

An ancient street with a long and chequered history.

Little St Mary's Lane has been in existence since at least 1300 and originally housed the bargees who brought corn and coal along the river to the Mill Pool. It evolved from this commercial use and became the houses of college servants in the late C19. The lane had a reputation as a 'red light area' when the old Half Moon Inn moved from Trumpington

Street to No. 5 Little St Mary's Lane in 1875. It apparently lost its license in 1971 because of the behaviour of the 'licentious' soldiers! Today the lane has been gentrified and is a quiet, mainly residential street.



Street view

SIGNIFICANCE - HIGH

General Overview

Little St Mary's Lane has the character of a quiet residential lane set off the main thoroughfare of Trumpington Street. The houses reflect a long and organic process of development, dating from the C17 through to, at least, the late C19. At least one building retains evidence of use as a public house, whilst the three C17 houses (Nos. 12, 13 and 14) in the narrower western section of the lane stand out due to their jettied frontages and low eaves, which lean over the pavement. Other properties may be of similar age with timber-framed upper floors that are revealed by their painted render façades, and timber-framed windows set flush with the exterior wall surface. Other jettied frontages have been under-built by brick ground floors however. The later infill buildings at Nos. 6 and 7 were designed with detailing that complements the earlier-timber framed structures; including half-timber upper floors over brick ground floors and pargetted plasterwork and low arched brick heads to windows.



Nos. 12, 13 and 14



Two storey scale buildings with timber-framed sash windows

In addition to the evidence of timber-framed construction, the lane is notable for the number of surviving timber sashed windows and a small number of examples of external windows shutters.

Despite variations in level the street has a general two-storey scale, with irregular steps up and down contributing to the character of an informal (organically developed) terrace on the north side of the street.

The churchyard of Little St Mary's (also known as St Mary the Less) forms a large part of the southern frontage with attractive cast iron railings overshadowed by the medieval church. The church is of pre-Norman origin, with a fragment of interlaced stone carving preserved, although it was almost entirely rebuilt in the mid C14 having served as the chapel of Peterhouse College since 1286.

It was originally called 'St Peter outside the Trumpington Gates', indicating its position outside the limits of the town (later city). Despite a long period when it served the college, the church remained and is still a parish church for the area.



Little St Mary's Church



Little St Mary's Churchyard and railings

At the entrance to the street, the side elevation of Emmanuel United Reformed Church also makes an important impression, echoing some of the Gothic detail of the earlier Little St Mary's Church on the south side of the street but standing at the rear of the pavement and therefore having a more immediate impact on the street's character. The use of Gault brick on the building is echoed by houses further down the lane providing some unity, although painted or red brick are also evident throughout the street.

Whilst the predominant architectural character is residential, the lane also has a frontage for the Museum of Classical Archaeology built in the late C19 by reusing earlier warehouses that related to the activity of the port on the river just to the west. The building faces onto the small forecourt of Peterhouse College and has an ornate arcaded frontage of engaged ionic-columns standing on a tall plinth of matching Ketton stone with red brick infill panels and a stone entablature above with lightly dentiled cornice, topped by a heavy balustrade with urns. The door-case is also ornamented with heraldic beasts. It makes a significant impression as an end to the open space of the churchyard, whilst it preserves the low scale sense of intimacy and development of the lane. It also helps to frame views towards the C15 North Range of Peterhouse Old Court to which the green space of the churchyard provides an attractive foreground. The Gault brick workshop buildings in the yard to the north of the lane have a large metal-framed semi-circular headed window that provides a strong industrial character.



