



6. Elm Hill and Maddermarke

Significance

Concentration of historic buildings

Presence of features from historical period(s)

Townscape / Landscape quality:

Quality of details:

Concentration of negative features:

Score

VERY HIGH

VERY HIGH (4)

VERY HIGH (4)

VERY HIGH (4)

VERY HIGH (4)

FEW (3)

19

Character Area Overview

Summary

This area is one of the most attractive in the City with a grid of often very narrow and intimate streets and lanes generally running north-south and linked by more major routes running east-west, the line of which dates back to Roman times. The area also includes Tombland, the Saxon market place, which is the transition between the town and Cathedral. The area today is characterised by small specialist shops, bars and cafes and as a consequence the area is quite vibrant with vehicular traffic limited on several streets. The key exceptions are Tombland, which is bisected by a very busy road, and St Andrew's Street which forms the boundary of the area.

Topography & Landscape Framework

The topography is a strong contributor to the character of the area as many streets descend northwards towards the river with east-west routes following the contours of the land. The lines of now culverted streams, particularly the Great Cockey, the line of which can be traced along Little London Street (a) and School Lane (b), have also strongly influenced the pattern of development in this area.

The area is not heavily landscaped. To the west, there are a number of small, green open spaces associated with the churches along St Benedicts Street, whereas to the east St Andrews Plain and Tombland (c) are

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Extract from 1886 OS map

both hard landscaped. Occasional set-back buildings and churchyards which allow space for trees to survive, punctuate what are often strong building lines in the tight urban grain of the area.

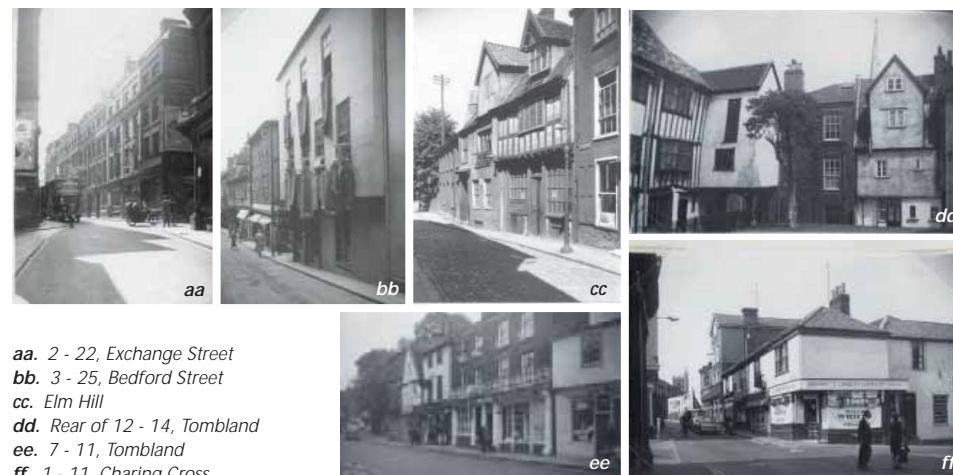
Area Morphology, History & Archaeology

The street pattern in this area has been strongly influenced by the historical development of the area since Roman times. The alignment of St Benedict's Street – St Andrew's Street broadly follows the line of the east-west running Roman Road. By the C8, as the first urban settlement developed, part of the town's defensive ditch crossed the area around St Andrew's Street and Pottergate. Much of the area must have stood outside the defended town and may have been an industrial suburb where pottery making was carried out. Tombland,

within the defended part of the town, became the town's marketplace.

The Normans massively changed the status and shape of Norwich. The marketplace shifted to its present location and the grid of streets which characterise much of the area is a product of this period as are many of the churches. Tombland remained an affluent area close to the Cathedral and many houses were rebuilt in stone.

