

A partly-pedestrianised street, formerly the city's fish market and now part of the commercial and civic area surrounding the market place and Guildhall.

Peas Hill formed part of the town's medieval core of market streets and had a specialist function as a fish market. It is a short but broad street forming an elongated square, flanked on one edge by the imposing side elevation of the Guildhall and on the other by buildings that vary in date from the C16 to the late C20, including some surviving medieval elements. The medieval church and churchyard of St Edward the Martyr also form a substantial

section of the frontage. The two entrances to St Edward's Passage run off the street towards King's Parade, providing glimpsed views along the narrow alleys. One of the street's most unusual features cannot be seen however; extensive cellars running beneath the street, covering a quarter of an acre. They were once used as wine vaults and during the Second World War as an air-raid shelter.



Streetview

SIGNIFICANCE - SIGNIFICANT

General Overview

This short road forms a part of the dense network of streets, lanes and passages that surround Market Hill as the medieval commercial core of Cambridge. It was recorded as Pease Hill on Braun's map of 1572, which is thought to be derived from 'piscaria', the Latin for fish market. Running south from Market Hill, the street was at one time formed of two narrower lanes either side of a central block of back to-back shops or booths with an enclosed market square at the southern end. The booths were cleared by the late C19 opening out the square to the larger area of Market Hill to the north. The new wider space was named Union Street for a while.



Market Hill to the north



The Guildhall

The side elevation of the Guildhall (used as a Tourist Information Centre) dominates Peas Hill rising to four storeys from the pavement's edge in a mixture of rusticated ashlar at ground floor level with brown brick and stone window dressings above. Details include bronze windows frames and a long balcony with bronze balustrade, which contribute to the building's heavy appearance. The old library just to the south supports the character of the block as a focus of municipal activity, although it is now a restaurant. Its lower scale allows more light into the southern end of Peas Hill whilst its Italianate architecture adds to the richness of detail in the streetscene.

The buildings to the west are very mixed, including late C20 shops and the student residential accommodation of Market Hostel, which stands adjacent to the C12 church of St Edward the Martyr and is of little architectural merit. South of the church the buildings are of C17, C18 and C19 construction and vary considerably in height between two and five storeys. The variation in scale reflects the different pressure for use of space and the building technologies of their dates of construction. The steeply



Buildings to the west

pitched tiled roof and plastered timber framed construction reveal the lower structure of Nos. 4 and 5 as a C17 building.

