

A popular riverside destination, with mostly modern buildings forming a single unified development, framing an attractive riverside square next to the historic spinal route of Bridge Street.

Quayside is largely a modern development created through redevelopment of one of the last traditional riverside industrial areas in the historic city core. Although there is relatively little historic significance in the buildings themselves, it is an attractive and popular area close to the river which

has become one of the major night-time destinations in the city. The scale and materials of the development around the square reflects the industrial character of the former brewery just to the south, as well as emphasising the timber-framed details of buildings elsewhere on Bridge Street.



View from Bridge Street

SIGNIFICANCE - LOW

General Overview

Quayside was largely built in the 1980s using the site of the former iron works and brewery sites and retaining the open space of the quay next to the River Cam that connects with Bridge Street. The set back of buildings from Bridge Street is recorded as a feature of the area on Braun's map of Cambridge of 1575 and thereafter. This is likely to have provided a wharf area for unloading boats, and potentially as a small associated market space next to the bridge and busy street.

The scale of development surrounding Quayside is substantial rising to four storeys near Bridge Street and three 'industrial scale' storeys further to the east which helps to integrate the development with the former brewery building, now the Varsity Hotel and Restaurant. The rooftop extension and glazed terrace constructed for the restaurant rises significantly above the surrounding roofscape and is considered to have made a negative impact on the city skyline, particularly in views from Great Bridge and Jesus Green. The red brick frontages and placement of windows in a uniform grid pattern, also helps to integrate the development with the historic industrial character of the brewery building and quayside. The buildings form a continuous frontage wrapping around the south and east side of the Quayside square with a line of low trees providing some sense of a return on the north side.



Quayside development



No. 32b Bridge Street

Near to Bridge Street, the buildings incorporate pastiche elements found along Bridge Street and Magdalene Street, including ornamental timber-framing or rendered facades with jetties. The effect demonstrates a willingness to integrate the development with the wider townscape of the city and provides a detailed and interesting frontage that builds on the character of its surroundings. The rendered, jettied frontages and oriel windows of the corner building at No. 32b Bridge Street (Prezzo) are particularly well executed examples of a pastiche, where the success is dependent on commitment to the detail in designing and executing the features borrowed from historic exemplars, as well as successfully incorporating them as meaningful features of a new building.

Tunnels through the main frontage lead to more enclosed courts of residential development with restaurants at ground floor level or service areas and a route to Maltings Yard, which has been redeveloped recently to serve as service space to the hotel, restaurant and health club. Whilst preserving the sense of scale and enclosure afforded by the former industrial development of the area, this is now an altogether modern environment. These areas have high quality modern hard landscapes that create a comfortable living space but would not be considered of any historic interest. The surviving former brewery building just to the north is considered within Thompson's Lane.



