

Conservation Area No.4



# City and Queen Square

---

Character Appraisal



March 2009

[www.bristol.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/conservation)





If you would like this information in a different format, for example Braille, audiotape, large print or computer disc, or community languages, please contact: Urban Design and Conservation Team on: 0117 922 3097

This document was prepared by the Urban Design and Conservation Team,  
Planning Services Division, City Development, Bristol City Council.





<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. LOCATION &amp; SETTING</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. SUMMARY OF CHARACTER &amp; SPECIAL INTEREST</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT &amp; ARCHAEOLOGY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. SPATIAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>13</b>
6.1 Streets & Spaces	13
6.2 Views, Vistas	15
6.3 Landmark Buildings	16
<b>7. CHARACTER ANALYSIS</b>	<b>19</b>
7.1 Overview	19
7.2 Character Areas	20
7.3 Architectural Detail	27
7.4 Landscape	29
7.5 Local Townscape Detail	29
7.6 Unlisted Buildings of Merit	33
7.7 Characteristic Land Uses	36
7.8 Negative features and Opportunities for Enhancement	36
<b>8. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>9. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>10. LOCAL GUIDANCE, PUBLICATIONS AND SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>11. GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>	<b>44</b>
Map 1: Location and Setting	3
Map 2: Street Hierarchy	14
Map 3: Views and Landmark Buildings	18
Map 4: Character Areas	21
Map 5: Local Townscape Details	32
Map 6: Listed Buildings, unlisted buildings of merit, negative and neutral buildings	35





<b>FIGURES &amp; ILLUSTRATIONS</b>		<b>PAGE</b>
Figure 1	View of St Mary Redcliffe from Redcliffe Bridge	4
Figure 2	View of Bristol Bridge and St Peter's from Welsh Back	6
Figure 3	Millerd's Plan 1673	7
Figure 4	Roque's Map 1742	8
Figure 5	Plumley and Ashmead's map 1828	9
Figure 6	O.S. Plan 1880 Edition	10
Figure 7	O.S. Plan 1903 Edition	11
Figure 8	View down Broad Street towards St John's on the Wall	15
Figure 9	View up Small Street	15
Figure 10	View up Corn Street towards All Saints Church	15
Figure 11	Llandogger Trow, King Street	16
Figure 12	The Granary, Welsh Back	16
Figure 13	St Nicholas Church	16
Figure 14	Ruins of St Peter's Church from the air	16
Figure 15	The Corn Exchange	17
Figure 16	Christ Church	17
Figure 17	King Street (Theatre Royal on right)	22
Figure 18	Narrow Quay	23
Figure 19	Baldwin Street looking east	24
Figure 20	St Stephen Street	24
Figure 21	17th century timber-framed houses in King Street	24
Figure 22	Entrance gates to 29 Queen Square	25
Figure 23	Prince Street looking south	26
Figure 24	The Grove from Redcliffe	27
Figure 25	Welsh Back from Redcliffe Bridge	27
Figure 26	Almshouses, King Street	28
Figure 27	Tailors' Court	28
Figure 28	Leonard Lane	28
Figure 29	Queen Square looking towards the Custom House	30
Figure 30	St Stephen's Churchyard	31
Figure 31	St Mary le Port	31
Figure 32	Traditional street surface at St John's on the Wall	31
Figure 33	Railings with spear-point finials, Queen Square	31
Figure 34	Shell Hood to doorway, Queen Square	34
Figure 35	River Station Restaurant	33
Figure 36	St Stephen's House	33
Figure 37	Alliance House, Baldwin Street	33
Figure 38	St Nicholas House, High Street	33
Figure 39	52-53 Broad Street	34



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A Conservation Area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990).
- 1.2 Since the designation of the first Conservation Areas in 1970, Bristol City Council has undertaken a comprehensive programme of Conservation Area designation, extension and policy development. There are now 33 Conservation Areas in Bristol, covering approximately 30% of the city.
- 1.3 Bristol City Council has a statutory duty to undertake a review of the character and boundaries of each Conservation Area. This process was first undertaken with the Policy Advice Note 2: Conservation Area Enhancement Statements (November 1993).
- 1.4 More recent national guidance, set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) and English Heritage's Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2006), requires detailed appraisals of each Conservation Area in the form of formally approved and published documents.
- 1.5 The City Council is now underway with a comprehensive programme of producing a Character Appraisal for each Conservation Area. The enhanced appraisal process involves the review of boundaries, details of historical development, identification of townscape details, and unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. It also identifies elements that threaten to undermine an area's special interest.