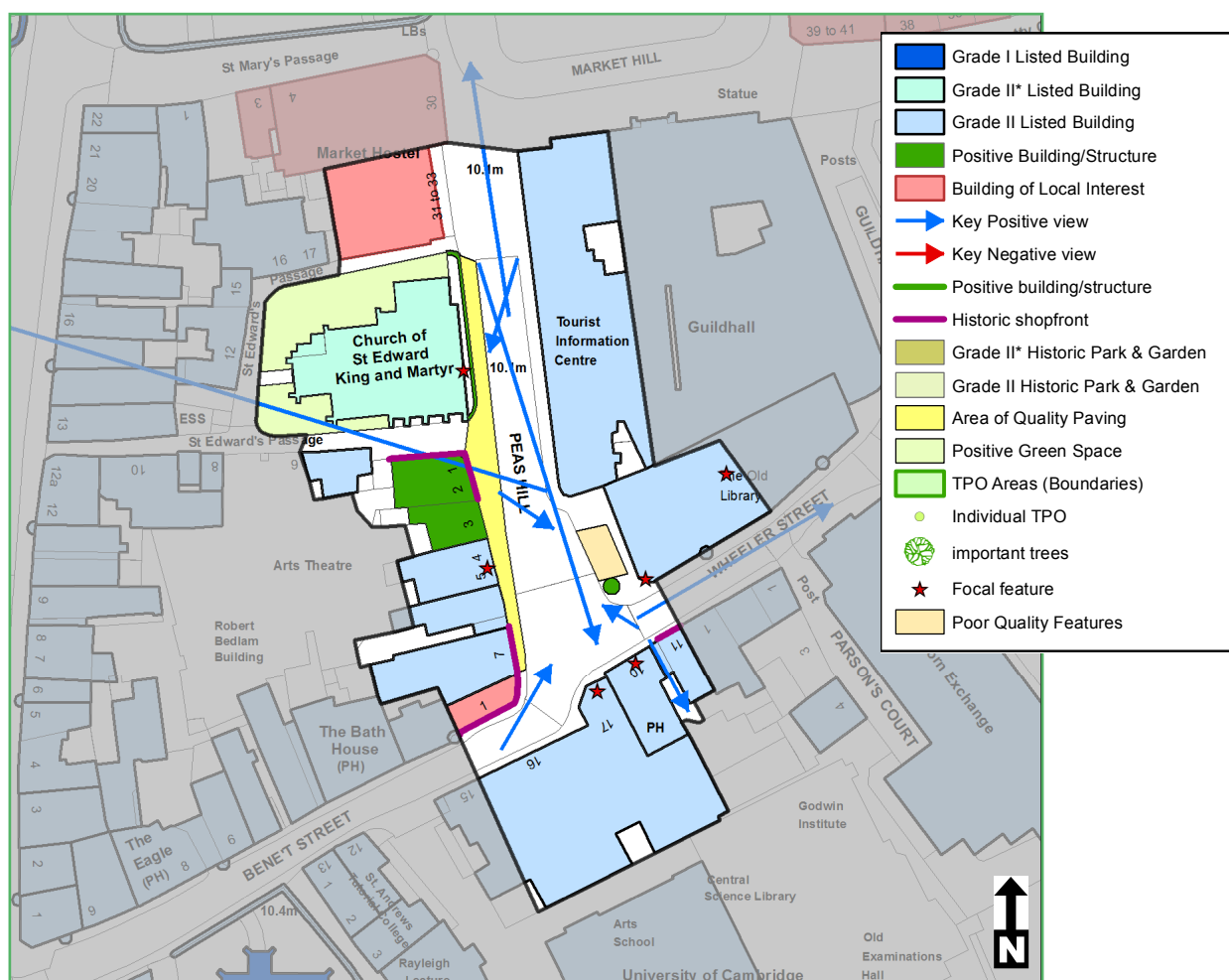
On the south side of the square, the jettied frontage of No. 11 Wheeler Street also stands out as an early building, illustrating the origins of this area as part of the core of the city. Architectural details have been well preserved within the street, particularly in the form of surviving vertically sliding timber sashed windows, whilst the mixture of Gault brick and limestone for building materials provides a consistent colouring that unites the buildings.

Positive street furniture includes the railings that enclose part of St Edward's churchyard and an unusual late C19 fire hydrant. The paved area has recently been extended and accommodates large numbers of cycle parking and some benches. It is also used for an outdoor seating area for the café in the Guildhall. The paving is sandstone and the original granite kerbs have been kept, with a linear drainage system running alongside. The entrance to the street from the north is dominated by cycle parking.

Peas Hill is a popular through route between the market, Tourist Information Centre and King's Parade for pedestrians and cyclists. The shops at ground floor level draw activity throughout the day, whilst the use of upper storeys for student accommodation ensures activity continues into the evening and preserves domestic characteristics such as front doors. The theatre also attracts activity in the evening, although the street can become congested as a result of deliveries of scenery. The loss of both the Barclays and the NatWest bank branches, as well as the Public Library, has resulted in an increasing use of the area for retail and restaurants.



C19 Fire hydrant



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To the south east and south west, Bene't Street and Wheeler Street continue the tight network of streets and provide views of interest to focal buildings that include the former Red Cow Public House, the Corn Exchange and No. 1 Free School Lane.

Townscape Elements

- The bulk of the Guildhall dominates the street and creates a strong sense of enclosure.
- Buildings are generally set against the footpath edge forming an informal terrace, although the church is set back behind railings. An area of wider pavement with the entrances to St Edward's Passage provides narrow breaks in the frontage and access to spaces behind it. The Old Library also stands back from the main frontage line, creating a small square at the southern end of the street.



