glazing bars, ensuring that building facades retain their original form and patterns. The external wooden shutters in Castle View represent some of the very few such features remaining in Leicester and are important parts of the history and architecture of these buildings. **Stucco** is rare, only being used at Newarke Houses Museum.

4.57 The use of **metals** of various types can be seen throughout the conservation area. Its use for fencing is particularly important, helping to define and separate the private and public realms. **Cast iron** is used in the construction of West Bridge, while **wrought**



Portland stone cartouche to the original section of the Hawthorn Building.



Cast bronze plaque from the Richard III statue plinth, Castle Gardens.



Stone vaulting to Newarke Gateway.



External wooden shutters to cottage in Castle Street.

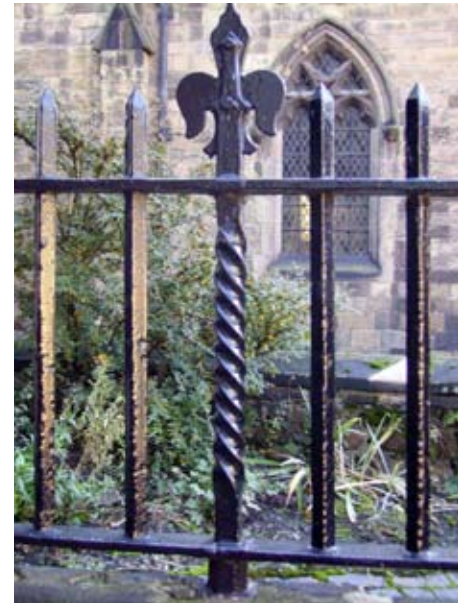
iron is used for the Leicester pattern bow-topped fencing and arrowhead railings outside Trinity Hospital, Georgian fanlights and the ornate curvilinear hinges and door hasp on St Mary de Castro's west door. The wrought iron fencing around St Mary de Castro is decorated with barleysugar twists and fleurs-de-lis while the Hawthorn and Portland Buildings have decorative posts and railing finials of considerable visual interest. The 18th century gates that stand as a feature in the rear garden of Newarke Houses Museum are also of wrought iron as are those separating the garden from Castle View. Some buildings have retained their original steel windows and steel is used for the modern railings and gates of Newarke Houses Museum and the boundaries of Castle Park. Some original lead rainwater goods can also be seen. Copper appears as an unusual cladding on the doors of the Hawthorn Building on The Newarke which are further enhanced by panels representing different trades such as building, printing, mechanics, welding and weaving.

4.58 In the public realm roads and footways are generally laid to **tarmac** and **concrete**, except in Castle Yard where **granite setts** and **York stone** are used. The roadway and paths on the west side of Castle Yard are no longer public highway, the rights having been extinguished in the early 1990s. This has allowed parking to be controlled without additional yellow lines, although a proliferation of timber bollards adds little to the quality of the open space. Elsewhere the pavements and roads are broken or patched leading to a reduction in the visual amenity of the area, particularly the south end of Castle View. Magazine Walk is an entirely unsatisfactory pedestrian space, particularly when approached from the west. The visitor is confronted with the large concrete retaining walls of the ring road, the dark entrances to the pedestrian subways and a confusing mix of bridge, barriers, steps and raised edges. Pedestrian movement across this space from north to south is particularly poorly served. Heavy on-street parking is another feature of the area and parked cars are encroaching onto the grassed verge opposite the Newarke Houses Museum.

4.59 Street furniture is generally of a standardised form used across the city, such as the grey-green steel lamp columns. Castle Yard is the exception and higher quality surfaces, lighting and signage are used within its precincts, such as the reproduction Paris-style lamp columns with gold leaf decoration that are characteristic of the city's other premier conservation area, New Walk, and the 'heritage' design direction fingerposts. Two lamp posts installed when the Hawthorn Building was built occupy a prominent site on The Newarke to define the entrance to the building. The loss of their original square section lamps is regrettable.



Detail of one of the metal relief panels designed by Percy Brown to the main entrance doors of the Hawthorn Building.



Fleurs-de-lis detail to wrought iron railings, The Gateway, Castle House.



Mountsorrel granite setts and kerbs are an important local feature within the Conservation Area.



Traditional cast iron street name plate, Castle Yard.