The town continued to prosper throughout the Middle Ages with the wealthy merchants occupying houses in the area around Elm Hill, Bedford Street and Charing Cross. The undercrofts of many of these houses still survive even when the buildings above have been redeveloped. Elm Hill was realigned in the C15 following the construction of the St Andrews Hall Friary complex and was devastated by fire in 1507.



aa. 2 - 22, Exchange Street
bb. 3 - 25, Bedford Street
cc. Elm Hill
dd. Rear of 12 - 14, Tombland
ee. 7 - 11, Tombland
ff. 1 - 11, Charing Cross

Most of the population lived in timber-framed buildings, many of which still survive in the area despite several fires especially in the C16. The economy of the town declined in the C16, but the influence of settlers from Holland, who revived the weaving industry, led to an economic boom. A legacy of that period are the large dormers or 'lucams' which enabled people to use the upper floors of their houses for weaving. The courtyards, evident in many groups of buildings in the area, are also a legacy of the dual use of buildings which can still be seen today. The name 'Maddermarket' where dye stuffs were sold is another reminder of the importance of the weaving industry to the area.

By the C18 the area contained some of the main shopping streets in Norwich, a trend which continued throughout the C19 when

Exchange Street was formed (1828-32) to ease traffic to the market, and St Andrew's Street and Bank Plain were linked in 1898-1900 to allow tram access. London Street was a medieval lane, but was widened in 1856 and again in 1876 to provide better access from the railway station, losing many of its ancient buildings in the process. Such a fashionable area was also seen as a suitable location for Nonconformist Churches such as the Friends Meeting House and Congregational Church.

Landmarks & Views

City Hall, one of the City's strategic landmarks, is an important feature in views from several of the streets between the Market Place and the river due to the topography and orientation of the streets (d). Despite their scale, the Cathedral and Castle are less visible from this area: the spire

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of the former only becoming noticeable in views from London Street and Princes Street. Views of the Castle from the St Andrew's Hill / Elm Hill area are, however, important **(e)**. Some views of the river are possible through the courts of buildings on the north side of Elm Hill **(f)** whilst St Ethelbert's Gate attractively closes the vista east along Queen Street **(g)**.

St Michael at Plea **(h)** is an important local landmark to views east along St Andrew's Street, with St Andrew's Church itself important in views from the end of Bedford Street / London Street.

An important aspect of the character of this area is the views which can be gained along the longer east-west streets **(i)** and the tangential views along the narrow north-south lanes and alleys **(j)**. Often, these views do not focus on key buildings, but allow glimpses of attractive, intimate streetscenes.

C20 developments along St Andrew's Street, Duke Street, Pottergate and Bedford Street are very noticeable in certain long views looking east along the main streets and north down Exchange Street. Whilst some of the more modern buildings have interesting forms and materials they do contrast sharply with those of traditional buildings **(k)**.

Key Building Groups

Key characteristics of this area are its 'domestic' scale and vernacular forms which mean that although there is a wealth of historic buildings, which is so important in defining the sense of place, the buildings are not ostentatious. There are, however, some exceptionally fine timber framed buildings on many of the streets and equally fine Georgian (or Georgian-fronted) houses on streets including Pottergate **(l)**, Princes Street **(m)** and St Andrew's Hill, for example. The south **(n)** and west **(o)** ranges of Tombland are particularly good compositions of C18 properties. Several of the vernacular buildings are notable for the way in which they neatly turn corners **(p)**.

The key buildings in the area tend to be the churches and other places of worship. None of the churches in this area are city-wide landmarks though they are important within several street scenes – St Michael at Plea being especially prominent in views east along St Andrew's Street **(q)**, with St Laurence forming the focus of views to the west. St Andrew's itself is less prominent due to its set-back position (as is St Gregory's **(r)**). Other fine places of worship include the Friends Meeting House on Upper Goat Lane and United Reformed Church on Princes Street. London Street **(s)** forms the boundary of 'The Lanes' area but on the corner of Bedford Street is the National Westminster Bank **(t)**, a key building at a major point in the street.

The area has some C20 buildings along St Andrew's Street, Upper Goat Lane, Redwell Street and Pottergate which are dominant due to their general design, plot width and height or heavy roof forms. This also applies to some of the modern stores such as Habitat, the lead roof of which is very visible looking east along Bedford Street.