## 2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 All Conservation Areas are the subject of policies in the Bristol Local Plan (adopted December 1997) and the proposed Alterations to the Bristol Local Plan (deposited February 2003). Once adopted, policies in the emerging Core Strategy, and any future Development Plan Documents, will replace those in the Local Plan.
- 2.2 The Core Strategy is a key document in the emerging Bristol Development Framework. Once adopted the Core Strategy will become the key overarching policy document within the Bristol Development Framework. The next stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy will be the Submission Document, which will set out a Spatial Vision for the City, Strategic Objectives, a Spatial Strategy, Core Policies and a Monitoring and Implementation Framework. It will include a Core Policy on Conservation Areas and the Historic Environment.
- 2.3 Each Conservation Area Character Appraisal will be subject to extensive public consultation and once adopted will be a tool for development control officers, developers, residents and others to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. Each adopted Character Appraisal will replace the relevant Conservation Area Enhancement Statement for that area.
- 2.4 City and Queen Square was designated as a Conservation Area on the 3rd August 1972. The Conservation Area was extended to include Castle Park and the area south west of Fairfax Street on 14th January 2009. Two key planning policy documents of local relevance to the now extended Conservation Area are the Broadmead Shopping Area: Expansion and development Strategy July 2001 and the Nelson Street Regeneration Framework SPD No.8 October 2005. Of particular relevance is the promotion within the former document of redevelopment of land at the junction of Wine Street and High Street (sometimes referred to as the St Mary le Port site). The potential of this site to significantly enhance the character of the Conservation Area is recognised in Section 8 of this Appraisal.



### 3. LOCATION & SETTING

#### 3.1 Location within the City

3.1.1 The Conservation Area forms the historic heart of the city of Bristol, bounded on the south, east and west by the Avon and Frome Rivers, and on the north by the site of the medieval castle (now Castle Park).

3.1.2 The Conservation Area is centred on two main areas: the core of the medieval city of Bristol to the north and west of Bristol Bridge, and Queen Square that was set out on marshland to the south of the city, beginning in 1700.

3.1.3 The Redcliffe Conservation Area is situated to the south and east of the Conservation Area, the City Docks Conservation Area to the south and west, and the College Green Conservation Area to the west. In addition, there are long views from within the Conservation Area towards the St Michael's Hill and Christmas Steps Conservation Area, and also the Tyndall's Park Conservation Area.

#### 3.2 Geology and Geomorphology

3.2.1 Geologically, the low bluff on which the original Saxon settlement was sited is an outcrop of red Triassic sandstone, but the low-lying areas around the rivers Frome and Avon are alluvial deposits. Building stone used in the city has usually been either Pennant stone from quarries to the east of the city, or for ashlar work, Dundry stone from the hills to the south. In the post-medieval period bath stone became the favourite stone for facades of buildings.

3.2.2 Geomorphology and the lie of the land have been instrumental in shaping the layout and urban grain of the area. The Saxon burh, or fortified settlement, seems to have had a roughly circular shape, and this can still be seen outlined on the street plan along St Nicholas Street, Leonard Lane, Bell Lane and Tower Lane. This shape was probably dictated by the shape of the low bluff, and the need to construct an earth wall around

the position in the most economical way. A wooden fort on the highest point could defend the strategic crossing point of the bridge and survey the river approach to warn of pirates or invaders.

3.2.3 Whereas the low hill of the Old City is obvious in Corn Street and Small Street, the area around King Street and Queen Square is characterised by the flatness arising from its origin as a drained marsh. On rainy days Queen Square can appear to threaten to return to its origins, particularly if there are crowds of pedestrians encroaching on the grassed areas.

Map 1 Location & Setting of the City and Queen Square Conservation Area





## 4. SUMMARY OF CHARACTER & SPECIAL INTEREST

- 4.1 The City and Queen Square was one of the first Conservation Areas to be designated as 'of national significance', and although this formal title is no longer in use, it still corresponds to reality. It has distinctively different characteristics in different areas. The Old City is tightly packed, with dense and interconnected development of various historical eras and various styles of architecture. Queen Square is a formal open space with primarily office use but also heavily used for recreation. It is a valuable open space in the heart of the City, and is of considerable architectural and historical interest as an example of 18th century town planning.
- 4.2 Although most of the medieval city has now disappeared from the surface, there is much archaeological evidence below ground that requires protection. There is an extensive network of medieval vaults below the surface that is of national significance.
- 4.3 Outside the medieval city walls, King Street and its servicing streets mark the first post-medieval suburb of Bristol. The street is noteworthy for its rich townscape and traditional paving, and it has rows of generous half-timbered Jacobean period merchants' houses many of which are listed Grade II\*, linked to rear warehouses.
- 4.4 To the south, the creation of a broad peninsula in 1240 by the diversion of the Frome at its confluence with the Avon allowed the creation in 1700 of Queen Square and Prince Street. The former is among the largest residential Georgian Squares in the country, while the latter has lost much of its fine character through low quality post-war development.
- 4.5 All around the peninsula, large areas of traditional setted quays survive, and there are many features from the docks such as bollards, cranes, stone kerbs and setted haulingways.

