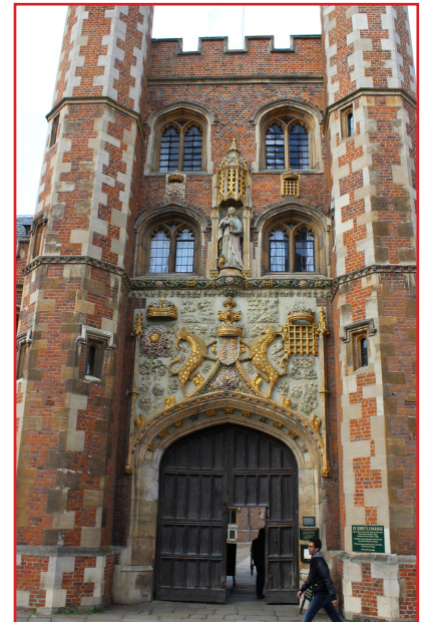


The northern end of the historic Highe Street (St John's Street – Trinity Street – Senate House Hill and King's Parade) that is the focus of the Cambridge colleges and architecturally one of the finest street's in the country.

The Tudor period red brick frontages of St John's and Trinity Colleges, along with the Victorian Tudor-Revival School of Divinity and limestone chapels of St John's and Trinity, bring the colleges directly into the public eye as buildings of exceptional architectural interest, and punctuate views along the curving street. Despite the high status of the institutions, the road has an enclosed and intimate feel, with the historic buildings approachable despite the staggered building

line. The former churchyard of All Saint's, enclosed by bicycle clad railings, provides a more open tranquil space for contemplation of the surrounding buildings off the busy street, which also allows light in to illuminate the road and frontages, as well as adding greenery to the streetscene. The curving streetscape leading off Bridge Street provides a tantalising view of the street disappearing out of sight to the south, with sunlight illuminating the college frontages.



St John's College Great Gate

SIGNIFICANCE - VERY HIGH

General Overview

St John's Street forms a part of the town's early medieval street plan and acts as the gateway to the long route between colleges and historic shopping areas, to the focal spaces of King's Parade and Senate House Hill.

The Hospital of St John was founded near the junction with Bridge Street in the late C12 or early C13. It is likely the street formed a part of the commercial area of the town even then, although early reports by Cambridge's townspeople record it was founded on wasteland on the town's edge. The continuation of the street to the south became a focus for the university during the later middle ages, with numerous



First Court, St John's College

academic halls founded along what are now Trinity Street and Trinity Lane.

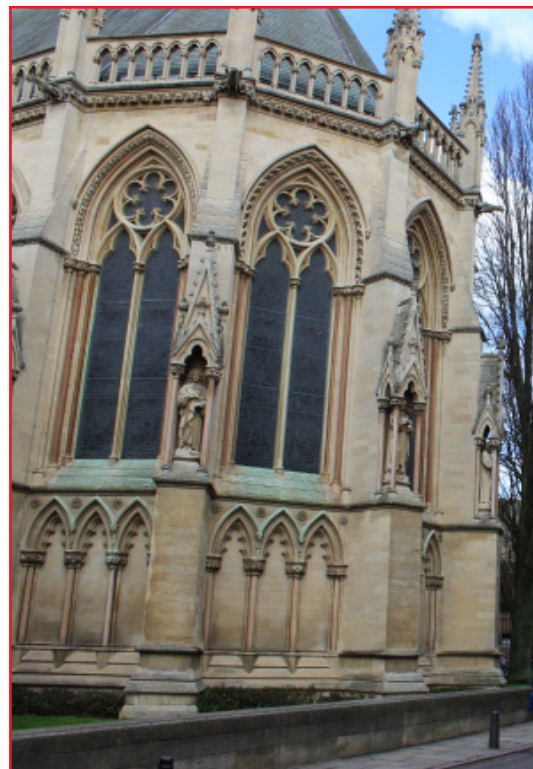
The college received its charter in 1511, was founded through the suppression of the hospital and was funded from the estate of Lady Margaret Beaufort (the mother of Henry VII), although this was only through the considerable efforts of Cardinal John Fisher (canonised in 1935), who forced chancery to recognise a codicil to her will. From the street, the frontage of First Court retains much of its Tudor character. This includes the diaper brickwork with limestone dressings and imposing Great Gate, which includes Margaret Beaufort's coat of arms with the red roses of the house of Lancaster and a statue of St John, with turrets rising at the corners above. The embattled tower forms

a focal feature within the street and stands directly at the edge of the pavement, making the five hundred year old college buildings a tangible element of the street for pedestrians.