Castle Gardens with the spire of St. Mary de Castro in the distance.

4.60 The quality of the public realm is also determined by smaller features such as litter bins and seating. The conservation area has retained some of its original black and white painted cast iron street name signs in the Castle Yard area that help to contribute to its historic quality. A series of bronze plaques is placed at various locations within the conservation area providing visitors with information about the history of the buildings around them. Of particular interest is the plaque, installed by the County Council, on the wall of 24 Castle Street which commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Bosworth. However, generally, the seating environments and litter bins are of poor quality. There is no seating on the Castle Green for the casual visitor or tourist to enjoy this quiet space and the seating area on Castle Street is uninspiring and unwelcoming.



The walled garden at the rear of Newark Houses Museum.

Greenery and green spaces

4.61 Castle Gardens provides the largest area of public green space in the conservation area. The parts that are not accessible, such as private gardens, are mostly open to view and so contribute to the green character of the conservation area. On the north side of The Newark the buildings are set within well-kept flowerbeds and lawns or shelter behind dense banks of shrubs and other garden plants. Trees are one of the most important features of the conservation area as they help to 'soften' spaces, provide much needed shade in summer and generally enhance the otherwise hard urban environment. The London planes on The

Newarke are particularly effective in this respect and the mature plane tree on the east side of the Hawthorn Building is an important feature of an otherwise bland and generally unusable public open space. Trees are a feature of many views into and out of the conservation area, particularly north along The Gateway, where they frame and enclose the view of the Trinity Hospital, and west along Newarke Close where a small group of street trees 'stops' the view.

4.62 The River Soar forms the western boundary of the conservation area and has a key role to play in the quality of the area as well as more generally for the biodiversity of Leicester. The Soar and its canal were transformed over 25 years to create the Riverside Park, the creation of which won the City Council a Diploma of Merit in the Europa Nostra Awards in 1989. It is now an important 'wildlife corridor' and provides visitors with an accessible open space from which to watch wildlife or to take part in other activities such as boating, fishing, walking etc.

4.63 Magazine Walk was re-designed a few years ago but the space still does not function well as open space. It is featureless and bland. The grass bank on the north side is too steep for casual seating and the flatter part on The Newarke has recently become an unauthorised car park. Not only has this seriously damaged the grass it also restricts pedestrian movement across the space.

4.64 Castle Gardens contains most of the area's trees with a variety of bushy, upright and weeping forms. They create interesting shapes and colours throughout the year and also act as foils through which the Great Hall, St Mary de Castro and the Castle motte can be glimpsed. There are also over 75 different kinds of shrubs and flowering plants, including the rare deadly nightshade, a plant long associated with castles, physic gardens and old hospitals. The plants in Castle Gardens could therefore have been in and around the park for many centuries. Trees also create a dense green edge along the 'Mile Straight' although they also a visual barrier between Castle Gardens and the river.

Negative factors

4.65 The appraisal points to various problems in the area which have a negative impact on the conservation area. The most damaging is the area around the Magazine Walk where the pedestrian environment is entirely subservient to that provided for motor vehicles. The



Metal footbridge over the canalised River Soar linking Castle Gardens with West Bridge Place. The former Pex factory of 1840-50 lies to the right.



West Bridge designed by E. C. Mawby the Borough Engineer in 1890.



West Bridge: part of the carved detail.

steps, ramps and subways that provide pedestrian links with the city centre are unsightly and unfriendly. The structures associated with them cut across the base of the Magazine Gateway, an important medieval structure, to the great detriment of its historic value and architecture. The gap site and vacant buildings on The Newarke also damage the appearance of the conservation area as does the low level vandalism such as graffiti on the bronze tourist information plaques and the problems associated with drug-taking and selling.

4.66 Within Castle Gardens there are a few problem areas or aspects that detract from its full potential. Dense planting around the ponds creates a rather gloomy atmosphere which is compounded by the dark corner and vacant shelter on the south side of the Castle Street entrance. The steps beside the pond are rather uninviting as is the access from Castle Street.

4.67 The vacant site and building on the south side of The Newarke detract from the appearance of the street as does the car park and approach to Bosworth House on the north side.