Church of St Edward the Martyr

- The church acts as a focal feature in views along the street, largely due to its lower height and the additional sky space around it.
- The two timber-framed buildings play an important role in illustrating the history of the street as a part of the city's medieval and early modern street plan.
- The street is a well enclosed space with buildings on three sides although the large open space of Market Place to the north provides a more open feeling that draws activity out into the wider square beyond.
- The street has a variety of different architecture and scales representing an organic process of development over many centuries. Nevertheless the use of Gault brick and limestone, the narrow plot widths and position of buildings at the rear of the pavement helps to unite the buildings to form a cohesive sense of place.



Glimpsed views of the tower to No. 16 Bene't Street

- Picturesque vistas down the intimate passageways contrast with the more generous spaces of Peas Hill itself and the market.
- Glimpsed views of the tower of 17 Bene't Street, St Edward's Church tower and King's College Chapel towers contribute to a quality of roofscape on the west side of the street.
- Greenery is limited to the glimpses of planting in St Edward's churchyard seen along the passage.
- The Victorian fire hydrant stands out as a highly unusual element of street furniture.
- Paving includes good quality kerbs and setted gutters with large areas of stone paving.

Streetscape Enhancement

The streetlights are not very appropriate or well sited. The galvanised pole outside the former Barclays Bank on Bene't Street, the column in the middle of the footway in St Edward's Passage and the column right in the middle of the view north into the market could all be improved.

Opportunities for the interpretation of the street's history would be appropriate.

Vehicular Restrictions

Reduction in the amount of traffic accessing the area, and particularly stopping opportunist parking, may create an opportunity to restore a more market-like feel to the street. This would also provide useful milling space around the leisure uses.

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
No. 31 Market Hill	BLI	late C19	3 + attic	painted brick	tile		
No. 32 Market Hill	BLI	1960-62	4	brick	copper sheet	Architects Co-Partnership	
Church of St Edward, King & Martyr	Listed Grade II*	C13-C15	N/A	stone rubble, cement rendered with some barnack stone dressings	lead & tiled	restored 1858-60 G. G. Scott	
No. 3 St Edward's Passage		early C19	2 + attics	brick	parapet / tile		Listed with No. 4 St Edward's Passage
1-2	Positive building	early C20	5	brick	parapet		
3	Positive building	early C20	4 + attic	brick	mansard / slate		
4 & 5	Listed Grade II	part Medieval, part C17, remodelled 18	2 + attics	timber-framed & plastered	hipped dormers / tile		
6 Arts Theatre	Listed Grade II	early C19	4	Gault brick	parapet / slate	alterations: 1996 Bland, Brown & Cole 2013 Burrell Foley Fischer	
7	Listed Grade II	early C18	3	red brick	parapet / clay tiled		incorporates timber-framing from an earlier building
1 Bene't Street	BLI	C19	4	stone	parapet		
10	Listed Grade II	c1830	3 + attics	Gault brick, stone ground floor + dressing	mansard / slate		
11	Listed Grade II	late C16 / early C17	3 + attic	timber-framed & plastered	old tile		
15 Bene't Street CAU	Listed Grade II	1968-69	3	brick / concrete/metal cladding		Charter Building Design Group	modern block, formerly extension to Barclays Bank (16)
16 Bene't Street (former Barclays Bank) Zizzi's	Listed Grade II	mid C18 / rebuilt end C19	2 (+ attics) (main range)	yellow brick / stone dressings	mansard roof / tiled		John Mortlock (business man & 13 times Mayor of Cambridge) acquired original house built 1720 for ironmonger W Finch
Jamie's Italian (formerly The Old Library), Wheeler Street	Listed Grade II	1862	2	yellow Gault brick, ashlar dressings	hipped / slate	Peck & Stephens	formerly the Central Library; Italianate additions by G. MacDonell in 1884
The Guildhall	Listed Grade II	1936-7	5	brown brick, stone dressings	flat	C. Cowles-Voysey	