



8. King Street

Significance

Concentration of historic buildings

Presence of features from historical period(s)

Townscape / Landscape quality:

Quality of details:

Concentration of negative features:

Score

HIGH

SIGNIFICANT (2)

VERY HIGH (4)

SIGNIFICANT (2)

HIGH (3)

SOME (2)

13

Character Area Overview

Summary

King Street is a very mixed area with some very important old domestic buildings interspersed between many more recent industrial buildings. The area is undergoing significant change as many of the buildings formerly associated with industry and the river are either being replaced or converted, mostly into residential use. The northern part of King Street retains a greater number of traditional buildings and forms a more coherent townscape.

The ongoing regeneration and enhancement of the area together with the creation of the proposed new footbridge across the river will create a strategically important area that links the Riverside and city centre.

Topography & Landscape Framework

The area lies just east of the Ber Street escarpment and west of the River Wensum, forming a downward slope towards the river. Despite being adjacent to the river, riverside access is blocked due to the location of industrial units fronting onto the river. The Novi Sad Friendship Bridge (a) at the southern end of King Street is currently the only point at which the river can be accessed. The grass 'island' at the junction of King Street and Rouen Road which forms the entrance to the Novi Sad Friendship Bridge is the only significant green space in the area. Another bridge further north is proposed at the point where the river bends northeast.

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Extract from 1880 OS map

Town Morphology, History & Archaeology

Since Saxon times, the area has been associated with fishing and riverside industry. King Street, formerly known as Conesford Street, dates from Saxon times and was a route from Conesford Gate to the City centre. Mountergate also had river-related activities; it lay in marshland during Saxon times and an excavation in 1998 uncovered the edge of a small cockey revetted in C11 with reused fragments of a small boat. Skinners worked in Mountergate in Norman and medieval times, preparing hides for

export via the river. The area between Mountergate/King Street and the river was the location of the Augustine Friary, commonly known as Austin Friars, and was founded in the C13, eventually being dissolved in 1538 and given to the 3rd Duke of Norfolk.

King Street is shown lined by buildings with four churches evenly spaced along its length on maps from the mid C16. It was not until the late C18, however, that significant development took place between King Street and the river and then only as far north as

the bend in the river. By this time, elongated burgage plots with warehouses leading down the jetties lined the river bank.

King Street also played an important role in Norwich's Jewish history, with a synagogue and Synagogue Street formerly on the site of the brewery between Rose Lane and King Street. The Music House is the oldest surviving house in the city and was originally the C12 hall of two prominent Jews.

In the C19, the area was important to the City's brewing industry with Morgan's King



aa. Howard House, 97, King Street
bb. Howard House, 97, King Street
cc. 42 - 44, King Street
dd. 56 - 60, King Street

Street Old Brewery close to Mountergate (and recently developed for new housing) and the Crown Brewery of Young's, Crawshaw and Young's on the riverside, together with their associated malthouses.

The Rose Lane Iron works was still occupied by Boulton and Paul in 1905, later to be occupied by Parmentergate Court and Community Church. This industrial area extended to Mountergate, where the Fishmarket opened on the north side in 1913. The boot and shoe factory of John Hotblack and Sons was also located there; St Faith's House was the family home in the 1890s. However, previous to its industrial activities, the Mountergate area was a 'pleasure garden' in the C18 and C19.

As an industrial area, King Street was also the location of places for workers' leisure activities; the 1900 Kelly's Directory of Norfolk shows King Street to be lined with business premises including a wide range of shops and public houses. Their houses also filled the area, and there was a dense network of C19 terraces between King Street and Ber Street.

Landmarks & Views

Development on the riverside obscures most of the potential views of the river and beyond, but a few glimpses are gained from King Street, particularly from the Novi Sad Friendship Bridge (b). Views of the

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Wilderness from the southern end of King Street, along Stuart Road and Alan Road are visible, focusing on the many trees (c).

Key Building Groups

The most important buildings are along King Street with the greatest concentration north of the crossroads with Mountergate, mostly dating back to the C17 and C18, some of which have surviving Victorian shopfronts. Some courts, such as Three Tuns Court, Swan Yard and the C16 Raven Court, also survive (d).

Other key buildings include the Music House (e), originally dating from the C12, and Dragon Hall (f), which dates from the C14 and was a merchant's house. The adjoining buildings have a C20 ground floor with an early C16 first floor. A number of C17 properties line the street, many of which were originally public houses. The row of C17 terraces opposite Dragon Hall for example, includes the former Ship Inn, now Princes Inn (g), and is a reminder of the medieval street. Howard House sadly now derelict, is a C17 house which was the residence of Henry Howard, brother of the Duke of Norfolk.

Three of the four churches that once lined the street survive, although only St Julian is still in ecclesiastical use. St Etheldreda (h), redundant since 1961, is used as a sculptor's workshop, whilst St Peter Parmentergate



(i) is currently used as a martial arts centre. Only a fragment of the west tower and the springing of the west window opening of the fourth church, St Peter Southgate, survive as ruins.

Current Uses

The eastern side of King Street is predominately in commercial and industrial use until the junction with Rouen Road where the former warehouse buildings are being converted into residential use (j). The western side is predominately residential with some commercial use.