General condition of the area and buildings

4.68 The large majority of buildings in the conservation area are in use and their condition is therefore good. The gap site on The Newarke and the adjacent empty building have had a detrimental effect on the street, as do the environs of Bosworth House. The recent renovation and re-use of the old St Mary's Vicarage has much improved the appearance of this ancient building. A new building for training in the performing arts is under construction for De Montfort University on the south side of Magazine Walk, leading to some temporary disruption as well as damage to the Magazine Walk area, the latter being compounded by car parking on the grass verge on the north side of the Walk.

4.69 Castle Gardens retains its early 20th century character such as the rockery, pools, dry stone walling and sweeping tarmac paths. New planting has been introduced, such as the curving lines of pleached Limes in the centre of the park, but the interpretation panels and the access and views to the castle motte require improvement. Following some years of less than effective management, it now has a full time summer gardener and an active park users' group. Its care and condition are therefore improving.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change

Problems and pressures

4.70 There are several problems in the conservation area that need to be resolved and these have all been referred to in the foregoing appraisal:

- the poor pedestrian environment created by the Magazine Walk and its associated ramps, stairs and subways and the poor environment around Bosworth House;
- the isolation of the Magazine Gateway in the centre of a busy road and its lack of good pedestrian access;



Above: These two unique square section lamp posts date from the 1930s and were installed at the time that the Hawthorn Building was constructed. The copper lanterns are an unfortunate recent change. The original square shaped lamps were designed to complement the design of the columns as is evident from the top image.

- the encroachment of parking onto the grassed area south of The Newarke;
- the lack of a physical link between the inner bailey of the Norman castle and the castle mound;
- the extent of tree growth on the sides of the castle mound that obscures the shape of this important monument;
- the continuing vacancy of the Castle Hall and the Magazine Gateway and uncertainty about their future uses;
- the gap site and vacant buildings on the south side of The Newarke;
- the patched appearance of historic surfaces such as the southern section of Castle View;
- the low level vandalism such as graffiti and anti-social behaviour associated with alcohol and drugs;

4.71 The area is also under pressure from the planned expansion of the De Montfort University, the masterplan for which has already received outline planning permission. The plans involve the construction of several new buildings in the Magazine Walk and Newarke areas and their designs and massing will need to be appropriate for these sensitive locations.

Capacity for change

4.72 Improvements to Magazine Walk and the setting of Magazine Gateway are included in the masterplan for the development of the de Montfort University campus, outline approval for which was given in 2005. The plan includes for the restoration of the original ground level at Magazine Walk, thereby restoring the ground level approach to, and access through, the Magazine Gateway, infilling of the pedestrian subways and the provision of an improved, possibly formal, open space with blocks of new buildings enclosing the space on the north and south sides. De Montfort University expects to deliver this part of its "masterplan" within the next 12-18 months, including the necessary roadworks to divert northbound traffic from the west side to the east side of Magazine Gateway. A new building on the north side of The Newarke on the east side of Newarke Houses Museum may help to resolve the poor environment on that side.

4.73 Subject to the constraints imposed by their scheduled and listed status, there appears to be potential to link the Castle Yard and the Castle Motte by providing a new access through the site of the disused public toilets behind the rear garden of 5 Castle View. This should be investigated and, if the works are considered feasible and acceptable, an action plan should be drawn up to act as a basis for seeking funds to undertake the work. A new landscape management regime for the sides of the motte would also have to be agreed.

4.74 The vacant site on the south side of The Newarke creates an unsightly gap in the built fabric and offers potential for redevelopment. De Montfort University will be refurbishing the building for educational use within the next 12 - 8 months.

4.75 Whilst it is impossible to prevent graffiti, steps can be taken to minimise its impact through regular cleaning. The anti-social behaviour that results from alcohol and drug use

in the park can be addressed by removing or opening up areas that currently conceal those involved and/or seeking the extension of the street-drinking ban.