A series of enclosed college courts leads from the road frontage to the River Cam and beyond via the Bridge of Sighs. Each represents a chronological progression of buildings; First Court dates from between

c. 1511 and 1516, Second Court from between 1598 and 1602, Third Court from between 1623 and 1628, with elements added between 1669 and 1671, and New Court (beyond the river) built during the first half of the C19. The Shrewsbury Tower, covering the tunnel from Second Court to Third Court is a repeat of the Gate Tower, maintaining the character of the courts, which is also achieved through consistent use of red brick with limestone dressings. First Court and Third Court are grandiose open spaces with spacious lawns intersected by paved walks. Third Court (squeezed between Second Court and the river) is a more intimate space, although the buildings are no less splendid.

New Court, by contrast, has the appearance of a palace set in the Arcadian surroundings of the Backs using limestone and clunch in an extravagant Tudor-Gothic Revival style. The tower forms a centrepiece to the court rising up to an octagonal stone clock tower and lantern with vertical traceried windows and diagonal buttresses, all ending in pinnacles. This is a prominent landmark in views across The Backs. Low ranges to either side of the tower lead to pavilions with pinnaced diagonal buttresses and embattled parapets that form east and west ranges to the court and are joined by a covered cloister walk that encloses the court to the south. The Bridge of Sighs is of



St John's College Chapel

contemporary date and matching materials with New Court. The buildings of Third Court and New Court both rise directly from the water's edge creating a point of enclosure in the river that makes these buildings and the bridge arching overhead very prominent features from the river and creating a gateway to The Backs.

Despite its age, First Court has been significantly altered, including the re-facing of the south range in the C18, part of an uncompleted scheme to update the court for Georgian taste. The northern range, including the medieval chapel, was demolished in the C19 to expand the court with a replacement chapel, designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and built between 1863 and 1869, standing on the site of the hospital's infirmary. The chapel is one of the glories of Cambridge, an early example of the Victorian Gothic Revival style for the Anglican Church and is a prominent feature of the city's roofscape. Its apse juts towards the road frontage within a grassed verge and creates a pinch



Town houses

point, dividing the north and south ends of the street. This emphasises the change in the character of the street from commercial with college buildings only on its western side at the Bridge Street end, to the more focused character of university and college buildings to the south. The gap between the chapel and the front range of the court allows a glimpse through to the green lawns and buildings of the court from the street with a delicate wrought iron screen crossing the gap but providing further architectural interest. East of the chapel, the views through the college's wrought iron gates are of a rather more mundane parking courtyard in the shadow of the chapel and the college's early C20 accommodation ranges.

At the north end of the street, the road is lined on one side by a series of town houses, providing a rapid rhythm of frontages in contrasting materials and preserving historic or sympathetically replaced shopfronts to the ground floors (and occasionally first floors) reflecting



