

A narrow and winding lane between colleges and historic university buildings and forming a surviving part of the medieval back lane to the High Street.

The lane provides a mixture of long vistas of historic buildings, intimate street spaces and glimpses into the green space of college courts and gardens before providing access to the backs (via Clare College).



Trinity Lane

SIGNIFICANCE - VERY HIGH

General Overview

Trinity Lane is an ancient part of the city's street plan and originally provided access from the town's High Street (now Trinity Street) to the wharves along the River Cam and to the rear of plots on High Street. As a result, the lane has a significant dogleg after running back from the Trinity Street frontage between the large plots occupied by Trinity College and Gonville and Caius College to follow the rear of the latter's plot and then kinks to run through the narrow gap between Trinity Hall and The Cockerel Building (part of the Old Schools Site). It then continues along the rear of the Old Schools Site. The street has a narrow curving line in places, creating long unfolding views with continuously changing focal features.



Dogleg of Trinity Lane



Clare College

During the course of the C14, the lane became a focus of academic halls, replacing, and in some cases subsuming, earlier student hostels. Several of these survive, including Clare College, founded as University Hall in 1326, Gonville and Caius College (moved to the site of Gonville Court south of the lane in 1353 as Gonville Hall), and Trinity Hall which was founded in 1350. Ely Hall was subsumed by Trinity Hall, and both Michaelhouse (founded 1324) and King's Hostel (refounded by Edward III in 1337) Colleges were subsumed by Henry VIII's Trinity College, which occupies the northern and western sides of Trinity Lane from Trinity Street to Garrett Hostel Lane. The halls, where evidence survives, generally conform to the classic Oxbridge college plan of an inward facing courtyard of buildings that include the place of worship, hall and living accommodation. This results in long frontages of buildings as viewed from the street, creating a strong sense of enclosure, whilst regularly spaced windows and chimney stacks provide a strong rhythm, as well as illustrating the traditional arrangement of the scholars rooms in the accommodation ranges. The widely spaced entrances make these inactive frontages, however, which is a part of the back lane character. Ornate entrances, including college gate towers, provide attractive focal features that rise above the general roofline.

The foundation of King's College in 1441 separated the northern part of this route from its southern continuation (now Queen's Lane) and removed traces of its role as a back lane to commercial properties on the High Street. King's College Chapel was constructed across the line of the lane and forms an

imposing end stop in views south. This is now the route that many visitors use to reach it, creating a general flow of pedestrians along it during the day.

King's College Hall, which stood on the east side of the lane, south of Senate House passage, was the site of the original college established by Henry VI before the great re-planning that moved the college's centre of gravity to the south. Its northern range was demolished and replaced by the Cockerell Building in 1837 to house the university's library as one of a select number of non-collegiate university buildings constructed before the late C19. The west range, which continues the lane's frontage to the south, retains much of the C15 building of the college or hall, and is unusual for a building of this date in rising to three storeys. This casts considerable shadow over this southern part of the lane which can seem very dark, as well as making the building visually dominating. Looking beyond the lane, the gap between Clare College and King's College Chapel provides a rare glimpse from one of the city centre's streets out to the green open space of The Backs.



Gap between Clare College and King's College Chapel

Investment in the college properties in the late C16, C17, C18 and C19 resulted in considerable renewal of the architecture of the surrounding colleges, including the majestic Great Court of Trinity College and



Greenery in the streetscene

Clare Colleges Old Court, which span the culmination of the Gothic movement at Trinity College and its replacement with the classical style seen at Clare College Old Court.

Whilst the long frontages of college buildings dominate the streetscene, areas of gardens do provide some greener gaps, including the tall trees of Gonville and Caius College's Master's Garden seen over the high garden wall, and the gaps in the frontage either side of Bishop's Hostel at Trinity College. The greenery provides softening to the otherwise hard urban environment and a suggestion of the aesthetic environment provided within the colleges but

generally hidden from public view. The south gate to Great Court at Trinity College provides a glimpse from the lane into the court's majestic open space and can be used to access the grounds, although the main entrance is from Trinity Street.

The gardens at the front of Clare College provide a more open green space in the street that is part of the formal setting to the college's C17 layout. Access through the College's Old Court is available to the public during the day and provides an opportunity to experience the embrace of the court that is part of the hidden world of college life, but also to see the subtle change in the college's architecture from the Gothic of the north range, built in the early C17, to the fully realised classical style of the south range, completed in 1715. Passing through the west range, the route through the college runs via the registered Scholars Garden, which again is part of the C17 formal setting of the college, to the stone bridge designed by Gilbert Scott, which allows further extensive views over The Backs of great aesthetic value, including the activity of the punts passing underneath.