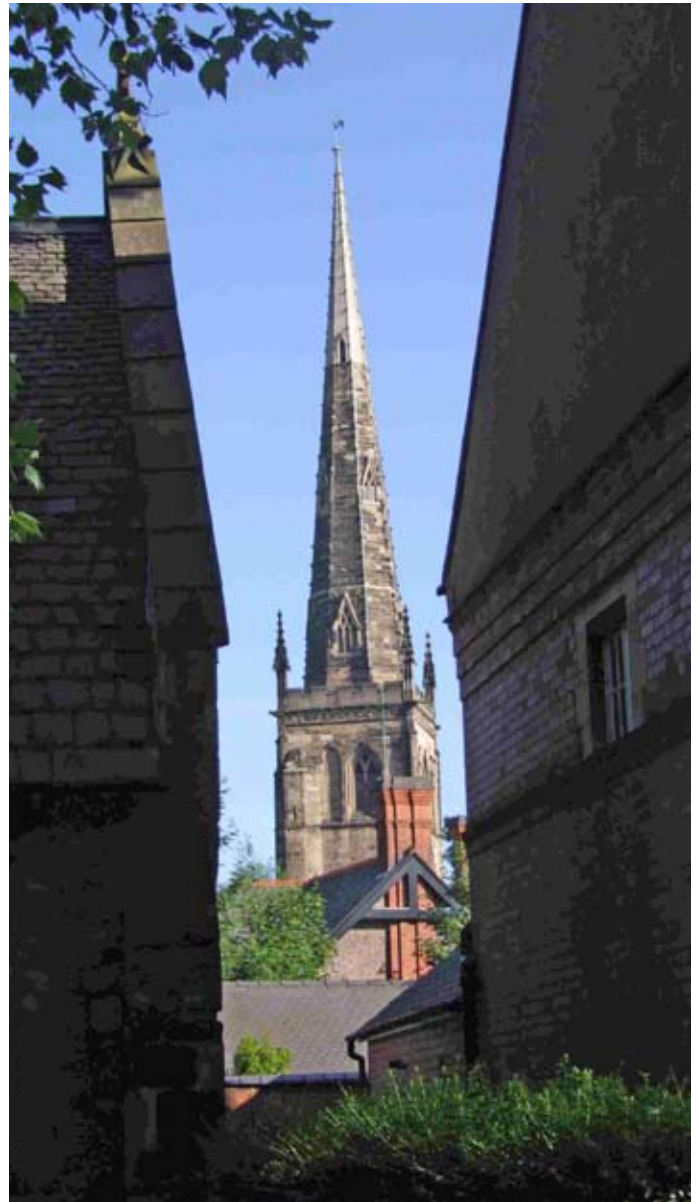
5.0 community involvement

5.1 Consultation on the draft appraisal included a Press Release, placing the draft on the Council's website, copies in the Customer Services Centre at New Walk Centre and individual hard copies for those people who asked for one. An exhibition was held in the local library and all those who lived, worked, visited or had a property or other interest in the area were invited to a public meeting in the Ukrainian Catholic Church Halls, Fosse Road South, to discuss the draft management proposals. All views expressed were included in the Cabinet report that adopted the appraisal as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan. The report included details as to how the various views had been taken into account in the preparation of the Management and Enhancement Proposals.

6.0 conservation area boundary

6.1 The appraisal of the conservation area prompted a reconsideration of the boundaries. The north part of the conservation area, from West Bridge/St Nicholas Circle (South) to Welles Street is physically isolated from the larger, southern part and has no visual links with the rest of the area. However, most of the land and buildings in this area are protected both by reason of their inclusion as part of the Jewry Wall Scheduled Monument as well as being listed in their own right. St Nicholas Church is a Grade I listed building, Vaughan College and 10-12 Talbot Lane are Grade II listed and the trees in the churchyard of St Nicholas Church are maintained to a high standard by the Council. The only unprotected buildings are therefore 14-24 Talbot Lane, a short terrace of late Victorian houses. The Council therefore excluded the area north of St Nicholas Circle from the conservation area.

6.2 The present southern boundary runs along the centre of The Newarke but this disregards the influence that the buildings on the south side of the street have on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The boundary has therefore been extended to include these additional buildings and land up to, and including, the Clephan Building (Oxford Street) and the Gateway Sixth Form College building and grounds (Richmond Street/Bonnars Lane). The western boundary of the conservation area presently runs down the centre of the canal. This is illogical and means that only half of the canal bridges at St Augustine's Road and The Newarke fall within the conservation area. The western boundary has been extended to include the canal and its towpath and the whole of Newarke Bridge.



A surprise glimpse of St. Mary de Castro's spire from The Newarke.