### Main Issues affecting the Conservation Area

#### Development & Alterations

- Unsympathetic alterations & loss of traditional architectural details in historic buildings
- One quarter of Old City missing due to war damage at the western end of Castle Park
- Pressure to extend buildings upwards with additional floors

#### Public Realm

- Traffic conflicts with pedestrian movement, particularly on wide main routes
- Loss of traditional street surfaces and a mix of modern surfaces is gradually eroding the character of the area
- Poor spaces associated with modern development at and around St Mary le Port Church and poor relationship with the historic High Street and Wine Street
- Corn Street is partly pedestrianised, but has poor pedestrian surfaces that lack good character and appearance.
- In several areas there is an excess of street clutter such as traffic signage that detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 4.6 The edge of the working quays is marked by impressive Victorian warehouses built in red engineering brickwork, and gives a dockside flavour to the streets adjoining the harbour. There are important vistas across the Floating Harbour, including a very significant view of St Mary Redcliffe church.





*Figure 1: View of St Mary Redcliffe Church from Welsh Back*





## 5. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT & ARCHAEOLOGY

### Saxon and Medieval Periods

- 5.1 The evidence for Bristol's Saxon origins is the place name Brycgstow (place of the bridge), coins minted c.1009-16, and a mention in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1051. In 1063 it is known that Bristol was the base for Harold (later King Harold II) Godwinson's attack on Wales.
- 5.2 This episode may have resulted in Bristol's earliest foray into the slave trade: at least Bishop Wulfstan is credited with stopping the sale of slaves to Ireland from Bristol at about this time. The Saxon city was large enough to have several churches, including St Mary le Port, St Peter's, and possibly St Werburgh's (dedicated to a Mercian saint).
- 5.3 Bristol came under Norman control in 1068, and a motte-and-bailey castle, probably of wooden construction, was in place by the 1080's. Henry II issued the first royal charter in 1155. The castle was strengthened c 1120 with the construction of a stone keep. Commerce flourished at this time, and the new suburbs of Redcliffe and Temple became centres of the wool and leather industries.



Figure 2: Looking towards Bristol Bridge from Welsh Back

- 5.4 Between 1240 and 1247 Bristol Bridge was rebuilt as a four-arched stone bridge and by 1300 it was lined with tall houses. At the same time St Augustine's Reach was dug to divert the river Frome further south and enlarge the harbour. The marshland created to the south of the city would later provide a site for Queen Square.
- 5.5 Also in the mid 13th century, new town walls were built outside the Saxon defences: their function was as much to regulate trade as it was defensive. The south side of the town was defended by two walls: one ran along the line of the later King street from Welsh back to St Augustine's Reach, and the second along the line of Portwall Lane. A new wall on the north side followed the Frome along the modern Nelson Street. The only remnants of the town walls visible above ground today are at the gateway below St John's-on-the-wall Church, and on the north side of King Street by The Old Library. By the middle of the 14th century Bristol was the second wealthiest town in England after London, and was made a county borough in 1373 by a charter of Edward III.
- 5.6 Most of the medieval city has disappeared from the surface today; however substantial evidence remains below ground, including the network of vaults that is of national significance.

### 16th & 17th Centuries

- 5.7 Bristol officially became a 'city' in 1542 when St Augustine's Abbey became the new cathedral. The Reformation caused changes to the interiors of the city churches e.g. pews were introduced to St John's at this time. Bristol pioneered trade with America, following the voyages of John and Sebastian Cabot, and the continent is supposed to derive its name from the Bristol merchant Richard Ameryck.

