

A street of C18, C19 and C20 commercial buildings, hotels and townhouses representing ribbon development south along the old Roman road as an important approach to Cambridge from the south. Downing College provides a spacious early C19 landscape of college buildings and grounds.

Regent Street is an extremely busy main route into the city centre, used by cars, buses, pedestrians and cyclists, reflecting its historic function as an important approach to the city from the south. Its mixture of architecture illustrates its initial development in the late C18 and early C19 as the city spread out to the south along the old Roman road. Subsequent redevelopment has managed to maintain many of the architectural characteristics, some times more successfully than others, whilst the many historic shopfronts maintain its character as a commercial area

taking advantage of the trade of passing travellers. It is now an area of restaurants, offices and specialist shops on the edge of the main city centre shopping area. Downing College, to the west, is accessed from the street with buildings in a consistent Greek Revival style set out on an axial grid surrounding manicured open lawns creating a strongly formal and open composition. The grounds become more naturalistic in character to the south, with a dense fringe of woodland.



Street view

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General Overview

Regent Street follows the line of part of the old Roman road. It has also been known as Hadstock Road, Friars' Street, Preachers' Street, High Street and King's Way. Its current name likely originates from a visit by the Prince Regent in 1815. It has been an important approach to the city centre throughout its history but it appears that it was not until C18 that development spread along it to take advantage of the trade of travellers arriving from the south. Indeed, at the turn of the C19, development was limited to a cluster of houses and inns at the junction with Lensfield Road and a number of buildings further up the west side of the road and the isolated Prince Regent Inn on the east side. The latter was also named after the visit of the Prince in 1815, shortly before his coronation.



Prince Regent Public House



No. 33A Regent Street

Further development along the street appears to have been rapid and formed part of the wider expansion of the city from the 1830s and following decades. Numerous surviving buildings are built in the Gault brick with simple Neo-classical detailing, including six-over-six and three-over-three pane sash windows and semi-circular arched front doorways that typify this period of Cambridge's domestic architecture. Several have later Victorian shopfronts as additions, whilst Nos. 78 and 80 Regent Street stand out for the fine late C18 shopfront that may have been imported from another building in the city to support this property's commercial use. The narrow shopfront

to Nanna Mexico at No. 33A is an exquisite example.

The street has seen significant redevelopment including Victorian and Edwardian buildings as replacement of individual townhouses, reflecting its vitality as a commercial area in the late C19 and early C20. Larger late C20 commercial and office developments have had a significant impact on the character of the street often combining shops at ground floor level with offices above. Some of these have pushed the building scale above the C18 and C19 three storey limit to four storeys, overshadowing the road and dominating the streetscene at the expense of the older and more architecturally interesting buildings. The University Arms Hotel is currently being comprehensively redeveloped and its relationship to the street will be considerably enhanced. Nevertheless, many of these developments have sought to maintain a unified character within the street through the use of Gault brick (or similar) and simple Neo-classical fenestration schemes that complement those of earlier buildings.

The strong building line to either side channels views along the street with the tall spire of Our Lady and the English Martyrs Church providing a focal feature and end stop to the south.