Gardens to the front of Clare College

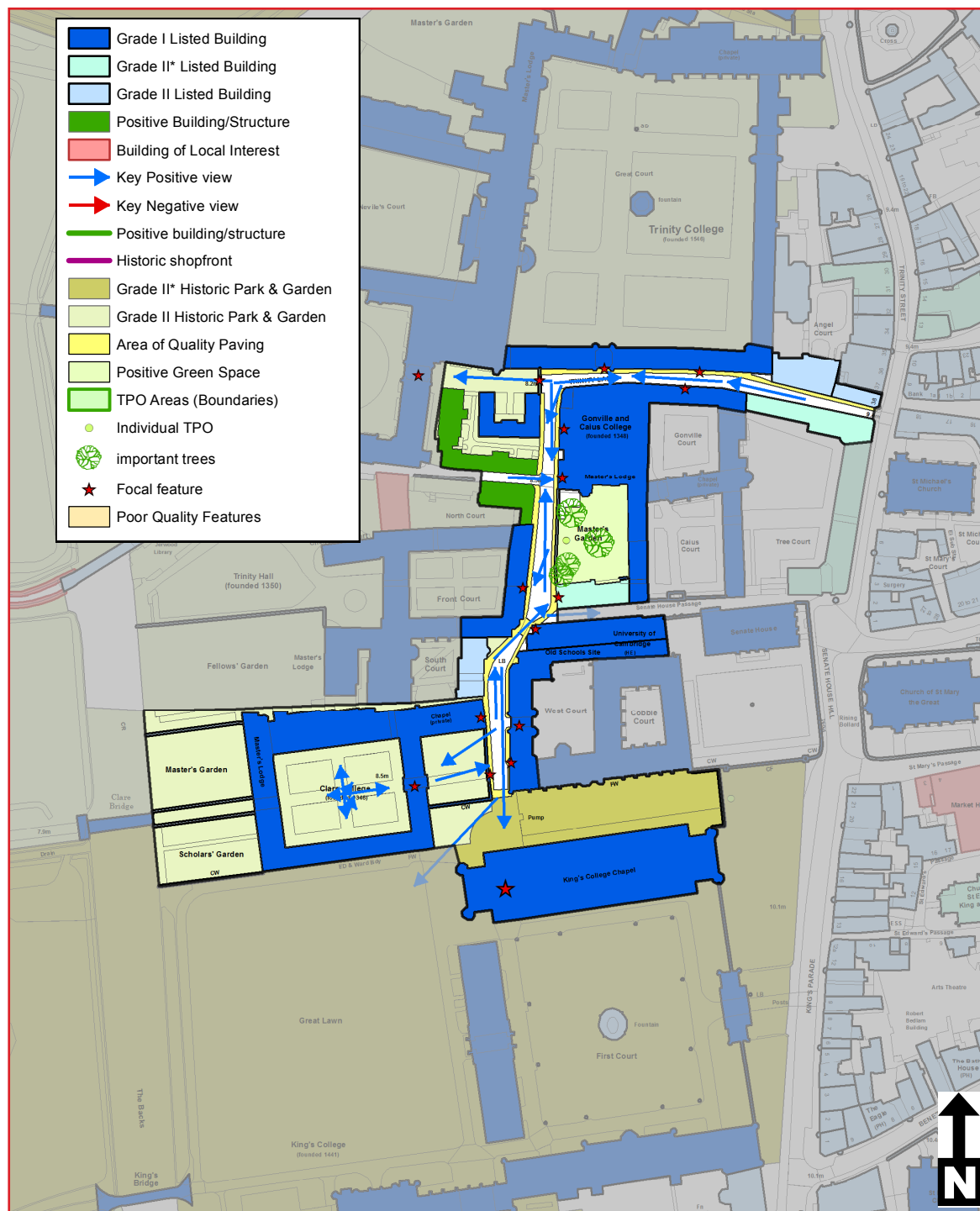
At either end of the lane, the work of Alfred Waterhouse is conspicuous, providing elaborate detail to the C19 additions to Gonville and Caius College's Tree Court and Trinity Hall's Waterhouse Building that provides a sympathetic foil to the earlier buildings.

Stone, including both ashlar and rubble construction, provide the most distinctive building materials in the streetscene, although brick is also in evidence in the buildings of both Gonville and Caius and Trinity Colleges and is not reserved only for subsidiary buildings but includes Gonville and Caius College Hall, as well as the Bishop's Hostel. The scale of development varies between two and three storeys, with an area of taller three storey buildings creating a distinctive enclosed space to the south that channels views towards King's College Chapel and the frontage of Clare College.

The narrowness of the lane permits a footpath

on only one side for much of its length, although the general low volume of vehicle traffic allows pedestrians and cyclists to mix in the carriageway. The pavement is surfaced in riven stone slabs that provide a positive historic character that is sympathetic with the historic stone buildings and is edged in good quality granite kerb stones. The carriageway is surfaced in unprepossessing blacktop with evidence of various episodes of patching.

The lane is well used by pedestrians and cyclists, as well as by vehicles as a delivery and access route to the colleges. These uses can, however,



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sometimes conflict and there is evidence damage to the buildings has occurred in the past by service vehicles. This is a favourite area for tourists who 'discover' the tranquil atmosphere and stately college buildings hidden along the narrow lanes behind the busier frontages of Trinity Street and Senate House Hill.

Townscape Elements

- A focus of historic college and university buildings, representing the development from student hostels to academic halls in the C14 and later formalisation as endowed colleges. These provide considerable historic and architectural interest, as well as a strong character defined by a limited palette of materials. Their style varies considerably reflecting the development of taste and fashion from the C15 to the early C20.



