

Guildhall Street / Guildhall Place

Guildhall Street was originally the city's meat market.

The line of Guildhall Street probably dates back to at least the C16 when it was called 'Butcher Row' because it contained the city's meat market. Houses and stalls originally lined the street, but it has been much altered, particularly in the C20. The

current Guildhall dates largely from the 1930s, representing the latest in a continuous use of the site since the C14. The line of Guildhall Place was changed with the building of Lion Yard in 1975.



Guildhall Street and Guildhall Place

SIGNIFICANCE - SIGNIFICANT

General Overview

This short route is dominated by the side elevations of the Guildhall and Lion Yard but has a surprising amount of architectural interest due to the elaborate early C20 Jacobethan Revival frontages of Honest Burgers (formerly the Red Cow Public House) at its south end, and the late C16 timber framed element of Fisher House, confirming the early origins of the street. It also gains borrowed interest from the frontage of the Corn Exchange building on Wheeler Street. The impact of widening the street for the creation of C20 civic space surrounding the Guildhall and the development of Lion Yard is, however, very evident and only the narrow southern continuation of the street as Guildhall Passage retains the character of one on the medieval routes leading off the Market



Former Red Cow Public House



The Guildhall

(the Cretan sun god) by the well known artist Michael Ayrton. Its positioning at the front of the small square helps to reinforce the street's frontage.

The university's Catholic chaplaincy was founded in 1896 after the Catholic Church repealed its own decree banning Catholics from attending the university due to the dangers of increasing liberalism and scepticism. A condition of the repeal was that a chaplain was established to provide complementary teaching of religion, history and philosophy. A debating society named the Fisher Society was

Place.

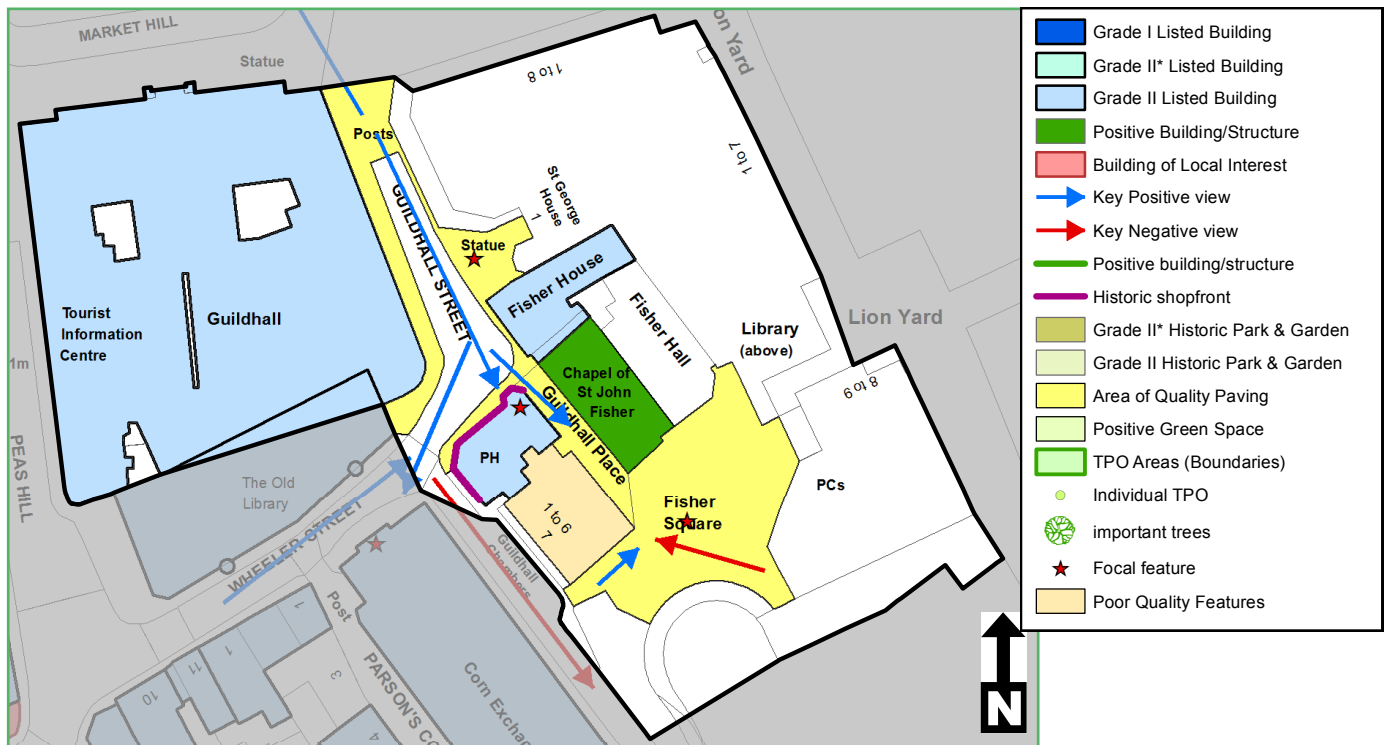
The Guildhall is a solidly built 1930s structure with a rusticated ashlar ground floor and brown brick upper floors rising to four storeys at the north end of the street, where the narrow space between it and Lion Yard is often in deep shade. At its southern end it falls to just two storeys, letting more light into the street. It occupies the sites of a previous guildhall and other buildings.

