

A popular but narrow lane lined by colleges on the east of the River Cam and cutting attractively across 'The Backs' to the west.

This minor lane represents a surviving element of the city's medieval street pattern leading from the focus of the historic college area of the city into the open spaces of the backs and the western edges of the city centre. The lane is a popular route from the quiet area of Trinity Lane to The Backs used by tourists

wandering down to the river and students moving between the city centre and West Cambridge.



Street view

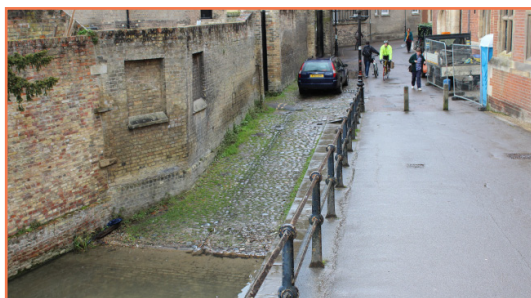
SIGNIFICANCE - HIGH

General Overview

Garret Hostel Lane lies in the heart of collegiate Cambridge and is evident on maps from the 1570s onwards, probably forming part of the medieval street pattern (formerly as Henney Lane). Garret Hostel stood on the corner of Trinity Lane and Garret Hostel Lane, now the site of Bishop's Hostel, and was in existence by 1329. An island named 'Garret Ostell Greene' lying between two courses of the River Cam appears on Braun's map of Cambridge of 1574. In 1546 Henry VIII combined the properties of seven hostels (including Garret Hostel) King's House and Michael House to create his new Trinity College. Braun's map records the lane as a route from Trinity Lane over a bridge to the island and via a second bridge to the road south to Newnham.



Bishop's Hostel



Cobbled slip-way running to the river

During the C17 the eastern channel of the Cam was partly culverted allowing Trinity College buildings to expand onto Garret Hostel Green as part of Neville's grand redesign of the college. By the end of the century the meadows west of the river had been laid out as two formal paddocks either side of a triple avenue and surrounded by tree-lined walks. Garrett Hostel Lane appears to have remained as a service road, with Trinity College brewhouse located against it and a triangular wharf area running up to the riverside. The latter remains as a cobbled slip-way running down from the lane to the river.

Development of the land between the river and Trinity Lane for college buildings between the early C19 and mid C20 has created a narrow street canyon, with a strong sense of enclosure and channelled views. The buildings include attractive detailing that is eye catching, particularly the late C19 and early C20 Gatehouse and Latham (by Grayson and Ould) buildings of Trinity Hall, which present an active frontage to the lane using dark red brick with stone dressing, recalling many of Cambridge's C16 college buildings. The Tudor Revival gatehouse building of Trinity Hall was added in 1920, incorporating the college's 14th century archways and a door of the college's original gates, moved to this location from Trinity Lane in 1890. Overall the street's character benefits from the strong combination of Tudor Revival and similar architectural styles (including Wilkins' early C19 New Court for Trinity College), including elaborate detailing in stone. However, it remains a space to which many of the college buildings turn their backs, with their more prestigious frontages focused on the private courts and college gardens.

West of the river the lane remained as an historic access running as a causeway with ditches on either side separating it from the 'improved' landscapes of Trinity College Meadow to the north and Clare Hall Meadow to the south. This stretch of the lane has retained this character to the present, with expansive vistas northward towards Trinity College and St John's College. The views include the turrets and tower of the ornate gatehouse of St John's College New Court seen rising above the riverbanks and the graceful arch of Trinity College Bridge forming a particularly attractive composition. The views over the former Clare Hall Meadow (now Clare College's Fellows' Garden) are screened by a tall evergreen hedge that casts shade over the lane and negatively affects its character. This western part of the lane is bounded by low iron railing supported by cast iron posts on a stone dwarf wall, whilst it is lit by traditional Windsor lanterns on cast iron standards, providing