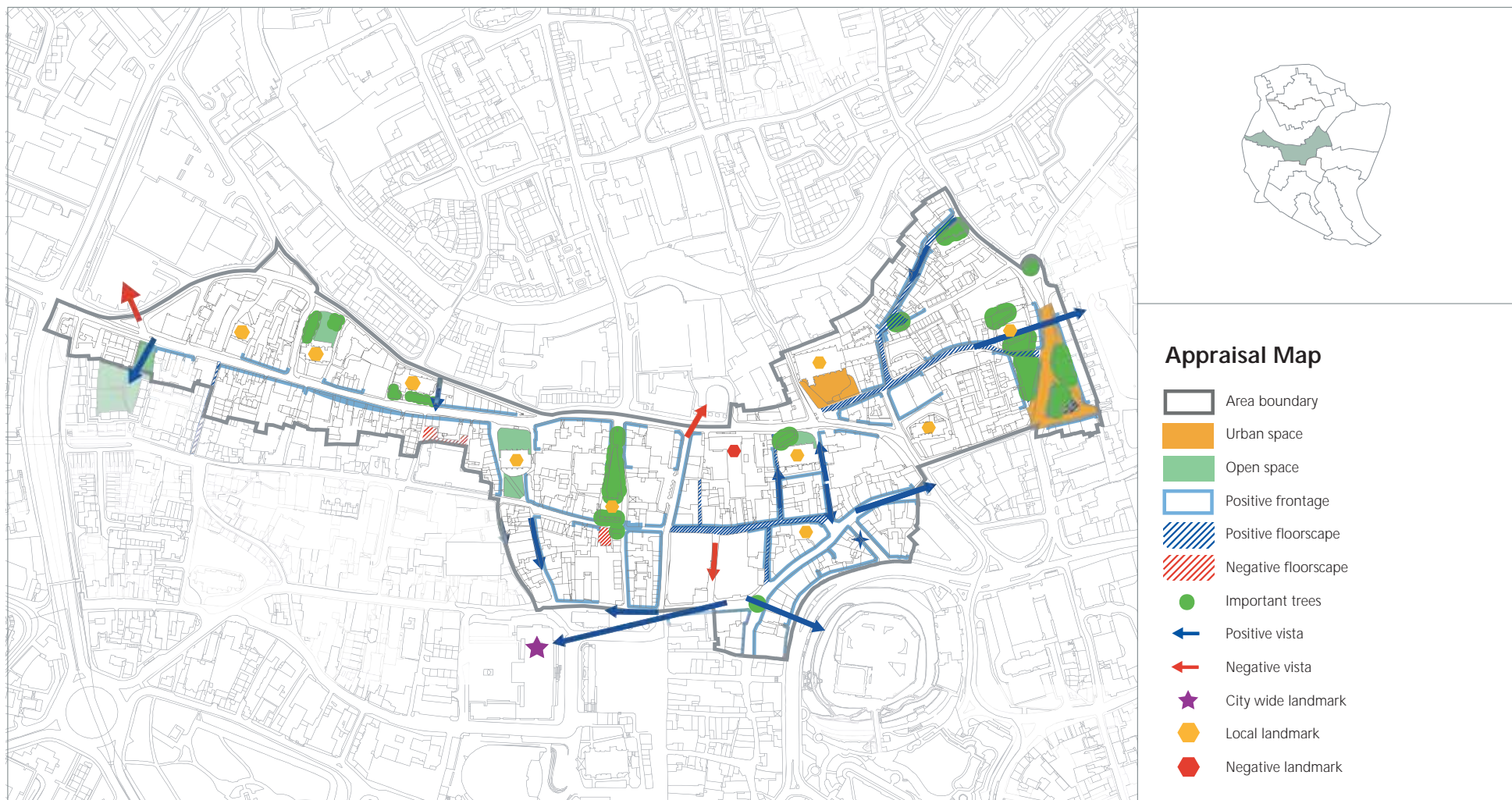
Current Uses

The area is an important part of the City's shopping 'offer' with an impressive range of specialist shops and galleries together with pubs, bars, cafes and some bank and office uses. 'The Lanes' area thrives as an intimate enclave of specialist shops whilst Elm Hill **(u)** is one of the most enduring picture postcard images of the City. The area also contains a number of churches, some of which have been converted to community or artistic uses complementing the range of uses within the area. The buildings on Tombland are now mostly in bar / restaurant use forming an enclave popular at night-time and with opportunities for al fresco dining. London Street is notable for its jewellery stores with very ornate shop fronts.

