

Designed as a completely new development in the 1920s and 1930s, creating a somewhat 'hidden' shopping street with student accommodation on a raised walkway above.

Sussex Street is a very attractive neo-Georgian shopping street, described by Pevsner as the 'best piece of pre-war urban planning at Cambridge'. The route of the street dates back at least to the late C17, but the buildings lining both side of the street today are a planned mixed-use development for Sidney Sussex College which was built in 1928-39.



Sussex Street, looking to Sidney Street



Sussex Street, looking to Hobson Street

SIGNIFICANCE - HIGH

General Overview

The line of Sussex Street is recorded on Loggan's Map of Cambridge produced in 1690. It appears to have replaced an earlier road that continued the line of King Street along the southern boundary of the Grey Friars precinct to the north, shown on Braun's map of 1572. It has always been a narrow street, creating a transitional zone between the approaches to the city centre from the east and the central commercial area of Sidney Street and the streets running off Market Hill.



Crescent of two storey cottages

Recorded as five separate buildings, the redevelopment of Sussex Street took place in the late 1920s and early 1930s (south side), and at the end of the 1930s in a distinctive Baroque Revival style in dark red brick with stone detailing and bronze framed shop fronts. At the entrances to the street the building rises to four storeys with attics. Narrow entrances create gateways that give access to a hidden and enclosed space. The overall Baroque design has a theatrical character that is emphasised by the long gallery or terrace surrounding the courtyard. The trend within the city centre to provide student accommodation at first and second floor levels, over ground floor and basement commercial units, was followed by creating an open 'street' above the arcade with the buildings appearing to be a crescent of two storey cottages whose front doors are emphasised by segmental arched hoods.

As a single 'set-piece' development it has a strong architectural character that is dependent on its continued quality on the maintenance of uniformity in its detailing and materials. These are of very high quality with stone detailing to shopfronts and the colonnade, thin, rusticated brick quoins and raised plat bands above the second storey providing classical proportions to the frontage. The dormer windows to the attic rooms are notable for the use of transom and mullion windows, reinforcing the Baroque references. An example of the type of sensitive treatment required was the addition of a footbridge over the entrance from Hobson's Street in 1991, using matching materials and detailing to the original structures.

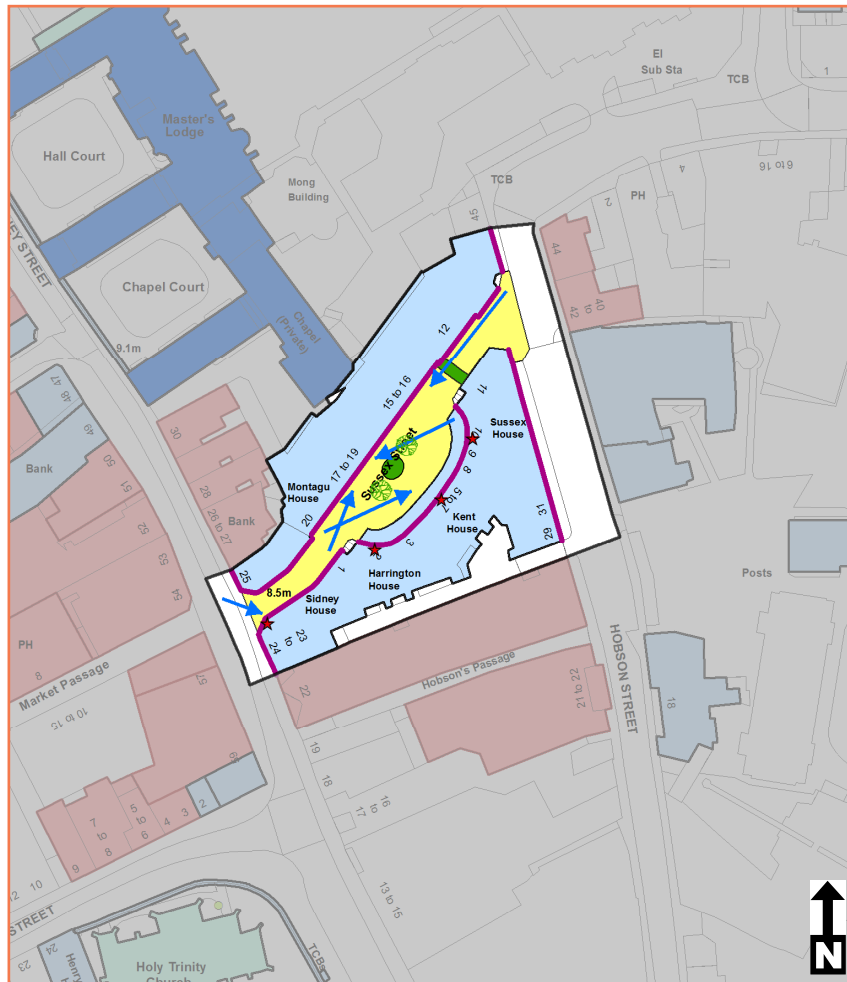


Shopfronts and dormer windows



Footbridge over entrance from Hobson Street

Although it was originally accessible to cars, pedestrianisation has made this a popular shopping area with pavement space for café use, conveniently located just off the main shopping street. An additional draw is the number of high quality specialist shops as well as some of the nationals.



	Grade I Listed Building
	Grade II* Listed Building
	Grade II Listed Building
	Positive Building/Structure
	Building of Local Interest
→	Key Positive view
→	Key Negative view
—	Positive building/structure
—	Historic shopfront
	Grade II* Historic Park & Garden
	Grade II Historic Park & Garden
	Area of Quality Paving
	Positive Green Space
	TPO Areas (Boundaries)
●	Individual TPO
●	important trees
★	Focal feature
	Poor Quality Features

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Townscape Elements

- The building surrounds a crescent-shaped courtyard with an arcade along its south side, above which the entrances to the student accommodation are accessed by a raised street, reached from the arcade by balustraded staircases.
- The building stands at the back of, and overlaps with, the pavement, enclosing the space and defining the public realm.
- The vista west is enclosed by commercial buildings on Sidney Street.



Two silver birches

- Green landscaping is restricted to two silver birches in the centre of the street.



Stone obelisk with two gas lamps

- The floor surface is distinguished by a decorative granite sett paving scheme of intersecting circles in the centre of the space surrounding a stone obelisk bearing two gas lamps.
- Further paving includes Yorkstone slabs of a high quality.

Streetscape Enhancement

Some minor improvements to street furniture are possible, particularly at the Sidney Street end.

Preventing occasional night-time vandalism is a key challenge whilst preserving the architectural interest and integrity of the building.

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
1-20 Sussex Street: Montague House; Harrington House; Kent House; Sussex House; Sidney House	Listed Grade II	south Side: 1928-32 north Side: 1938-39	south side: 3 + attic north side: 2 tiers of dormers	red brick with stone arcade	hipped / south: pantiles north: plain tiles	E.R. Barrow; linking bridge added 1991 by Pleasance Hookham & Nix	4 storey & dormer attic corner blocks at east & west ends Listing includes Nos. 29 & 31 Hobson Street, No. 25 and Nos. 23 to 24 Sidney Street