Chimney stacks and ornate dormers

- Roofs sloping down towards the street with rows of chimney stacks and ornate gable ended dormers rising from the eaves providing a distinctive and attractive roofline with a strong rhythm in views.
- Where the street turns to run from north to south a greater variety of roof forms and building materials builds towards a greater grandeur in style, with embattled parapets to the Gothic buildings and the roofline of Clare College marked by a balustrade.
- Tightly enclosed lanes with buildings of two and three storeys standing directly at the rear of the pavement form a series of intimate spaces that are divided from each other at pinch points such as the gap between the Cockerel Building and Trinity Hall.
- Long buildings with widely spaced entrances provide inactive frontages, which support a tranquil character. Nevertheless there is normally activity in the lane as pedestrians and cyclists pass through from Trinity Street to

King's College Chapel or The Backs either via Clare College or Garrett Hostel Lane.

- Small gaps between buildings are filled by greenery of college gardens, whilst the forecourt of Clare College provides a larger formal green garden space set behind impressive railings.
- Clare College provides a series of green spaces running through to The Backs, which are accessible to visitors as well as college members, whilst the forecourt of King's College Chapel also provides visual access to the college lawns and views to The Backs.
- Other green spaces within the colleges are effectively hidden by the surrounding buildings, providing privacy for the college communities, although there are occasional glimpses through at college gates.
- The entrance to the short southern section of the lane has a 'threshold' of cobbles that indicate it has a different status.
- Street lighting is provided by historic Winsor Lanterns on scrolled brackets of cast metal columns, which complement the historic character of the street.

Streetscape Enhancement

A key opportunity for enhancement is resurfacing the lane in more appropriate historic materials.

Vehicular Management

Reducing the number and size of the vehicles using the street and thereby improving the pedestrian/ cyclist experience and protecting buildings from accidental damage would be a major enhancement to the character of the street.

Redevelopment Opportunities

No obvious opportunities for the redevelopment of buildings exist. The vehicle doors in the west facing elevation of Gonville and Caius College Lecture Rooms suggest this building is used for servicing the site at present and this mars an otherwise imaginative Tudor revival frontage by Waterhouse. Renovation of this building could replace this with a more sensitive ground floor elevation.

South and east side (from junction with Trinity Street)

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
Gonville & Caius Tree Court: North Range	Listed Grade II*	1870	3	ashlar-faced	westmorland slate	Alfred Waterhouse	French Chateau style
Gonville Court: North Range	Listed Grade I	1753-5	2 + attic	brick	hipped dormers / tile	James Burrough	
Gonville Court: West Range		1441	3 + attic	red brick	slate	refaced 1728 James Burrough	
The Master's Lodge		1441, altered 1565 Dr Caius	3 + attic	freestone ashlar	slate & tile	west wing 1795 William Wilkins	extended 1853 A. Salvin
Lecture Rooms	Listed Grade II*	1883	2	red brick	slate	A. Waterhouse	
The Cockerell Building: Squire Law Library	Listed Grade I	1837-40	3	ashlar faced	parapet		
The Old Schools: West Court	Listed Grade I	begun 1441-4, west range completed 1864-7 & 1890	2	ashlar faced	parapet	1864-7: G. G. Scott; 1890: J. L. Pearson	Old Court of Kings' College bought by university & partly demolished 1829
King's College Chapel	Listed Grade I	1446-15	N/A	ashlar	lead		

North and west side (from junction with Trinity Street)

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
No. 38 Trinity Street	Listed Grade II	late C18	3 + attics	red brick	parapet / tile		
Trinity - Angel Court: South Range	Listed Grade II	1833; extended 1864	2	red brick	embattled parapets	Charles Humfrey	originally Lecture Room Court - altered Tudor Gothic style
Great Court: South Range & Queen's Gate	Listed Grade I	1594-1602 Gate: 1597	2 + attics	ashlared	slate & tile	Dr Thomas Nevile	
Nevile's Gate	Listed Grade II*	c1610	N/A	ashlar		the gateway has been moved several times	
Bishop's Hostel	Listed Grade I	1669-1671	2	brick	hipped / tile	Dr John Hackett, Bishop of Lichfield	restored 1874-78 A. W. Blomfield
Trinity College building	Positive building		2+ basement	red brick	hipped / tile		
Trinity Hall: North Court	Positive building	C19	3	brown brick	tile		
Front Court: East Range	Listed Grade I	rebuilt after 1852	2	stone	slate	A. Salvin	originally of late C14 & C18, but burnt out in 1852
Waterhouse Building	Listed Grade II	1873	3	finely coursed stone	stepped gables / slate	A. Waterhouse	C16 Flemish style
Clare College: Chapel	Listed Grade I	1763-69	N/A	ketton & weldon stone ashlar	collyweston stone slate & lead	Sir James Burrough & James Essex	
Front Court: East Range & Main Gateway	Listed Grade I	1638-41	3 + attics	ketton & weldon stone ashlar	collyweston stone slate & lead		altered 1891