Parts of the area do suffer slightly from intrusive vehicular traffic and opportunities to reduce this, remove unsightly signs and consequently increase pedestrian enjoyment and safety are being explored.



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Appraisal Map

- Area boundary
- Urban space
- Open space
- Positive frontage
- Positive floorscape
- Negative floorscape
- Important trees
- Positive vista
- Negative vista
- City wide landmark
- Local landmark
- Negative landmark

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Key Characteristics

Townscape Elements

The streets in this area form a grid-pattern which follows the contours of the land. Several streets descend northwards towards the river and are criss-crossed by usually wider routes which run east-west and take vehicular traffic. The main exception is the Tombland / Elm Hill area which skews slightly with Elm Hill running North East, parallel to the river to meet Wensum Street.

Almost all the streets have strong, usually continuous built frontages with buildings hard on the footpath edge. The exceptions, most apparent along St Andrew's Street, are mostly due to aborted road widening proposals. There are a range of very narrow alleys and passageways, of which some link streets (v) and some run into rear courts (w). These are an important characteristic of this part of the city.

Streets such as St Andrew's Street, Exchange Street (x) and Redwell Street (y) are relatively wide and take through vehicular traffic (as does Tombland). This instantly changes the form and feel of the street. By way of contrast, Waggon and Horses Lane (z) has very much the feel of a back-street unlike even the narrowest streets in the area which have active frontages.

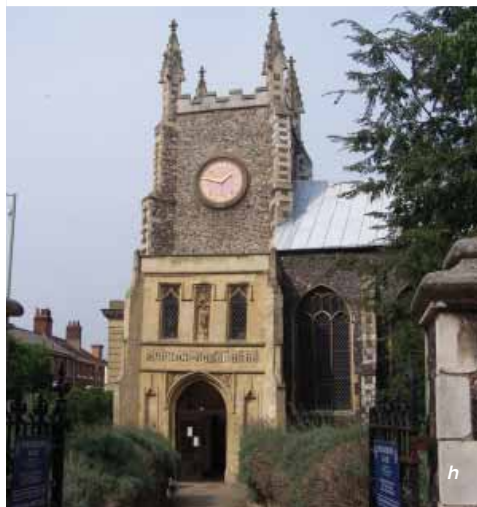
The edges of the area are most strongly defined on the north side where the river and the generally modern developments

along it form a definite boundary. To the south and east the Cathedral Close and Castle Mound mark a distinct change of character. The Market Place is itself part of the transition between 'general' and 'specialist' retail areas. The boundary to the west is tightly drawn to exclude St Giles Street and Pottergate because this area contains a greater concentration of residential streets than the Elm Hill and Maddermarket area.

This area has been part of 'urban' Norwich for hundreds of years and as a result open space is very much at a premium. The key space is Tombland, which was the City's first market and is today an attractive tree-filled 'ante-room' to the Cathedral Close. Whilst very attractive, and potentially the best space in the city, the space is spoiled by a busy road which, by necessity, bisects it. The space also suffers from a chaotic arrangement of street furniture and dominant trees.

St Andrew's Hall Plain (1) also provides a useful punctuation in front of a major public building, whilst the frontage of St Gregory's Church on Pottergate is an equally welcome and rather greener space. Whilst less extensive, the churchyards of St George, Tombland, St Andrew and St John Maddermarket (2) give a hint of greenery and allow space for trees of significant scale to add interest to the streets.

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Street trees in the pedestrianised streets sometimes appear awkwardly placed (3) though the tree opposite St John Maddermarket is important in the long view west from Bedford Street and provides a canopy rather than a blocking feature in the street.

Most of the historic streets have attractive surfaces of cobbles or granite setts in the carriageway with stone flags and kerbs to the pavements. This distinctive surface treatment contributes strongly to the area's character, linking the key streets. The routes which take vehicular traffic have tarmacadam carriageways and often small, square concrete slabs to the footways.

Building Types

This area contains some of the best vernacular buildings in Norwich with some exceptionally high concentrations of timber-framed structures. These exhibit some typical Norwich characteristics including the jettying of upper storeys which further 'pinches-in' the streets above ground level. Some buildings are jettied on two faces, such as the Briton Arms (4) which is a particularly important C15 building because it was the only house to survive the 1507 fire on Elm Hill. Many of the properties were merchants' houses and stone-clad brick undercrofts survive beneath the timber-framed upper storeys. The numerous carriage arches and passageways through to the rear are further evidence of the mercantile activity which was carried out.