Partway along the street the small square formed by the side entrance to Lion Yard features a bronze sculpture of Talos



Fisher House

founded at the same time, named after John Fisher, a former chancellor of Cambridge University and a Catholic martyr. In 1924 the chaplaincy was moved to the former Black Swan Public House, which was fittingly renamed Fisher House. The building is in fact made up of two houses, both dating to the C17. The main elevation was built with a jettied frontage overhanging the street, and at right angles to this and located at the rear, a further house can be found, which was built over medieval cellars and contains the Great Chamber. The glimpsed view into the sheltered courtyard from the street promises an oasis of calm in the city centre.



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Guildhall Street and Place are important pedestrian routes between Lion Yard and the market. Guildhall Street is also often used for deliveries to the Guildhall which is used as offices for the City Council. Lion Yard is a mixture of shops and offices, the former Red Cow is now a restaurant (Honest Burgers), and the building behind contains a bookmakers on the ground floor and a bar and nightclub above.



Views south



Views north

Townscape Elements

- The scale of surrounding buildings gives the narrow Guildhall Street an enclosed character.
- Vistas north from Guildhall Street are channelled by the building line to the bustle of market stalls at Market Hill.

- The vista south is attractively terminated by Honest Burgers (formerly the Red Cow Public House) and its varied skyline.
- The Guildhall sits on the pavement edge with a continuous frontage for the entire length of the street, creating a strong sense of enclosure but also a lack of activity.



Michael Ayrton's Talos sculpture

- The Lion Yard buildings have a ground floor colonnade which maintains the apparent narrow width of the street but provides an additional pedestrian route underneath. The recessed entrance to the offices creates a small square, which is undistinguished apart from the Talos sculpture.
- Buildings along Guildhall Place are all on the back of the pavement.
- The vista south from Guildhall Place is of the new facade of the Grand Arcade development which has been considerably improved, with the active frontage of the Carluccio's Restaurant facing across the repaved Fisher Square.

- Flag stone paving throughout the street identifies this as an important location in the city centre, contributing to the setting of the Guildhall in particular.

Streetscape Enhancement

Fisher Square has been regenerated through the Grand Arcade Development, creating an attractive space with patterned paving and including a sculptural centrepiece.

Guildhall Street can be dominated by vehicles despite being a no-through road. It could benefit from resurfacing and traffic restrictions to create a better pedestrian environment and a setting for the 'Talos' sculpture. Inspiration should be taken from the flagstone paving that still survives.

The bollards to stop vehicles entering the market from Guildhall Street are very utilitarian in appearance and do not reflect the important civic status of this space.

Redevelopment Opportunities

The building which houses the bookmakers, bar and nightclub in Guildhall Place is not an attractive building and a sensitive redevelopment could work well as an enhancement of Fisher Square. This would also create a better relationship with Honest Burgers (the former Red Cow).

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
The Guildhall	Listed Grade II	1936-9	5	brown brick & Ancaster stone	flat	C Cowles-Voysey	job architect: J Brandon-Jones
Lion Yard	none	1975	3	buff brick & concrete	flat	Arup Associates	
Fisher House	Listed Grade II	late C16 / early C17	2 + attics	brick G/F, rest: timber-framed & plastered	tiled		
Fisher House link building	Positive building	C19	1	Gault brick	slate		
Fisher Hall	none	1976	2	brown brick	slate	Gerard Goalen & Partner	
1-7 Guildhall Chambers (Ladbrookes & Lola Lo's)	none	1970s	4	brown brick	metal sheeting		
The former Red Cow Public House (Honest Burgers)	Listed Grade II	1898	2 + attic	red brick, timber-frame & plaster	plain tile	Richard Reynolds Rowe	Jacobethan Style