



7. Prince of Wales

Significance

Concentration of historic buildings

Presence of features from historical period(s)

Townscape / Landscape quality:

Quality of details:

Concentration of negative features:

Score

SIGNIFICANT

HIGH (3)

SIGNIFICANT (2)

SIGNIFICANT (2)

SIGNIFICANT (2)

SOME (2)

11

Character Area Overview

Summary

A predominately commercial area of the city that was developed in the Victorian era on the site of the Franciscan Friary (Grey Friars), linking the City centre to the railway station. C19 terraces flank the prominent Prince of Wales Road, whilst behind, the Mountergate and Rose Lane area has been subject to almost complete late C20 redevelopment.

Topography & Landscape Framework

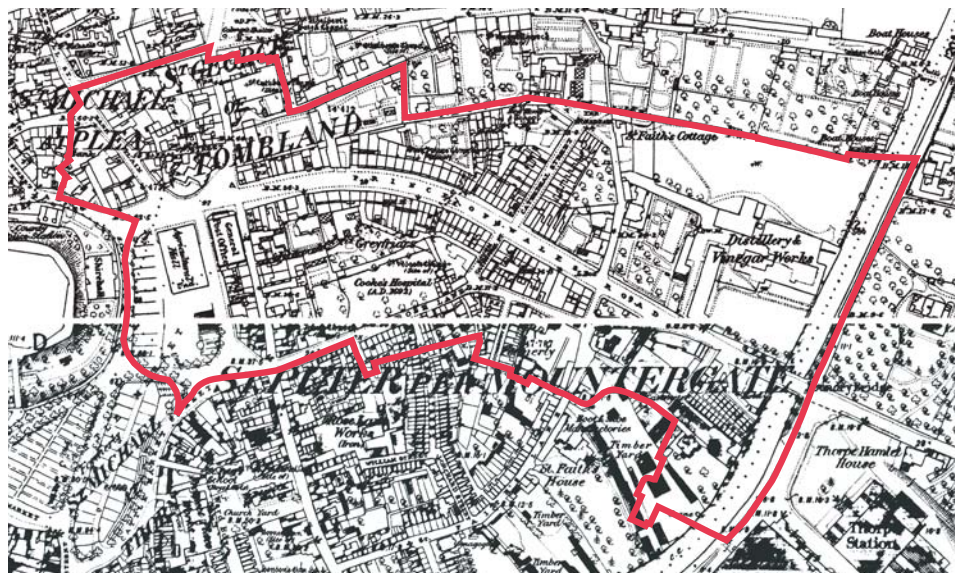
Prince of Wales Road rises from the east to the west towards the Castle Mound, although the Castle itself is barely visible. The James Stuart Garden (a) off St Faith's Lane/Recorder Road is a significant green space in the Character Area. A smaller patch of green space is the area of grass on the east side of Market Avenue (b) and

there are landscape features on many of the roads; mature tree planting on the east side of Market Avenue and recent tree planting along Prince of Wales Road are examples. Trees are often visible over the top of buildings, e.g. along Rose Lane looking east.

Town Morphology, History & Archaeology

In medieval times the area immediately east of King Street was once the site of the Franciscan Friary, also known as Grey Friars. Franciscan friars first arrived in Norwich in 1226 and sixty years later the precinct was built on land granted by John de Hastingford. The Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries led to the closure and confiscation of monasteries throughout the country and the Friary was

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Extract from 1880 - 1886 OS map

demolished; the 'great house' of the Friary was pulled down in 1565/6.

After the demolition of the Friary the area became open fields, with buildings fronting onto King Street, as shown on Thomas Cleer's map of 1696. By the time of George Cole's 1807 map this still seems to be the case. Cooke's Hospital, Rose Lane, appears on both maps and was founded in 1692 by Thomas Cooke, a worsted weaver who became mayor in 1689. The hospital, small in size, initially catered for 10 elderly women and a court was built in 1700 with 10 tenements around it. The building was demolished in 1892 because it was declared insanitary.