6.3 Finally, and to more properly reflect the new boundaries and the historic environment within it, the Council has changed the name of the conservation area from “Castle Gardens Conservation Area” to “The Castle Conservation Area”.

7.0 management and enhancement proposals

7.1 Conservation areas are complicated places that derive their special character from the interaction of many different elements. They are therefore vulnerable to change, particularly if that change is the result of a series of small changes that, taken individually, may be minor but cumulatively add up to very large changes in character or appearance. However, the intention behind the designation of conservation areas is not to prevent change but to manage change in such a way that areas can adapt and evolve but retain the features integral to their special architectural and historic interest.

7.2 By setting out the special architectural and historic features of the area in some detail, the foregoing character appraisal provides additional information, supplementary to that in the Local Plan, for those charged with managing or changing the environment and helps them to ensure that any development is planned in a manner that is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

8.0 contacts & appendices

8.1 If you would like further information on this, or any other, conservation area you can contact the Council as follows :

- Write to : Conservation and Nature Team, Planning Policy and Design, Regeneration & Culture, Leicester City Council, New Walk Centre, Welford Place, Leicester LE1 6ZG
- Fax : (0116) 2471149
- E-mail conservation@leicester.gov.uk
- On the Council's website at www.leicester.gov.uk and search under 'conservation areas'.

appendix 1 : list of buildings in the conservation area

Castle Gardens	Remains of Castle Wall
Castle Street	Nos. 1-5 (odd), 20-24 (even) (The Gate House & Castle House)
Castle View	Nos. 5-9 (inclusive), 12, Turret Gateway, Deacon's Workshop
Castle Yard	Castle Hall (former Magistrates' Court), Church of St Mary de Castro, Castle Motte, John of Gaunt's cellar
Oxford Street	25 (the Clephan Building)
Richmond Street	Gateway Sixth Form College and yard
Southgates	61, Bosworth House and car park
The Gateway	Portland Building
The Newarke	Magazine Gateway, Newarke Houses Museum, Trinity Building, (former Trinity Hospital), The Chantry House, 15-21 (odd), Newarke Bridge, former St. Mary's Vicarage, Hawthorn Building, site of 12-16 (even), 18-30 (even)
West Bridge Street	West Bridge

appendix 2 : list of listed buildings in the conservation area

Castle Gardens	Remains of Castle Wall*
Castle Street	Nos. 20 & 22 (The Gate House), 24 (Castle House), Gate, Gate Piers & Wall
Castle View	Nos. 5 & 6, 7, Nos 8 & 9, Turret Gateway, Deacon's Workshop
Castle Yard	County Court (incl. remains of Castle*), Church of St Mary de Castro, Churchyard wall*
Richmond Street	Gateway Sixth Form College and yard
The Newarke	Magazine Gateway, Newarke Houses, Chantry House, Iron Gates, Newarke Wall, Trinity Building, (former Holy Trinity Hospital Almshouses), Newarke canal bridge
West Bridge Street	West Bridge

* part of Scheduled Monument

appendix 3 : article 4 directions

The Newarke	Nos. 15-21 (odd)
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appendix 4 : management and enhancement proposals

Location

Castle Yard and Castle Mound

Management or Enhancement Proposal

1. Investigate the potential to create a new access point to the Castle Mound from Castle Yard to restore the historic connection between the motte and its inner bailey and improve access to, and interpretation of, both sites;

2. Agree and establish a new management regime for the tree cover on the sloping sides of the Castle Mound (including not replacing trees as they fail or die and removing undergrowth and self set trees as they occur with a view to restoring the mound to its original tree-free form with grassed slopes);

3. Undertake research to determine future uses for the Castle Hall and Magazine Gateway buildings, including rigorous assessment of the significance of the existing Court fittings in the former to determine whether they should be retained in whole or in part;

4. Work with partners as appropriate to fund works to these two important historic buildings.

The Newarke

1. Replace the lanterns on the lamp columns outside the Hawthorn Building to match the original 1930s design.

Magazine Gateway and Magazine Walk

1. Deliver, via De Montfort University masterplan proposals –
a) better links from the area to the city centre by restoring ground levels to provide level access to, and through, the Magazine Gateway.
b) an attractive and useable public open space in front of the Hawthorn Building.

