

Laundress Lane takes its name from the university's washerwomen who used the river and dried laundry on the green.

A narrow passage running off Silver Street beside the historic Anchor public house and leading to Mill Lane. It leads into the small industrial enclave running down to the edge of the river and has always formed an important route to the green spaces of

Coe Fen and Sheep's Green, which have been important as an industrial area and also as a recreational resource. They were also used by the city's laundresses as drying grounds, from which the lane takes its name.



Street view

SIGNIFICANCE - SIGNIFICANT

General Overview

The character of Laundress Lane plays an important role in illustrating the history of this part of the city centre, which formed a small industrial enclave of print works and breweries that lay between Silver Street, Trumpington Street and the river and outside the focus of college and university buildings north of Silver Street. It retains the character of a minor lane in an area of functional architecture relating to industrial uses.

On Loggan's 1688 map of Cambridge, the lane is recorded as having a large number of tenements facing onto it. However by the late C19 these had been subsumed by larger buildings, probably relating to the brewery to the east and the quay to the west. The majority of the buildings are now in university use, except for The Anchor public house and the cycle repair workshop.

The late C19 industrial buildings at the southern end of the lane are now part of the University Social Club and are connected at first floor level by an unusual glazed footbridge that serves to accentuate their industrial character. These brick buildings (in part painted) are of plain design with small windows, and curved corner to the ground floor at the entrance, a feature often found in industrial areas in order to protect the corners from passing barrows and carts.



University Social Club buildings



The Anchor PH and No. 15

The Anchor pub provides the frontage of the northern half of the lane's west side although the absence of the rusticated stucco used on its frontage to Silver Street indicates that historically this was more a service lane than a principle frontage. The use of weatherboarding for part of the pub's frontage, also reflects the historical low status of the lane and simple building materials and techniques used in this industrial area. The low arch headed windows and first floor loading door of the shop (currently a bicycle shop) at No. 15, reflect the forms of construction of minor industrial buildings, whilst the proportions of the windows add to an overall horizontal emphasis to the lane. The narrowness of the lane means roof surfaces are generally hidden from pedestrian view, whilst the visibility of the windows and doors mean they are important features.

The street surfaces are of unremarkable tarmacadam, although the line of a stone curb of a footpath is preserved, providing evidence of past investment. The bollards at the southern end of the lane are of the superior hot-cross-bun cast iron type chosen for the Conservation Area, whilst those at the northern end of the lane are simple black painted tubular steel and not particularly attractive. These are removable to allow access by service vehicles. At the corner with Mill Lane, a street lamp on an attractive cast iron bracket projects from the building on the west side of the lane, but beyond this corner there is no further street lighting and the lane is a dark and rather threatening alley at night. A curious historic sign at the Mill Lane entrance to Laundress Lane announces that as of 24th March 1857 the lane is not a thoroughfare for carriages and horses.