Previous street elevation, now demolished, of The University Arms Hotel



View into Downing College

Downing College

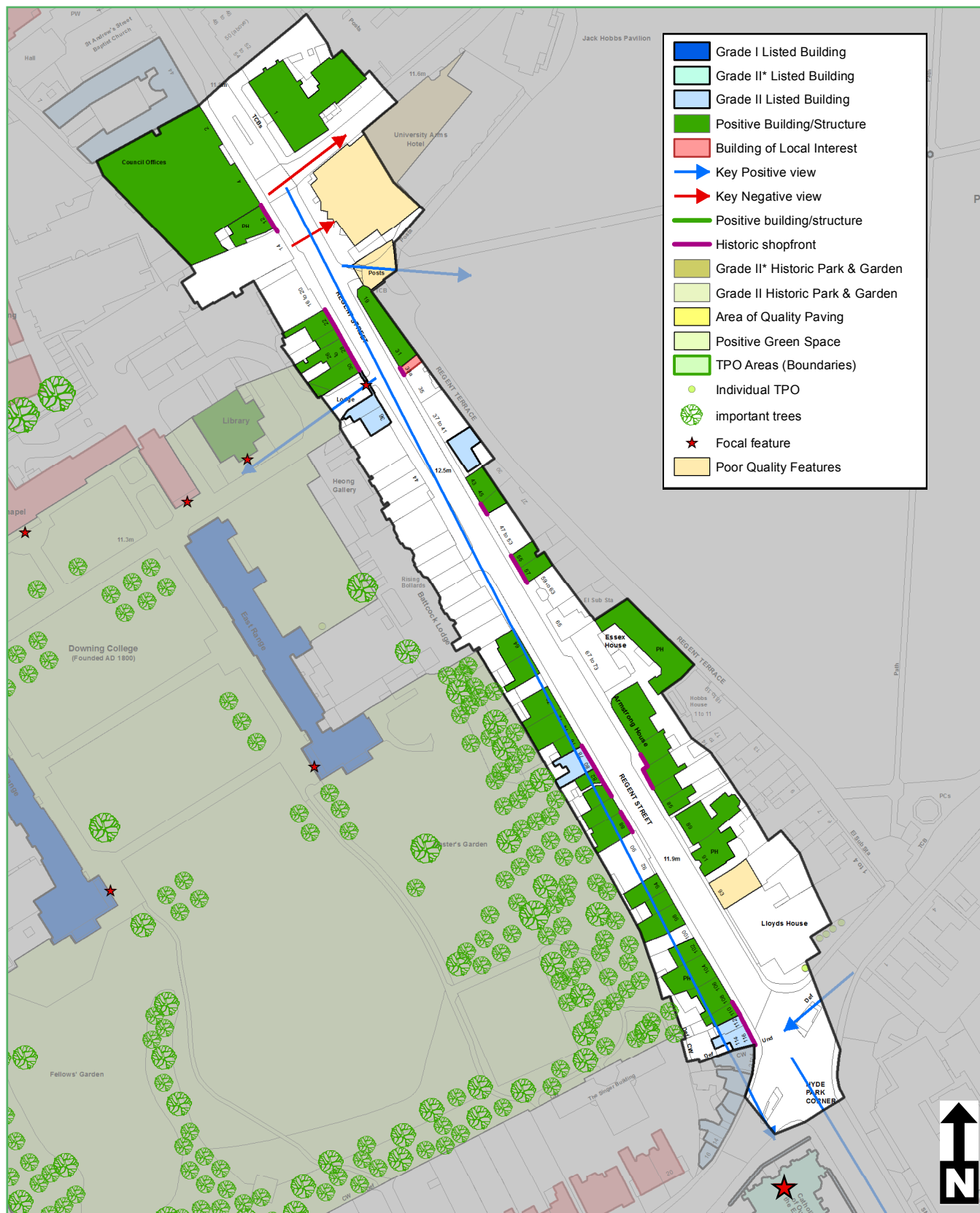
The Downing College site was developed soon after 1800 to a scheme created by William Wilkins using Greek inspired accommodation ranges to surround a vast lawned court. The original design of the court included a range to the south, which was never constructed. As a result, the space continues into the less formally landscaped grounds to the south, creating a sense of wide-openness and attractive vistas, whereas the intention had originally been to focus views to an impressive gateway to the north. The northern ranges were also built further back from the court than originally designed adding to the vast scale of the space. The buildings are generally only two storeys high adding to the openness of the space. Wilkins' Greek Revival architecture is very successful and creates a unified character that was continued in later buildings in the complex. Where later buildings diverge from this scheme, variations are surprisingly jarring.

The gate lodge to Regent Street stands out as a more vernacular building, forming part of a group of two storey houses and shops on the street frontage. It is notable for the survival of its domestic frontage where other buildings on the street have had shopfronts inserted. The iron gates, topped with large Winsor lanterns, provide a tempting glimpse into the college grounds to encourage visitors to explore. Whilst the grounds are open to the public, the through route to Tennis Court Lane is not open and as such there is little through footfall, helping to maintain the tranquil character of the space.

Tree planting is focused to an avenue along the main east – west path crossing the northern edge of the court leaving the remaining space relatively uncluttered with trees. To the south a fringe of woodland forms a naturalistic boundary to the open space beyond the court.



Downing College gate lodge



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Townscape Elements

- The building line is generally set at the rear of the pavement with long stretches of informal terraced development that create a strong sense of enclosure and focus views along the street.



Buildings set at the back of the pavement

- The many C19 buildings contribute to the historical character of the street, including the preservation of historic details including timber framed sash windows and semi-circular headed doors. A number of properties retain domestic frontages, whilst many others have high quality historic shopfronts that make an important contribution to the area's character as an historic focus of trade at the entrance to the city.
- There is very little greenery within the streetscape, although views through to Parker's Piece and Downing College provide glimpses of greenery behind the main frontage. The view south includes the greenery at the road junction and further along Hills Road, which contribute to the attractive quality of views.



Mixed roofscapes

- The roofscape is mixed with the historic buildings providing a mixture of parapets and broad over-sailing eaves to pitched hipped or cornered gabled roofs, reflecting a mixture of C19 styles.
- The use of Gault brick, or similar, unifies the mixed periods and styles of construction.

- Later C20 buildings have also used window proportions that reflect those of the earlier buildings, whilst many later shopfronts have been conscientiously 'historical' in character to harmonise with the historic examples.
- The green spaces and architecture of Downing College combine openness of the space, successful use of a limited architectural palette, and low scale and formal arrangement of buildings, to create an area of exceptional environmental quality and historical and architectural interest.

Streetscape Enhancements

There are opportunities to improve the paving, and to limit the on-street parking. Removing the parking bay in front of Nos. 67-69 would relieve the congestion at that point in the street.

Some buildings have flower boxes and hanging baskets, which help soften the impact of buildings and signs.