Stretch of the lane west of the bridge over the river



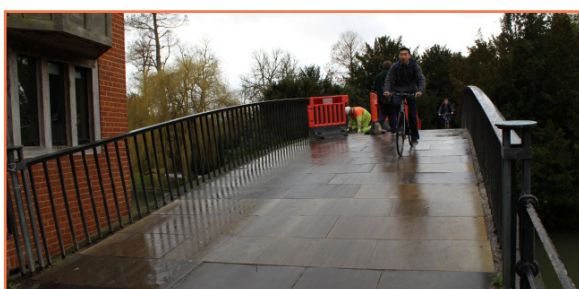
Views to St John's College New Court



Views to Trinity College bridge



Clare College's Fellows' Garden screened



Bridge over the River Cam

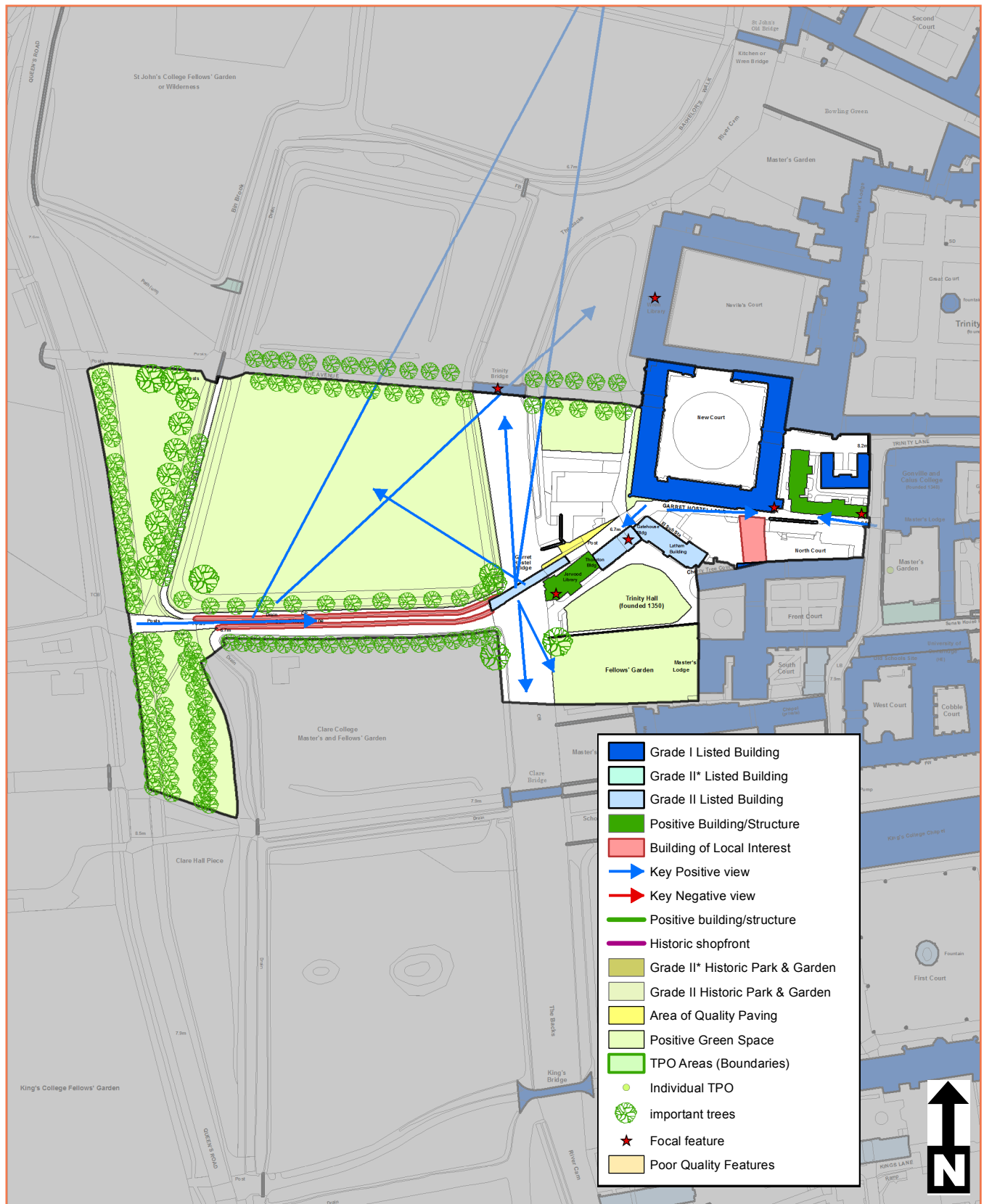
a more formal Victorian character.

The bridge over the remaining arm of the River Cam is known to be the sixth built in this location since 1455. It is an elegant structure designed by an undergraduate of the School of Architecture (Timothy Morgan) who died in the year of its construction. Its high arch provides a fine prospect of the river, including the bridges and gardens of Trinity Hall and Clare College to the south and Trinity College Bridge to the north with a broad vista over the

formal lawns and paddocks of The Backs.

At the western limit of the lane it emerges into the informal green space of Clare Hall Piece an open grassland studded with mature trees and crossed by a mixture of formal and informal pathways that runs alongside Queen's Road.