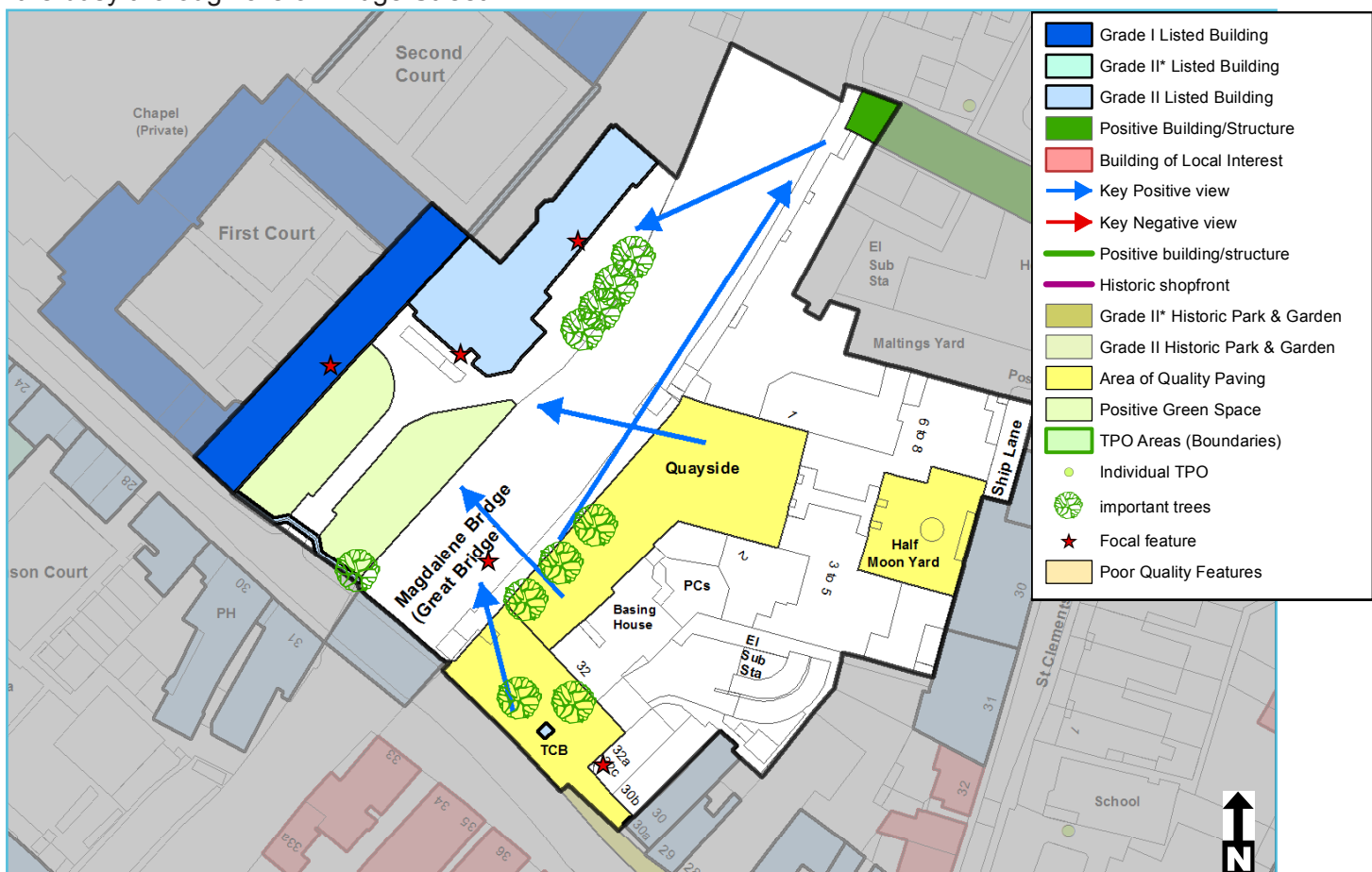
Tunnels to enclosed courts



The River Cam, punting station and Magdalene College

The views from Quayside down to the river make an important contribution to the quality of the square, with the high walls of the quay providing evidence of its past use as an inland port and views of the busy punting station providing continuity with the historic association of Cambridge with this form of recreation. The views across the river provide a spectacular prospect of the buildings of Magdalene College, with the Neo-Tudor Bright Building by Webb and Bell standing particularly prominently with areas of lawns running down to the riverside and a scattering of low trees overhanging the water. The combination of the square, river and Magdalene College grounds beyond provides an enormous open space, despite only a part of this being publicly accessible.

The pedestrianised square is full of activity due to the ground floor level shops, cafés, restaurants and bars, along with the activity of the punting station on the river and provides a car free area on the edge of the busy thoroughfare of Bridge Street.



Townscape Elements

- The open space fronting onto Bridge Street and the riverside preserves the riverside quay, wharf and associated commercial space that reflect Cambridge's historically important role as an inland port.
- Views to the river, including the activity on the river, bridge and to Magdalene College beyond provide an experience of historic Cambridge from within an otherwise modern development.
- The extremely attractive lawns and mature trees of Magdalene College make an important positive contribution to the interest and character of the Quayside space.
- The scale, materials and detailing of the modern buildings surrounding the main square have sympathy with the surviving industrial buildings of the brewery to the north and help to integrate the development with its surroundings (although the rooftop extension and terrace of the Varsity Restaurant is considered to be a negative contribution). The buildings are of high quality and provide an attractive, albeit modern, area of townscape.
- Similarly, the buildings with frontages to Bridge Street have borrowed architectural idioms that relate well to historic buildings on Bridge Street and Magdalene Street that have been well executed and help to integrate the development with the historic route through Cambridge.
- The development pushes the limits of scale for new development within the city centre and, as such appears almost overlarge in views along Bridge Street, becoming very dominant in views from the bridge. It is hard to envisage that taller development could be considered acceptable in this area.
- A narrow riverside boardwalk continues the route along the riverside to the east with an almost temporary, industrial character that suits the setting, whilst providing permeability.
- The square has been surfaced with brick pavers providing a utilitarian character that reflects the historic industrial activity of the area. The smaller square adjoining Bridge Street is paved with riven stone slabs that reflect the historic identity of this small commercial space, whilst a modern wagon way has been created with a cobbled surface leading from Bridge Street to the service yard serving the commercial premises.
- The line of trees by the riverside contribute to the greenery and softening, as well as adding some vertical interest and definition to the northern edge of the square.
- Iron hand rails lead down to the punting station and suggest this is an historic route to the water's edge.
- A K6 telephone box provides an element of historic street furniture at the eastern edge of the development.

Enhancement Opportunities

As a successful modern development, little redevelopment is likely, and thus, opportunities are limited to street furniture and surfacing works. The street furniture and surfacing are modern and generally well designed and unobtrusive. However, some repair and maintenance may be beneficial due to the heavy use of the area.

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
1 (Prezzo)	none	early C20	4	red brick, stone detailing	gabled		
Quayside development (iGuanas, Teri-Aki, Shabu-Shabu and Crème du Café)	none	1983-89	3 + attics	brick	tile	Hughes & Bicknell, & Nicholas Ray Associates	