All Saint's Churchyard with the School of Divinity behind

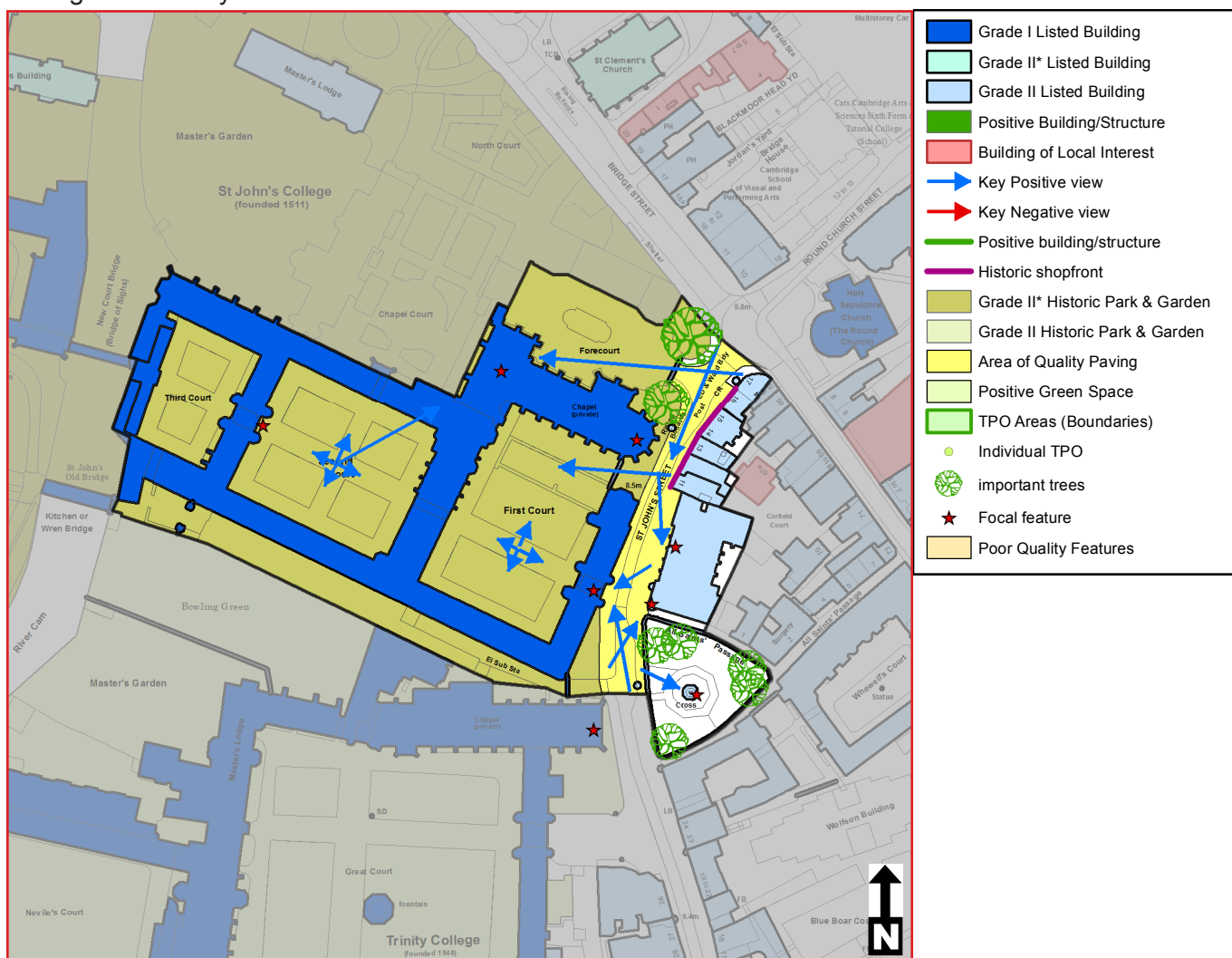
the street's commercial character. These vary in date, style and materials with a mixture of narrow and broader frontages creating the impression of an organic process of development of these plots over a long period of time. Nevertheless, they are all ornate buildings preserving attractive detailing. At ground floor level they remain in commercial uses, including shops, restaurants and cafes, providing a lively area.

West of the chapel, the Tudor frontage of the college is answered by the Tudor Revival School of Divinity by Basil Champneys. The style and materials of the buildings appear to have been conscientiously chosen to echo those of the college, as well as other prominent college buildings in the city, whilst evoking a period of great interest for the history of religion in this country. Again the building makes great use of ornamental detail, including the corner turret with ogee cap, traceried windows and statues of prominent theologians in ornate niches either side of the ogee arched door case, to create a spectacular frontage both to St John's Street and All Saint's Churchyard.



Richardson Candles

The churchyard creates a large break in the street frontage, with the building of Whewell's Court at the rear maintaining the strong sense of enclosure. The churchyard provides a connection with the church that once occupied it, but is also a space for relaxation during the week and activity at the weekends through the weekly art and crafts market.



The street is rich in greenery due to the broad grassed verges in front of the chapel and parts of St John's College frontage, and the mature trees standing in the verges or in the churchyard opposite. These filter sunlight, providing shade and softening, as well as adding vertical emphasis alongside the towers and turrets of the buildings.



Wrought iron screen allowing views through to green courts

Street furniture makes an important contribution to the character of the street, including street lighting with the 1950s listed Richardson Candles on fluted columns. The paving includes a mixture of historic and modern stone slabs and stone setts for the footpaths and brick pavers for the carriageway. The stone paving adds to the high quality and historic character of the street's environment as well as helping to emphasise the priority of pedestrians within the street. Metal bollards define edges and corners of the footpath but in places seem a little unnecessary. The machinery for the rising bollards that control traffic access to the street appears rather bulky but has been chosen to be as inconspicuous as possible whilst achieving its aims.