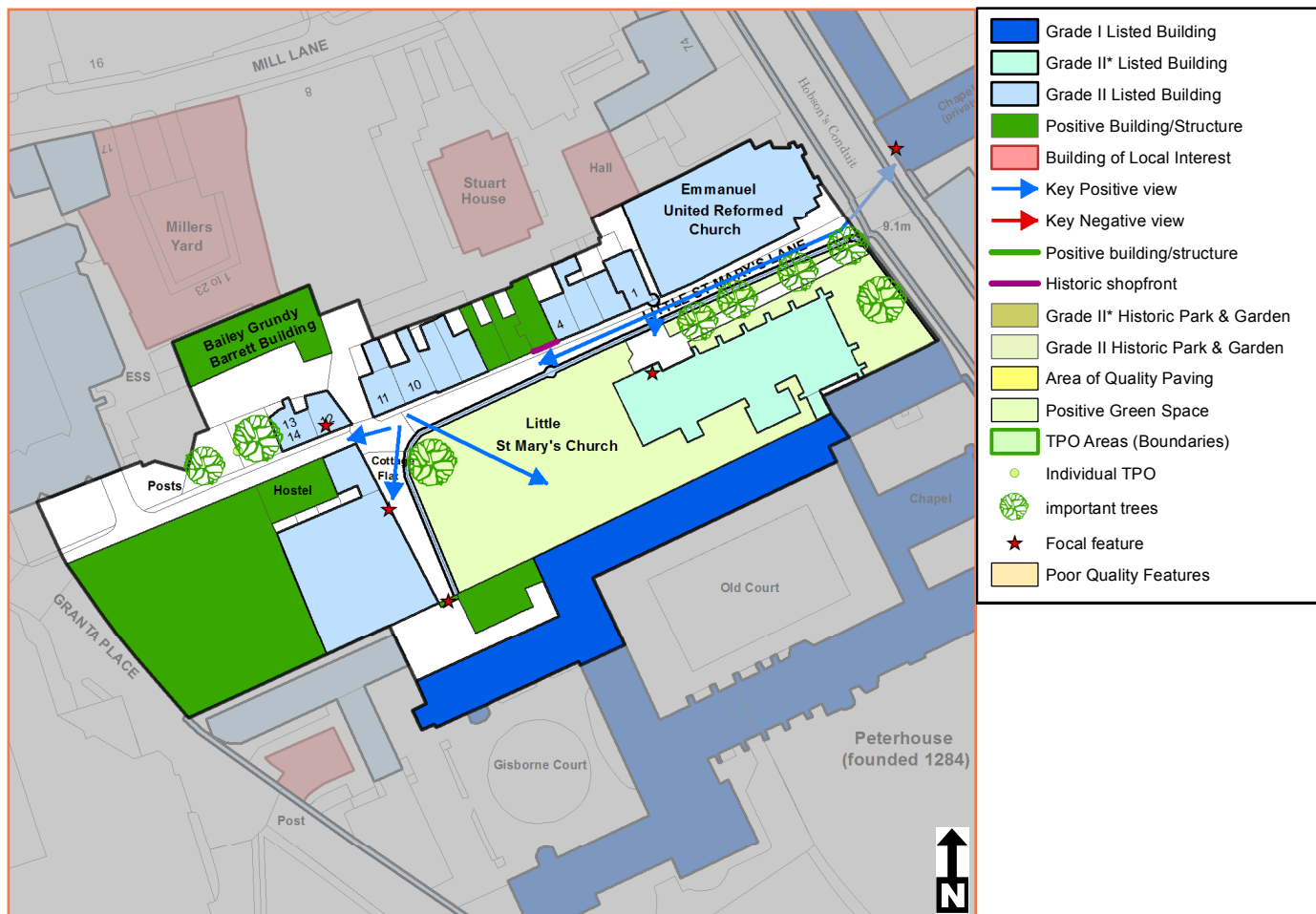
Frontage of Museum of Classical Archaeology



Gas lamp

The narrowness of the lane permits a footpath on the north side only, where it helps to separate houses from the road. The road width and trees in the churchyard filter the traffic noise from Trumpington Street and slows cars, contributing to the lane's tranquil character as an escape from the busy route to the east. The western end of the lane is not accessible to vehicles due to its narrow width, contributing to the tranquility of the route as an escape from the busy. Two listed C19 gas lamps provide historical street lighting features.