Garret Hostel Lane is a busy street, especially in summer when it is popular with visitors as a route to the river. The land on either side is used by either Trinity College or Trinity Hall. There is very little vehicle traffic although only the leg on the west bank is entirely car-free and is a pedestrian / cycle route; the east leg is a right of way used by vehicles for accessing and servicing the colleges.



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Townscape Elements

- The lane has distinct east and west character areas separated by the River Cam.
- In the western section iron railings on dwarf walls define a straight tree-lined causeway with ditches beyond and with Victorian style Windsor lanterns on cast metal columns that provide a strong late C19 character to the lane.



Iron railings

- The grass banks of the causeway and lawns of Trinity College Paddocks provide an attractive foreground to views from the lane to the river and the buildings of Trinity and St John's Colleges, which are important to the identity of Cambridge and the colleges.
- The tree line on the edge of the paddocks and hedge in Clare College Gardens channel views along the causeway to the bridge and the Jerwood Library building at Trinity Hall, a positive building in the streetscape, to the east and to the trees and open space at Clare Hall Piece to the west emphasising the role of the path as an historic link from the university area of the town to the rural hinterland across the river valley.



Views to the bridge and Jerwood Library (Trinity Hall)

- The east leg is narrow and tightly enclosed by buildings forming a street canyon. Views east along the lane are closed by the Trinity Lane frontage of Gonville Court of Gonville and Caius College, whilst the turreted corners of Trinity College New Court provide focal features within the lane.
- The course of the eastern section has a kink after crossing the bridge and again past the Jerwood Library (Trinity Hall), where looking west the library, Gatehouse Building and Latham Building provide the focus of views, with architectural detailing and frontages that contribute interest and a sense of activity in the lane.
- The cobbled ramp down to the riverside from the lane is one of the few places in the north west of the city where pedestrians can reach the river and an area of historic surfacing reflecting historical riverside activities.
- The short section of garden wall preserved on the south side of the lane provides evidence of its course in the C16.

Redevelopment Opportunities

The major opportunity remains to improve the 1960s buildings of Trinity Hall which provide a poor and inactive frontage to the lane.

Streetscape Enhancements

The C16 clunch wall is in need of repair.

Careful building cleaning may lift the lane's rather sombre character.

The floorscape could be improved to make it more attractive and discourage vehicle use, perhaps using the inspiration of the cobbled access to the riverside.

Lowering the hedge along the boundary of Clare College Fellows' Garden would lighten the lane and make the western section less foreboding.

South side

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
Clare Hall Piece	Registered Grade II		public open space criss-crossed by paths and lined with trees				
Clare College Master's & Fellows' Garden	Registered Grade II	1946-7	rectangular lawn, shielded from lane by trees			Walter Barlow	
Trinity Hall: Jerwood Library	Positive building	1998	4	brick & limed oak	gabled / tiled	Freeland Rees Roberts	
Thornton Building	Positive building	1910	2 + attic	red brick with stone	gabled / tiled		Tudor Gothic style
Gatehouse Building	Listed Grade II	1927	4	red brick with stone dressings	parapet / tiled		entrance gateway reset here 1890; moved from South Court
Latham Building	Listed Grade II	1890	4	red brick with stone dressings		Grayson and Ould	
Cherry Tree Court	none	1973-5	3	timber & brick	tiled	David Roberts & Geoffrey Clark	
JCR	BLI	1975	3	brick with stone dressing		David Roebuck and Geoffrey Clark	
Trinity Hall boundary wall	Listed Grade II	C16 & later refacing	N/A	stone and brick			probably original wall built 1545
North Court	Positive building	1948-51	2 + attic basements	brown brick	tile	A.E. Richardson	
Railings to west end of lane	BLI		iron posts set into low brick wall with two horizontal rails				

North side

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
Trinity south paddock	Registered Grade II		rectangular open lawn, gravel perimeter paths & trees				
Garret Hostel Bridge	Listed Grade II	1960	pressed concrete structure, bronze railings, reinforced concrete abutments faced with york stone			Timothy Morgan	
L-shaped wall on river front	Listed Grade II	C18 or earlier	N/A	brick with stone heraldic cartouches (late C17)		cartouches probably by Robert Grumbold	
The Old Brew House	none	C19	2	Gault brick	tile		
New Court	Listed Grade I	1823-5	3 + attics	Gault brick, rendered	embattled parapet	William Wilkins	Tudor Gothic style
New ranges	Positive building	1876-8	2 + basement	red brick	tile	A. W. Blomfield	
Railings to west end of lane	BLI		iron posts set into low brick wall with two horizontal rails				