2. Ensure that any new development on the south side of Magazine Walk retains the important views towards the Cathedral spire.

3. Continue to seek new uses for the Magazine Gateway.

Castle Gardens

1. Consider measures to redesign or open up areas where drug dealing takes place and seek funds to undertake this work;

Conservation area generally

1. Apply rigorously the policies set out in the Local Plan to encourage good design and appropriate forms of development, including the general presumption against demolition of buildings in the conservation area and the requirement that all development preserves or enhances the character of the conservation area.

2. Undertake a comprehensive photographic survey of the conservation area to establish a baseline against which to monitor change;

3. Retain and properly maintain historic street surfaces such as York stone, granite setts and granite kerbs and manage streetworks to minimise the time temporary surfaces are left in place.

4. Seek funding to secure specialised/more intensive management regime for the historic surfaces in Castle View, Castle Yard and Castle Street;

5. Retain, and repair where necessary, original fencing, gates and other means of enclosure;

6. Improve the design and surfacing of the junction of Castle Street with the east access to Castle Gardens;

7. Improve the design and layout of the public seating area in Castle Street;

8. Encourage sympathetic development of the vacant site and building on The Newarke;

9. Ensure that graffiti is regularly removed and seek police support for the extension of the city centre alcohol free zone.

appendix 5 : relevant local plan policies

Subject	Policy No.	Details
The Plan Strategy	PS01	a) the creation of an improved city centre... b) conservation and enhancement of the City's buildings...
Built Environment		
Archaeology	BE01	Preservation of the City's Archaeological Heritage
Listed Buildings	BE02-05	Listed Buildings
Conservation Areas	BE06-07	Conservation Areas
Buildings of Local Interest	BE08	Buildings of Local Interest
Article 4 Directions	BE09	Article 4 Directions
Green Environment		
Sites of Importance for Nature		
Conservation	GE02	Location 5 - River Soar and Grand Union Canal
Enhancing Biodiversity	GE03	Biodiversity Enhancement Sites No. 50 - Castle Gardens
Community & Leisure Facilities		
The Universities	CL06	De Montfort University

other policies

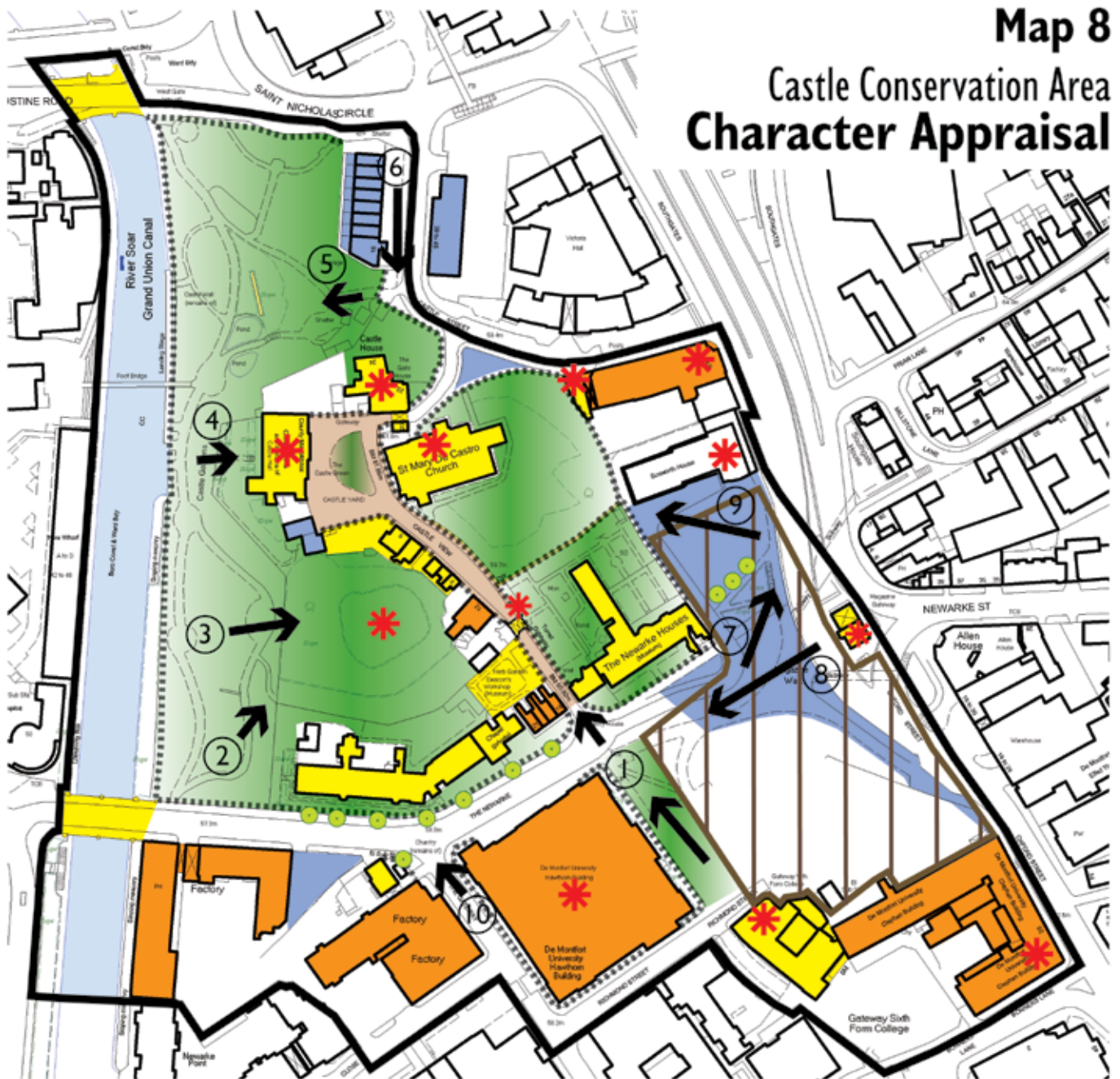
Supplementary Planning Guidance on Biodiversity October 2003