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Key Characteristics

Townscape Elements

The alignment of King Street has remained unaltered for centuries and many ancient yards and lanes connecting King Street to the river survive. Long extended burgage plots running from east to west down to the river are a key characteristic of the area (**k**). Some courts also survive on the west side of the street and recent new development, such as that on the former Morgan's Brewery site has sought to recreate these traditional yards.

Some of the narrow streets leading west off King Street were lost after the Second World War when the area was redeveloped and modern open plan housing or commercial developments replaced the former tight urban grain. The local authority housing, and particularly Normandie Tower, dominates the southern end of King Street where it joins Rouen Road (**l**).

The impact of motor vehicles has fortunately been significantly reduced as a result of both King Street and Mountergate being closed to through traffic, but the impact of cars is still too readily visible with the garage blocks which serve the C20 housing developments and the surface car parking that lines some streets such as Mountergate (**m**). More recent development has dealt with the motor car in a more sensitive manner with rear parking courts.

The remaining traditional buildings along King Street are typically on the back edge of the footway (**n**) which contrasts sharply with the mid-C20 local authority housing and the more recent commercial buildings which are generally set well back (**o**).

The area is currently undergoing extensive redevelopment, which is removing many of the negative buildings and areas which detract from the townscape. The reinstatement of many building lines and reuse of the good traditional buildings, such as Reeds Mill, will create a more cohesive townscape and provide a strategic link between the Riverside and the rest of the City centre.

Building Types

There are two very fine examples of early houses along King Street. The Music House was owned by a wealthy Jewish family and dates from the C12. It is thought to be the oldest surviving house in the City. Dragon Hall, a former merchants' hall, dates from the C14 and has a timber framed first floor over a flint rubble and brick ground floor.

A number of C17 and C18 properties are dotted along King Street, with the greatest concentration at the northern end of King Street. Many have later alterations, but they are predominantly of 2 – 3 storeys, as are the handful of C19 houses and inns interspersed among the earlier buildings (**p**).

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No.91 King Street is dated 1811, but has a C15 undercroft, one of an important group within the City Walls.

5 and 6 storey C19 warehouses, a major feature of the area, are mainly located by the riverside and typically have large ground-floor footprints. A small remnant of the numerous 2-storey terraces that housed the warehouse workers in the C19 and which used to dominate the area, survives at the southern end of King Street in Stuart Road and Alan Road.

C20 flat-roofed local authority housing is a common building type in the area. The modern buildings on King Street that turn the corner in to Music House Lane are single storey with flat or monopitch roofs which allow views of taller buildings behind including the stark gable wall of the 5 storey flats. By contrast, recent developments on King Street itself have attempted to replicate the traditional Norwich courtyards, and the domestic scale of the older properties. The building lines are, however, slightly more recessed from the street than the existing traditional properties, thereby creating slightly wider footways (q).

The three churches in the area all date from different centuries. The Church of St Peter Parmentergate originates from the late C15 and St Ethelreda's from the C12; St Julian's is, in origin, the earliest dating from the C11, but it was largely rebuilt after extensive war damage.

Building Details

The earliest buildings in the area are timber framed, often over flint rubble or brick ground floors which are usually painted. The Music House has, unusually, an undercroft partly built with stone. Many of the C17 buildings are rendered and this material continues into the C18. Red brick begins to dominate from the mid C18 and throughout the C19; sometimes the brick is painted.

Most buildings have pantile roofs, although a very few examples of plain tiles are also found, e.g. Nos. 27 & 29 King Street. Only the terraced housing and C19 factory buildings have Welsh slate roofs, although some of the terraced properties now have replacement concrete tiles.

Many properties have sash windows, usually multi-paned, but some early casements survive on the oldest buildings, including two large 6-light transom and mullion windows with pediments on the front elevation of the Music House. Dragon Hall has a jettied first floor and lucams are found on Nos. 168 – 172 King Street (r).

The mid C20 Council housing is predominantly flat-roofed and uses a grey/brown modern wirecut brick. Openings usually have a horizontal emphasis and details are very simple or non-existent. More successful and interesting contemporary building details include the use of horizontal painted weatherboarding, found on the Community Church (s).

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The three churches are all of flint with stone and brick dressings with black pantile (St Julian's), plain tile (St Etheldreda) or slate (St Peter Parmentergate) roofs. Consolidated ruins of the two flint boom towers survive on either side of the river. These originally controlled access to the City with a iron chain (t).

Management & Enhancement

1. New development must tighten up grain of area, reflecting the historic building plots and streets that survive and those that were destroyed (B2.2, C1.1, D3, D7, E4)
2. Access via narrow lanes to the riverfront must be retained (LP: TVA 3 & SR 11)
3. Scale of new development along King Street should reflect the existing traditional buildings, with larger buildings more appropriate at the south east end (D1, D2.1, D6, E1.1)
4. Public realm works to create a high quality and unified streetscape along the whole length of King Street (B1.2)
5. New development and refurbishment of existing industrial buildings should ensure that remnants of industrial archaeology should be preserved in situ, including street surfaces

Works to the river bank will require the approval of the Broads Authority.