It was not until the C19 that major development of the area took place. The Norwich New Street Company began the construction of Prince of Wales Road in 1860 to create a new street 108 ft wide and 500 yards long linking the railway station with the City centre, opening on 9 November 1862. While prestigious public buildings were built at the western end such as the Agricultural Hall, the design was never completed at the eastern end because investment had run out. Despite this, the influence of the railway was, and is, still clearly visible at the eastern end with the Great Eastern Hotel, demolished and replaced with the Hotel Nelson, the Railway Mission Building and latterly, Grosvenor House which was built as the British Rail Offices.

- aa. 86 - 98, Prince of Wales Road
- bb. 38 - 52, Prince of Wales Road
- cc. 44 - 70, St Faith's Lane



Recorder Road was laid out in 1907 (c). Stuart Court (1914) was built in the almshouse tradition and the name is from James Stuart, a pioneer of adult education in Cambridge who was also greatly concerned with housing conditions of the elderly poor. The late C20 brought new large scale office development to the area, such as those designed by Sir Frederick Snow in Rose Lane, and the eastern end of Prince of Wales Road.

Landmarks & Views

The Castle, one of the city's landmarks, forms a terminated view at the very western end of Prince of Wales Road, but otherwise is difficult to see from the rest of the area, despite being on higher ground. Glimpses of the City Hall clock tower are gained from Prince of Wales Road (d), whilst the continuous Victorian terraces on the road itself form excellent framed views and a coherent townscape (e).

Key Building groups

The key individual buildings are those found

on Agricultural Hall Plain. The former Post Office, now known as Hardwick House, became an Anglia Television office in 1980 (f) and is now being converted into residential and leisure uses. Built in 1866 by P C Hardwick, this grand ashlar-faced building is now linked by a 1982 bronze-glass extension to the adjacent former Agricultural Hall (1882 by J B Pearce (g)), now known as Anglia House or Anglia Television Centre. Behind this red brick building, a new building was added in 1982 by Feilden and Mawson (h).

On the corner of Bank Plain and Agricultural Hall Plain is the monumental Barclays Bank (i) designed by E Boardman & Son and opened in 1929. Also by E Boardman & Son is the Royal Hotel (j), but this is earlier, from 1896-7, and was built to replace the former Royal Hotel which was on the site of the Royal Arcade.

The key building group in the area is the grey brick terrace of houses on the north side of Prince of Wales Road. Nos. 30-52 were built

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after 1865 and their gables create a strong rhythm along the street. Other terraces are grouped along Cathedral Street (k) and St Faith's Lane which also contains the former Regent Theatre (l), a large red brick structure that overlooks the James Stuart Gardens. A good range of Early C19 properties line the east side of Upper King Street.

Alexandra Mansions, Nos. 86-98 Prince of Wales Road, was the first residential block of flats in Norwich and had shops on the ground floor.

Tudor Hall on the corner of Rose Lane and Boulton Street was built in a mock Tudor style in 1898-1900 for Boulton and Paul, featuring timbers from a C16 merchants' house pulled down on King Street.

Current Uses

The area is predominantly commercial in nature, with offices dominating and some enclaves of uses such as Upper King Street which is almost exclusively estate agents (m). Prince of Wales Road and Rose Lane are mainly in commercial, retail and leisure uses. Cathedral Street is almost entirely in office use, as is St Faith's although a small number of residential properties are also found at its eastern end; Recorder Road is residential in nature.



a



b



c



d



e



f



g

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Key Characteristics

Townscape Elements

From the junction with Mountergate westwards, Prince of Wales Road is flanked by continuous building lines of C19 terraces of 3 or 4 storeys high, giving the road a coherent identity, a pleasant streetscape and a sense of a grand procession towards the City centre. Prince of Wales Road then curves and rises towards the Castle where it joins Agricultural Hall Plain, which was given grand public and semi-public buildings to dignify the new entrance to the City from the railway station.

