

A busy pedestrianised street that links the market place area to King's Parade, as well as forming part of it, which provides striking views of civic, college and university buildings.

The route of St Mary's Passage appears to be a remnant of the town's early medieval street pattern, linking the market place and King's Parade and running along the southern edge of Great St Mary's churchyard. In addition to the impressive frontage of the church and the greenery and railings of the churchyard, the shops

and townhouses on the south side of the passage provides evidence of the medieval pattern of development of the town centre. The tall but narrow buildings form informal terraces, whilst the mixture of C17, C18 and C19 buildings provide an organic character and are an important element of the city centre's traditional fenland market town charm.



Street view

SIGNIFICANCE - VERY HIGH

General Overview

St Mary's Passage is recorded on Braun's map of 1575 but is likely to be considerably older, forming the southern boundary of the churchyard. The construction of the present church dates from the early C14. An earlier church burnt down in 1290 and even earlier buildings are likely to have existed in this prominent location on the city's early medieval high street. As such, the street line is likely to represent a property boundary of very considerable antiquity.

Loggan's map of 1688 records a substantial block of buildings forming a northern frontage on the edge of the churchyard. However a fire in the mid C19 resulted in the loss of these and another block of buildings to the east, which may have resulted in some widening of the lane as part of redevelopment of the market place as a central civic space for the city. The church tower dominates St Mary's Passage, being visible, albeit through the filtering of churchyard trees, from every point on the lane. However, it is set back from the frontage, with the greenery of the churchyard, creating an openness that helps dissipate the busy character of the street and provides an oasis of greenery and soft foliage on the edge of the hard surfaced market square.



Great St Mary's Church and churchyard



Properties with narrow frontages

Loggan's map also helps to demonstrate the pattern of development of the passage in the late C17, with long building frontages at either end, representing the sides of plots, which face onto the primary streets of King's Parade and Market Hill to the west and east. A small number of properties are sandwiched between these which face directly onto the lane with narrow frontages on plots running back towards St Edward's Passage. This pattern remains evident in the buildings of St Mary's Passage over three centuries later.

Whilst the church tower is a tall building that is an attractive focal feature in many views from the passage and surrounding streets, the scale of the buildings on the passage is also generally high, often reaching four storeys with large dormer windows (or the corner turret of No. 30 Market Hill), adding an extra storey above. Nevertheless the mixture of two, three and four storey buildings is part of the organic character of the street's development. These buildings rise directly at the rear of the pavement and as an informal terrace create a strong sense of enclosure to the south side of the passage. The buildings, including shop fronts, are directly accessible from the street, reflecting the crowded urban environment they have developed in, as well as their historic commercial character. The high quality and survival of historic and traditional shopfronts on the passage makes an important contribution to the traditional market town character of the surrounding market place and King's Parade area. The great variety in the materials, style and age of the buildings in this short street illustrates the organic character of renewal of buildings over a long period of time that is an important element of the area's character as an historic town centre.



Scale of buildings

The church provides important connections with the origins and history of the university as the 'University Church'. The church is also important in the history of 'the town and gown' disturbances, the most notable of which was the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 when the Mayor and townspeople burnt the contents of the University Chest which was held in the Church.

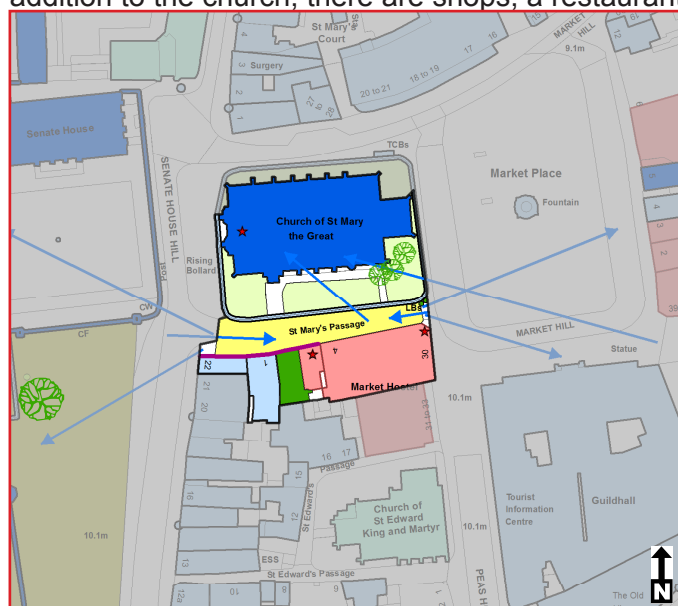


Red pillar boxes

The street furniture includes a pair of traditional red pillar boxes at its east end, whilst the paving in riven stone slabs in randomised unit sizes provides a character that complements the historic nature of the passage and the buildings to either side. The churchyard railings lining the north side of the passage are also an element of its historic character.

An unusual feature of the area's history is that the first public electricity supply in Cambridge started in the cellar of No. 2 St Mary's Passage in 1891, which supplied a small area around the passage, King's Parade and Peas Hill.

St Mary's Passage is one of the most popular streets with tourists and is an exceptionally well used pedestrian route with cycle parking. In addition to the church, there are shops, a restaurant and mostly student residential above.



	Grade I Listed Building
	Grade II* Listed Building
	Grade II Listed Building
	Positive Building/Structure
	Building of Local Interest
	Key Positive view
	Key Negative view
	Positive building/structure
	Historic shopfront
	Grade II* Historic Park & Garden
	Grade II Historic Park & Garden
	Area of Quality Paving
	Positive Green Space
	TPO Areas (Boundaries)
	Individual TPO
	important trees
	Focal feature
	Poor Quality Features

Townscape Elements

- The boundary on the north side of the street is formed by the church set-back behind good cast-iron railings providing views of the churchyard greenery that spills over in to the street.
- The south side of street is effectively a concave curve that creates a series of views of buildings as the pedestrian moves along the street.
- The building line on the south side of the street forms an informal terrace with a mixture of broad and narrow fronted plots that reflect the long history and organic process of development.
- Likewise, the mixture of building styles, materials and architectural detailing provides evidence of development of these buildings from the C17 to the early C20.



Shopfronts

- Well preserved historic or sympathetically replaced shopfronts provide evidence of the historic commercial nature of the street.

- The tower, turrets and crenellations of the church, together with varied storey heights on the south side of the street make for a very interesting roofline.
- St Mary's churchyard, Senate House and King's College lawns and the large chestnut tree outside King's College Chapel give the passage an unusually green setting for central Cambridge.



Channelled views to Senate House Hill

- The building line on the south side of the street helps to channel views towards Senate House Hill and the Law Schools building to the west.
- The attractive paving and traditional street furniture are important elements of the passage's historic character.

Building No./ Name	Status	Age	Height (Storeys)	Wall Materials	Roof Form / Materials	Architect	Notes
Church of St Mary the Great	Listed Grade I	late C15 remains of early C14 chancel	N/A	Oolitic & barnack limestone	flat-pitched / lead & copper		alterations & restoration: 1850-1 George Gilbert Scott 1857 Anthony Salvin
22 King's Parade	Listed Grade II	C17	3	timber-framed faced with red brick	tiled		
1	Listed Grade II	C17 refaced C18	3	timber-framed & plastered	parapet / tiled		refaced in brick to give appearance of 3 storeys
2	Positive building	mid C19	4	Gault brick	parapet		
3	BLI	C17 with late C19 / early C20 façade	2 + attic	timber-framed	clay tiles		
4 (+ 30 Market Hill)	BLI	early C20	4 + attics	Gault brick	hipped / slate		