Some shopfronts have adopted gaudy colours and poor quality materials, detracting from the area's overall appearance. Raising the quality of shopfronts could make a big impact on the overall quality of the streetscene.

Street lighting is provided by plain steel columns that fail to reflect the historic interest and architectural quality of the surrounding buildings. Upgrading or simply painting the lighting columns could help to improve appearance of the space and would highlight its status as part of the historic city centre.

Development Opportunities

Nos. 90-92 are quite stark in appearance, both in form and material, and are in complete contrast to the character of the street. The frontage could possibly be softened or enhanced.

The Pizza Hut frontage is on a key corner but the proportions of the long, unbroken façade and signage could be significantly improved.

East side (from north)

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
1	Positive building	1939	3	buff brick	hipped	George Ford	
University Arms Hotel	none	1965-66	4	brown brick	flat	Feilden & Mawson	Currently being developed
19-31 (Pizza Hut)	Positive building	C19	1-3	Gault brick	slate		Positive features survive above ground floor level
33A (Nanna Mexico)	BLI	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		
33 & 35 (Nanna Mexico and Parkers' Barbers)	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	slate		
37/39 (John Lewis of Hungerford)	none	C20	3 + attic	buff brick	slate		
41 (Regent Hotel)	Listed Grade II	c1830	3 + basement	Gault brick	hipped / slate		
43-45 (Gourmet Burger Kitchen)	Positive building	C19	3 + attic	Gault brick	slate		
47 (Zizzi)	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		
49-53 (Zizzi)	none	C20	3	buff brick	flat		
55 & 57	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		
59/61 (Ravenscroft House)	none	1980s	3 + roof top storey	orange / yellow brick	metal sheeting		
65 (Reed)	none	early C20	1-2 + attic	Gault brick	hipped mansard / slate		
67-73 (Essex House)	none	c1937	3 + roof storey	brown brick	flat	Hughes & Bicknell	
75-79	Positive building	c1938	3	buff brick, concrete details	flat		A well preserved early C20 addition to
81 (Accent)	Positive building	C19	3	colourwashed brick	slate		Includes high quality C19 shopfront
83 & 85 (De Luca and Massaro's)	Positive building	early C20	3	Gault brick, red brick detailing	slate		
89 (Devonshire House)	Positive building	c1880	3 + basement	Gault brick	hipped / slate		A large townhouse set back from the street with a well preserved domestic frontage
91 (The Prince Regent Public House)	Positive building	C19	3 + single storey front extension	Gault brick	slate		The earliest building constructed on this side of the street but substantially altered.
93	Negative building	C20	3	red / brown brick	hipped / slate		
Lloyds House	none	C20	3	concrete panels	flat		

West side (from north)

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
2-10 (Mandela House)	Positive building	1933	3	red brick	parapet		formelly Llandaff Chambers
12 (Novi Public House)	Positive building	late C19 / early C20	3	mock tudor panelling	hipped gabled / tile		
14 (Charlie Chan and Farrow and Ball)	none	1930s	3	red brick	parapet		

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
16 & 18 (The Futon Company)	none	C20	3 + attic	buff brick	hipped parapet / slate		Careful C20 reproduction of early C19 architectural style
20	none	C19	2	render	parapet		
22 -30 (Cambridge Blue Sandwiches, Pizza Express, and the Hospice Shop)	Positive building	C19	2	painted brick	slate		Includes high quality historic shopfronts
Downing College: Lodge & 36	Listed Grade II	1834	3	grey Gault brick	hipped / slate		
East and West Ranges, including Hall, Master's Lodge and East and West Lodges	Listed Grade I	1807-21, 1874-76	2 + attics	Gault brick faced Ketton stone	parapet / slate	Designed by William Wilkins, completed by E.M. Barry	
Baker and Scott Buildings and Chapel	BLI		3 (Chapel 1)	rusticated stone	parapet		
38-62 (Parker's House)	none	1980s	3-4	buff brick	metal sheeting		
64 & 66 (Haart and Seven Days)	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		
68	none	early C20	2	Gault brick	parapet		
70	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		
72-76 (The Money Shop and Tasty Restaurant)	Positive building	early C20	3	Gault brick, red dressings			
78 & 80 (John Beazor Ltd.)	Listed Grade II	early C19	3	grey Gault brick	slate		Late C18 shopfront
82-84	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		Good quality historic shopfronts
86-88 (Christian Bookshops)					slate		Overlarge oriel windows to the first floor and signage detract from building
90-92	none	C20	3+ roof top storey	concrete panels	flat		
94 (Christian Science Reading Room)	Positive building	1980s	3	buff brick	flat		
96-98 (Ladbroke's)	Positive building	C19	3 + attic	Gault brick	slate		
100 (The Olive Grove)	none	C19	2	Gault brick	parapet / slate		
102 (Regent Street Dentist's)	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		
104	none	C19	3	Gault brick	parapet		
106-110	Positive building	C19	3	Gault brick	slate		
112 & 114	Listed Grade II	late C18	2 + attics	colour washed brick	mansard / slate		
116			2		parapet / slate		