The broad width of Agricultural Hall Plain is matched by the large scale nature of flanking buildings (the Royal Hotel is 6 storeys high), all of which add to the sense of a grand entrance to the City centre. Agricultural Hall Plain, like many other plains in the City, is currently degraded by traffic and its associated paraphernalia (n). If this could be removed, it would have the potential to become a high quality space in the City.

Prince of Wales Road has been subject to a recent streetscape enhancement scheme which has included footway widening and tree planting and now one way (eastbound) traffic. This has enhanced its role as a key gateway to the City centre from the railway station. It is also part of the City centre's Green Spine which provides bus, pedestrian

and cycling priority through the heart of the City centre.

King Street and Upper King Street are much older and narrower and are on the route of the Saxon road from the south, with buildings in Upper King St reaching 3 storeys. They have, by contrast, a much more enclosed feel than the grand avenues of Prince of Wales Road and Agricultural Hall Plain (o).

St Faith's Lane runs from the junction with Prince of Wales Road to Tombland and changes in character from a typical street and footways to a narrow passageway (p). Towards its western end, and opposite the flank wall of the sports centre, the boundary with the Cathedral Close is marked by a row of attractive flint faced cottages.

To the south of Prince of Wales Road there are some abrupt changes of building scale, particularly at the corner of St Vedast Street and Rose Lane where a 6 storey modern office sits immediately adjacent to a 2 storey domestic scale property (q).

Notable public realm details include the ornate gateway entrance to James Stuart Gardens (r), the wall motif/public art on No.2 Prince of Wales Road (Potter and Co), and the planted traffic islands together with the granite and stainless steel signage. The Boer War memorial (1903) in Agricultural

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Hall Plain with its high granite and Portland stone plinth, and Ionic columns with a bronze angel, provides a focal point in this key space (s).

As the main route from the railway station to the City centre, Prince of Wales Road is busy with pedestrians at most times, although it is at its busiest in the evening as it contains a large proportion of late night uses such as night clubs, bars and take-aways. This is in stark contrast to the peaceful, mostly residential, streets north of the road.

Building Types

Large public buildings of varying heights from the Victorian and Edwardian eras line Agricultural Hall Plain. Their grand scale complements the openness of the plain and in the case of Hardwick Hall, dominates the northern end of King Street.

White brick Victorian terraces line the central part of Prince of Wales Road and other C19 terraced housing (now in office use) characterise the Cathedral Street area. Recorder Road has a variety of residential properties, including the almshouse inspired Stuart Court, maisonettes and modern houses and flats.

The influence of the railway is clearly visible in the hotels and large office blocks such as Grosvenor House which dominate the eastern end of Prince of Wales Road and

Rose Lane. These are generally a negative characteristic of the area (t).

Building Details

The Royal Hotel is in a free Flemish style with a large number of gables and pinnacles. It is a good example of 'Cosseyware' which is a soft red brick used for decoration in the late C19 and early C20. On the other side of Agricultural Hall Plain, Anglia House has a rusticated ground floor with rounded windows, plenty of moulded brick, Cumberland sandstone facing, and thin fluted pilasters at the first floor.

Many of the terraced properties on St Faith's Lane and Cathedral Street are of white gault brick, although several of the latter have now been painted. Welsh slate is commonly used for roofing in the area. Red brick and pantiles are only typically found on the small number of pre-C19 buildings.

Foundry Bridge which links the railway station to Prince of Wales Road was constructed in 1890 of stone and iron (u). Immediately next to the river on the south side of Prince of Wales Road is The Nelson Hotel of 1971 by Feilden and Mawson. It is typical of many buildings of that era with its horizontal emphasis and glass and concrete banding (v).



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Management & Enhancement

1. Opportunity for appropriate redevelopment in degraded Rose Lane and Mountergate area (A2, B2.3, C1.2, D1, D2.2, D3, E1.2)
2. Greater control of advertising and lighting on buildings (C3, E3.3)
3. Containment of late night activity along Prince of Wales Road, and away from the residential areas (LP: EP 10 & 22, HOU 2)
4. Widen footpaths on upper King Street (B1.3)