The area also has a high concentration of medieval churches together with St

Andrew's Hall which is the remains of the Dominicans' monastic foundation (5). These further emphasise the historic importance of the area. By the C19, the Nonconformist religions also saw the area as being a suitably prestigious location and the United Reformed Church and Society of Friends have fine chapels in Princes Street and Upper Goat Lane respectively.

The importance of the streets for retail and commercial activities during the C19 and early part of the C20 saw alterations to shopfronts and the erection of occasional prestige buildings. The National Westminster Bank was built in 1924 at a key point at the end of Bedford Street.

Building Details

This area is typified by rendered timber-framed buildings, though there are occasional examples where the timber framing is exposed (e.g. on Princes Street, St George's Street with a 'Victorianised' example on Pottergate (6)). Many of the Georgian buildings are of red brick with others of rendered façades. C19 buildings tend also to be of brick with greater use of gault brick often with polychromatic brickwork detailing. Most of the C20 developments are also of brick usually brown, red or tan colours.

The use of stone is generally restricted to prestigious C19 buildings such as banks and often to quite a limited extent on churches as part of the detailing. All the churches have some use of flint; some of it forming especially fine flushwork panels. A very



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good example of the secular use of flintwork can be found on the side of the Bridewell Museum. Brickwork is also found on some of the churches – for example in the clerestory of St George, Tombland.

Weatherboarding is not common in the area – the key example being found on a previously industrial building on St Andrew's Street.

The vast majority of traditional buildings in the area have clay pantiled roofs, usually red, but with very occasional 'smut' examples. Earlier clay plain tiled roofs can also be found with slates relatively common on buildings from the C19 onwards. The survival of some thatched roofs is a noteworthy characteristic of Norwich with examples on Elm Hill and Princes Street. Lead roofs can be found on several churches with the same material used less successfully on some of the modern commercial developments.

Jettied timber-framed houses are a particular feature of this area. Most of these are limewashed in a variety of colours and this varied palette is a key characteristic of many of the area's streets. The City Council's Historic Colour Strategy ensures appropriate hues continue to be used. Many properties have outsized gabled dormers raised to create additional roofspace in the C16 and C17 to allow weaving to be undertaken from home. Such features add considerable roofline interest to a number

of streets. The happily random mixture of hipped and gabled roof forms, catslide roofs and dormers further enhances the skyline character of many streets (7).