appendix 6 : glossary of architectural terms


ashlar	smooth faced masonry blocks laid horizontally
bargeboard	projecting board placed against the outside incline of the roof of a building, often used decoratively
corbel(led)	a method of laying bricks or stone so that each course projects slightly forward of the one below
cornice	horizontal projecting section at the top of a building or wall
crenellation	alternate high and low walls on a parapet resembling battlements
cul-de-sac	the projecting point in window tracery
doorcase	decorative timber or stone framing a doorway
fanlight	a window over a door
finial	a formal ornament at the apex of a gable or spire
half-timbering	the external visible timbers of a timber-framed building (or mock half-timbering where timbers are applied externally to create the impression of half-timbering)
header	a brick laid with its shorter face exposed
jetty (ies)	the projection of an upper storey outward over the one below
label	a rectangular projection over a window designed to throw water away from the wall
lancet	a slender pointed arch window
oriel	a curved bay window projecting out from an upper floor
parapet	a low wall along the edge of a roof
pediment	a low pitched gable shape over a door or window
pilaster	a shallow column attached to, and slightly projecting from, a wall
quoin	dressed stones laid up the external corners of buildings, usually in alternating large and small blocks
rusticated	of a column – square blocks which interrupt the shaft at regular intervals of a wall – chamfered edge masonry blocks laid with very deep joints
segmental arch	a very shallow arch [of a bay window – a very shallow curved bay]
spandrel	the triangular space that is created between a horizontal line drawn from the apex of an arch and a vertical line drawn from the point from which the arch springs
swag	decoration carved to resemble a draped flower garland or fabric
trefoil	a cusped tracery pattern with three lobes

Map 8

Castle Conservation Area Character Appraisal



-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed buildings
-  Unlisted buildings of townscape importance
-  Important trees and green spaces
-  Important boundary features
-  Sites that detract from the character of the area
-  University expansion site
-  Historic surfaces
-  Canalised river associated features
-  Focal building or landmark

-  Important views
- 1. Through Turret Gateway
- 2. & 3. To Castle Motte & St. Mary de Castro
- 4. To Castle Motte
- 5. To Westbridge Place
- 6. To Castle House & St. Mary's Church Spire
- 7. To Leicester Cathedral Spire
- 8. To Hawthorne Building
- 9. To St. Mary de Castro Church Spire
- 10. To Trinity Hospital

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