A large number of properties are in university uses, whilst the lane provides an important access to Peterhouse College and is also used by the University Estates Department works depot. During the day it is an important route between the riverside green spaces and Trumpington Street for pedestrians and cyclists. As such there is some activity throughout the day preventing it from becoming a lonely or isolated place. The University Centre at the west end of the lane is usually busy, but is mostly accessed from Granta Place.



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Townscape Elements

- Buildings line the back of the footpath on the north side creating an intimate space where there is close interaction between buildings and users of the street. This is even more pronounced in the narrower western section where the buildings enclose both sides of the passage.
- The rapid rhythm of narrow frontages of varying height and width contribute to the fine grain of the street and its organic character.
- A mixture of narrow and broader openings in the frontage, including the passage at the



Narrow frontages

rear of Emmanuel United Reform Church, the entrance to the University Estates Works depot and the larger opening for the access road to Peterhouse, provide a series of varied spaces in the street that reflect different activities and uses.



Side elevation of Emmanuel United Reformed Church

- The range of dates of houses (between C17 and C19) illustrate a long history of organic development and redevelopment of a residential lane. Characteristic architectural features include the sashed windows set flush with the exterior surface of the upper walls and

- plastered upper storeys with brick ground floors, suggesting timber-framed construction.
- Notable buildings, including Little St Mary's Church, the Ward Museum, Emmanuel United Reformed Church and Old Court of Peterhouse provide an extraordinary collection of architectural interest on a minor side street.
- On the south side Little St Mary's Church is set back in a green but overshadowed churchyard behind iron railings, providing greenery and a sense of space, albeit shut off from the general space of the lane.
- The small-scale nature of residential and museum buildings and the church's green space provide a lighter, human scale area in front of the Museum of Classical Archaeology, despite the enclosure by the surrounding buildings.
- The west end of the street narrows towards Granta Place, and taller buildings create a tight alleyway that is dominated by the C17 buildings with overhanging jetties.
- Historic gas lamps and cast / wrought iron railings provide a historically interesting public realm.

Streetscape Enhancement

There are relatively few opportunities for enhancement or development, although the PCC slabs used along the length of the pavements could be replaced with something more sympathetic.

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
Emmanuel United Reformed Church	Listed Grade II	1874	N/A	stone	slate	James Cubitt	
1	Listed Grade II	early C19	3 + basement	grey Gault brick	parapet		Grade II Listed gas lamp attached to south east corner
2-4	Listed Grade II	C18	2 + attics	brick / plastered over timber frame	hipped dormers / tile		
5	Positive building	C18?	3 + attics	colour-washed brickwork	pitched		former Half Moon public house - frontage is retained
6 & 7	Positive building	C18?	2 + attics	hard red brick & pargetted	tile		Grade II Listed gas lamp opposite
8 & 9	Listed Grade II	C18	3	soft red brick & plaster over timber frame	pitched		
10 & 11	Listed Grade II	C18	2 + attics	painted brick & plaster over timber frame	mansard / clay tile		
Baily Grundy Barrett Building	Positive building	C19?	2	Gault brick	pitched / slate		
12-14	Listed Grade II	C17	2 + attics	brick and plaster over timber frame	tile		
25-27 Little St Mary's Hostel	none	C19?	3	Gault brick	pitched		
Peterhouse Fellows' (secretary)	none	C19?	2+ basement	Gault brick	pitched		Grade II Listed gas lamp on building
Former Museum of Classical Archaeology - now the Ward Library	Listed Grade II	1883	1	ketton stone arcade, red brick filling	balustraded parapet	Basil Champneys	converted from existing warehouses - some features remain
Little St Mary's Church	Listed Grade II*	1340-52; C12 tower porch	N/A	rubble, ashlar-faced	pitched / slate	restored 1856-7 Gilbert Scott	South Chantry Chapel: 1517; South Chapel, porch, Choir Vestry & West Tower: modern
Railings, gates and gas lamp	Listed Grade II	C19	N/A	wrought and cast-iron			