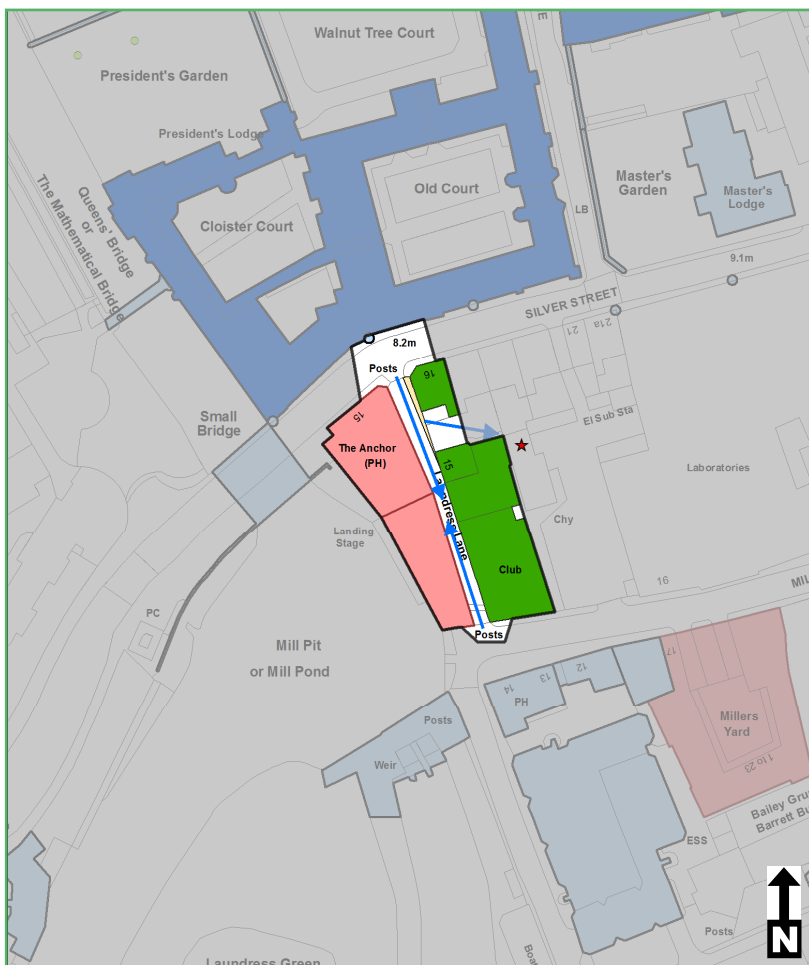


Historic sign



Pyramid roof of the oast house

The tight enclosure of the building lines, which stand either at the back of the narrow pavement or directly at the edge of the 'carriageway', channel views towards the late medieval kitchen block of Queen's College Front (Old) Court to the north, or to the Mill Public House to the south. The latter view is partially screened by the footbridge at the southern end of the lane. A small area of view, within the lane, looking eastward, includes the pyramid roof of the oast house just to the east which provides further evidence of the industrial past of the area.



	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

Townscape Elements

- The lane is enclosed by strong building lines on both sides set directly at the rear of the footpath.
- The mixture of two and three storey buildings contribute to the strong sense of enclosure, whilst allowing areas of greater light infiltration to the street and providing human scale.
- Architecture with a late C19 industrial character including small ground floor windows or windows with horizontal emphasis and low brick arched heads.
- Buildings in local Gault brick with little architectural pretension, reflecting a simple industrial aesthetic.
- The Anchor public house, which stands next the Silver Street Bridge has some more decorative features, although these are mainly focused on the Silver Street frontage emphasizing the role of the lane as a service alley or cut-through to Mill Lane and Laundress Green.
- The curved corners of the building at the Mill Lane junction provides evidence of past industrial light traffic (barrows and small carts).

- The surviving narrow pavement suggests former investment in the surfaces despite the present bland treatment.
- The building line is broken by the small, enclosed garden attached to the corner, which allows a view to the oast house as a prominent focal feature.
- The view north is focused on Queens' College's medieval kitchen block.

Streetscape Enhancements

There are a lot of water pipes (e.g. downpipes and soil vent pipes) and wire runs on the outside of buildings, reflecting the introduction of modern services to historic buildings. These add to the clutter and modern intrusions in what is otherwise a distinctive side street.

The large wheelie bins associated with The Anchor are conspicuous, poorly housed and clutter the narrow lane, detracting from its appearance. This could be enhanced by providing some additional simple screening for the bins.

Enhanced paving emphasising the former character as a narrow cut-through in an industrial area could add interest and contribute to the positive aesthetic value of the lane.



Narrow pavement

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
The Anchor Public House	BLI	C19	2	plastered	parapet / slate		
extension			2 + attic	painted brick & boarded	slate		
Centre of South Asian Studies	BLI	C19	3	painted brick	hipped / welsh slate		
University Sports & Social Club	none	late C19	2	grey gault brick	hipped / slate		
15 bike workshop	Positive building	C19	2	grey gault brick	slate		
16 corner building	Positive building	late C19	3	red brick	dormers	Richard Reynolds Rowe	