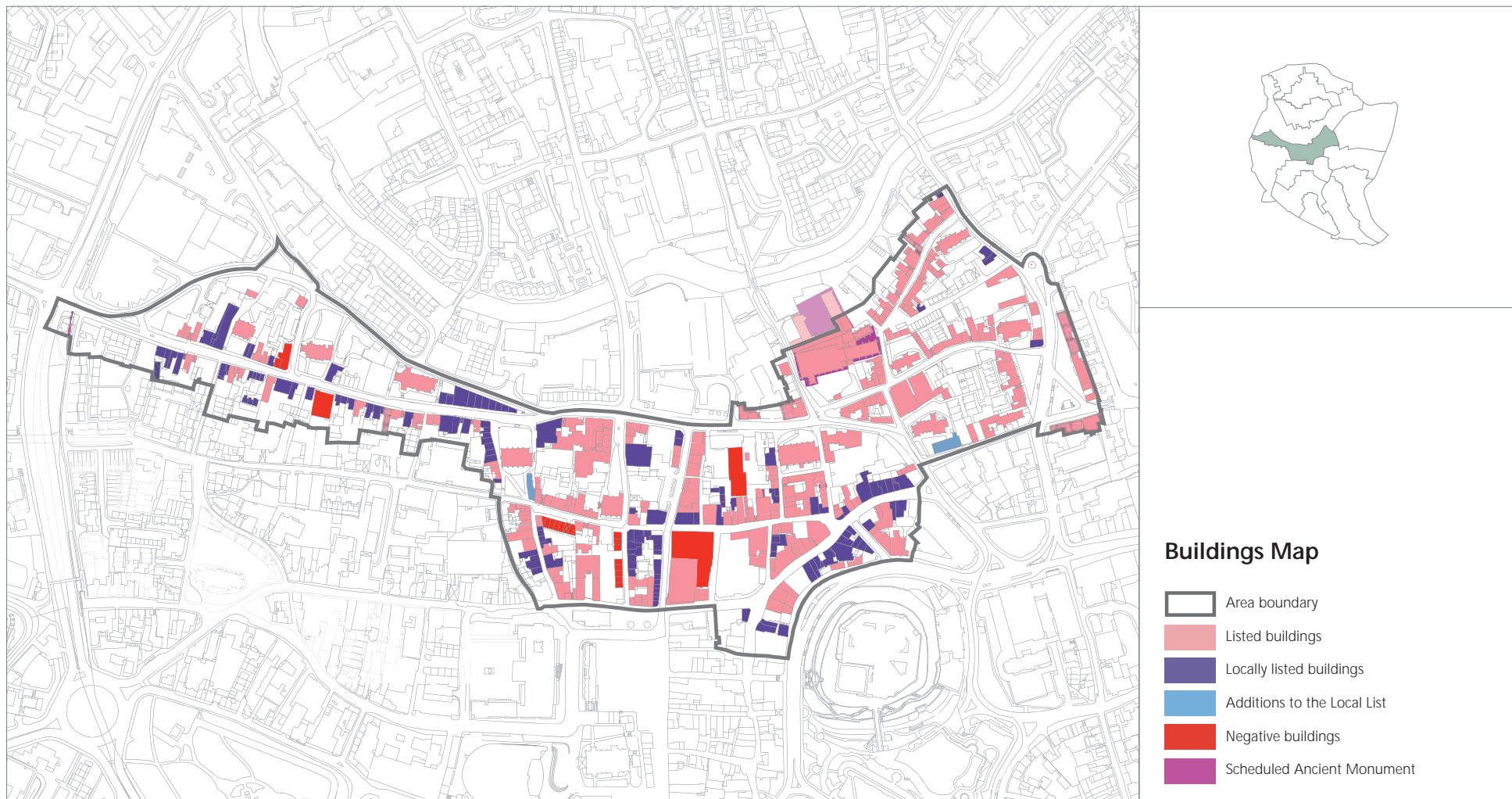
Several properties in the area have clearly been refaced often to 'modernise' or gentrify buildings especially in the Georgian period. The lined render (rustication) of the building on the corner of Elm Hill and St Andrew's Plain is of particular interest.

Several of the commercial properties have good, mostly C19, shopfronts with some earlier examples surviving on Bedford Street for example. On the busier commercial streets such as St Andrew's Street, there are some C19 first floor showrooms – a feature found more commonly in the streets east of the Market Place. There are also a number of very ornate 19th century shopfronts in London Street, as well as stone clad banks.

Grand entrances are a feature of several properties around Tombland where there are fine porticoes (and the curious Samson and Hercules). Similarly there is a very fine 'Gibbs Surround' on Princes Street and a pedimented entrance at No.17 Pottergate. Similar, if less ornate, examples survive usually on buildings in the less commercial streets. A few examples of four-centred medieval arches survive in Elm Hill, notably on Nos. 45-47 which has an arched entrance on the right leading to Wright's Court.



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Management & Enhancement

1. New buildings must respect the existing domestic scale of development (*D1, D2.1*)
2. The close grained character of the area must be retained (*B3, D3*)
3. The historic building line along St Andrew's Street should be reinstated (*B2.1*)
4. Improve public realm of St Andrew's Hall Plain and wider area to create a larger key urban space (*A1.1, B1.1, D5*)
5. Improve and unify St Andrew's Street, Charing Cross and St Benedict's Street through the use of appropriate public realm works to bring it up to the same standard as the rest of the character area (*B1.1*)
6. Improve interpretation of the site of St Benedict's Gates (*LP: HBE 1, 8, 9, 12 & 16, TVA 8 & 9; SPD – Heritage Interpretation*)
7. Improve public realm of Tombland (*A1.1, B1.1, D5*)
8. Investigate possibility of removing cars from Elm Hill (*B1.3*)