The curving line of the road and strong enclosure by surrounding buildings creates a series of foreshortened views in which the buildings of St John's College and Trinity College or the Divinity School form focal features (which they were designed to be) with a high aesthetic and historical value.



Attractive skyline

The street is a very popular cycle and pedestrian route and one of the main tourist destinations. It is in the 'restricted zone' of the city centre and is therefore pedestrianised between 10am and 4pm. The buildings are all college owned - many of those on the south side have shops and restaurants at ground floor with student accommodation above.

Townscape Elements

- On the west, the building line steps backwards and forward creating a series of prominent focal buildings that jut towards the street.
- Occasional gaps in the building line allow glimpses through the green courts of colleges and other spaces behind the frontages.
- The street is very green with mature trees in the grassed verges in front of college buildings and in the former churchyard.
- The street has a spacious, open feel due to the gap and space of the former churchyard, although the historic line of the street is maintained by the churchyard railings.
- On the east, most buildings are on the back of the footpath, with the only exception being the Divinity School which is slightly set back.
- Buildings with long frontages on both sides of the road rising to two and three storeys create a strong sense of enclosure to the space.
- The character of the street changes from more commercial in the north near Bridge Street, to more 'academic' to the south. Nevertheless the street is continuously busy with tourists and shoppers passing through it during the day.
- The skyline is very attractive, particularly through the silhouettes of Gothic buildings.
- A series of unfolding views can be seen along the curving line of the street.
- The lawn and shrubs in front of St John's College add further colour
- Street surfaces and furniture are of very high quality, complementing the quality of the historic buildings. These include historic and modern stone slab and sett or cobble paving and the fluted columns and unusual lanterns of the Richardson Candles.
- The series of courts running back from the frontage of St John's provide enclosed spaces of great architectural interest with a strong sense of unity through the use of a consistent palette of materials but lead to the strongly contrasting New Court in the Arcadian Setting of the Backs.

Opportunities

The Divinity School has been recently renovated and is now a prestigious conference venue.

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
Gates of Chapel court yard – St John's College	Listed Grade II	1940	red brick piers, stone capped topped by the Yales of Beaufort, wrought-iron gates and screen	Yales by A F Hardiman			
The Chapel - St John's College	Listed Grade I	1863-9	N/A	Ancaster stone	slate	Sir George Gilbert Scott	
First Court: East Range with Gatehouse - St John's College	Listed Grade I	1511 - 16, partly reconstructed 1934 - 5	2 -3	red brick with clunch and freestone dressings	embattled parapet and angle turrets		
Gateway to south of College Buildings - St John's College	Listed Grade I	early C16, reset in present position 1855	N/A	red brick	crow-stepped gable		
All Saints' Garden		C19					the site of the original All Saints' Church
Railings round churchyard of destroyed Church of All Saints	Listed Grade II	C18	N/A	cast-iron			
Cross in the churchyard of destroyed Church of All Saints	Listed Grade II	1880	N/A	stone - inscriptions commemorate the church (demolished in 1875)			
The Divinity School	Listed Grade II	1878 - 9	2	brick with stone dressings	clay tile & slate	Basil Champneys	Now college conference centre
11	Listed Grade II	Probably C18, altered C19	3	stucco fronted	balustraded parapet		
12	Listed Grade II	mid / late C19	4	grey Gault brick	slate		
13	Listed Grade II	C18	4	grey Gault brick	slate		
14 & 15	Listed Grade II	C18	3 + attic	timber-framed, rendered and painted	mansard / tile		
16 & 17	Listed Grade II	C18, frontage altered C19	3	timber-framed, rendered and painted			
3 Richardson Candle lamp posts and 1 wall mounted lamp	Listed Grade II	1957	Lamp posts: Tubular lantern of translucent glass containing fluorescent tubes. Lantern has simple cast-iron capping and base, mounted on column of bronze coloured cast-iron. Wall mounted lamp: Lantern has simple cast-iron capping and base, wall mounted via a pair of plain metal brackets at either end.			Sir Albert Richardson	Designed exclusively for Cambridge