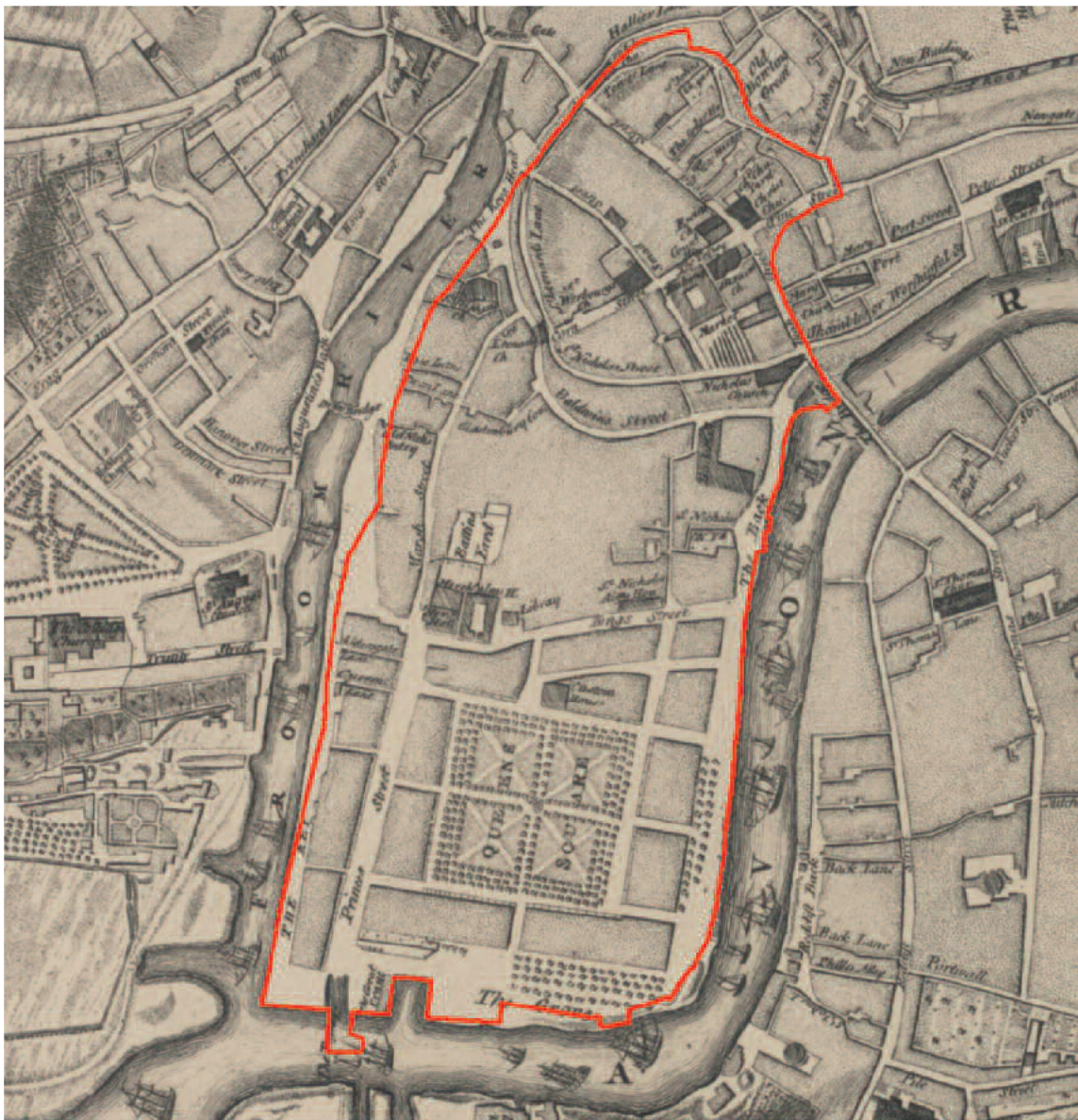


Figure 3: Miller's Plan, 1673

- 5.8 After the Civil War, Bristol Castle and the East Gate were demolished in 1656. King Street was laid out in the 1650s along the outside of the southern town wall, and some of the timber-framed houses from this period still stand in the street.
- 5.9 However, the old style of timber-framed buildings quickly became unfashionable in the 1690s, and flat brick or stone facades in classical style took their place, being enforced in building contracts for Queen Square in 1700.

### 18th and 19th Centuries

- 5.10 The years between 1700 and 1750 are generally regarded as the City's golden age, when it regained its position as second city after London. The extent of the growth of Bristol in this period is traceable from Miller's Plan of 1673 through to the 1880 Ordnance Survey. The growth in wealth and population was due partly to the notorious slave trade, but also to new industrial developments. Many industries were carried on in small or medium sized workshops in the heart of the Old City
- 5.11 Between 1700 and 1807 more than 2,000 slaving ships were fitted out at Bristol, and a conservative estimate is that half a million people were taken from Africa to slavery in the Americas.



*Figure 4: John Roque's Map, 1742*

- 5.12 The terraced houses in Queen Square were constructed piecemeal between 1700 and c1727. Coherence of the terraces only arose from the building leases that stipulated regular brick fronts, cornices, and sash windows, to emulate the fire regulations of the City of London.

5.13 Divisions between the terraced houses were marked with lesenes, projecting vertical strips, either plain, quoined or in the form of a pilaster. Decorative devices of the early 18th century included cherub rainwater heads, shell-headed doors and foliate window keystones in the form of grotesque masks.
- 5.14 The Exchange in Corn Street by John Wood the Elder is Bristol's most significant 18th century building, and the first known time Bristol used an architect of national importance. The 1740s also saw two guildhalls built in the city: Cooper's Hall in King Street, and Merchant Tailor's Hall off Broad Street. St Nicholas' Church was rebuilt in neo-Perpendicular style by James Bridges in the 1740s, and Christ Church, Broad Street was rebuilt in the 1780s.

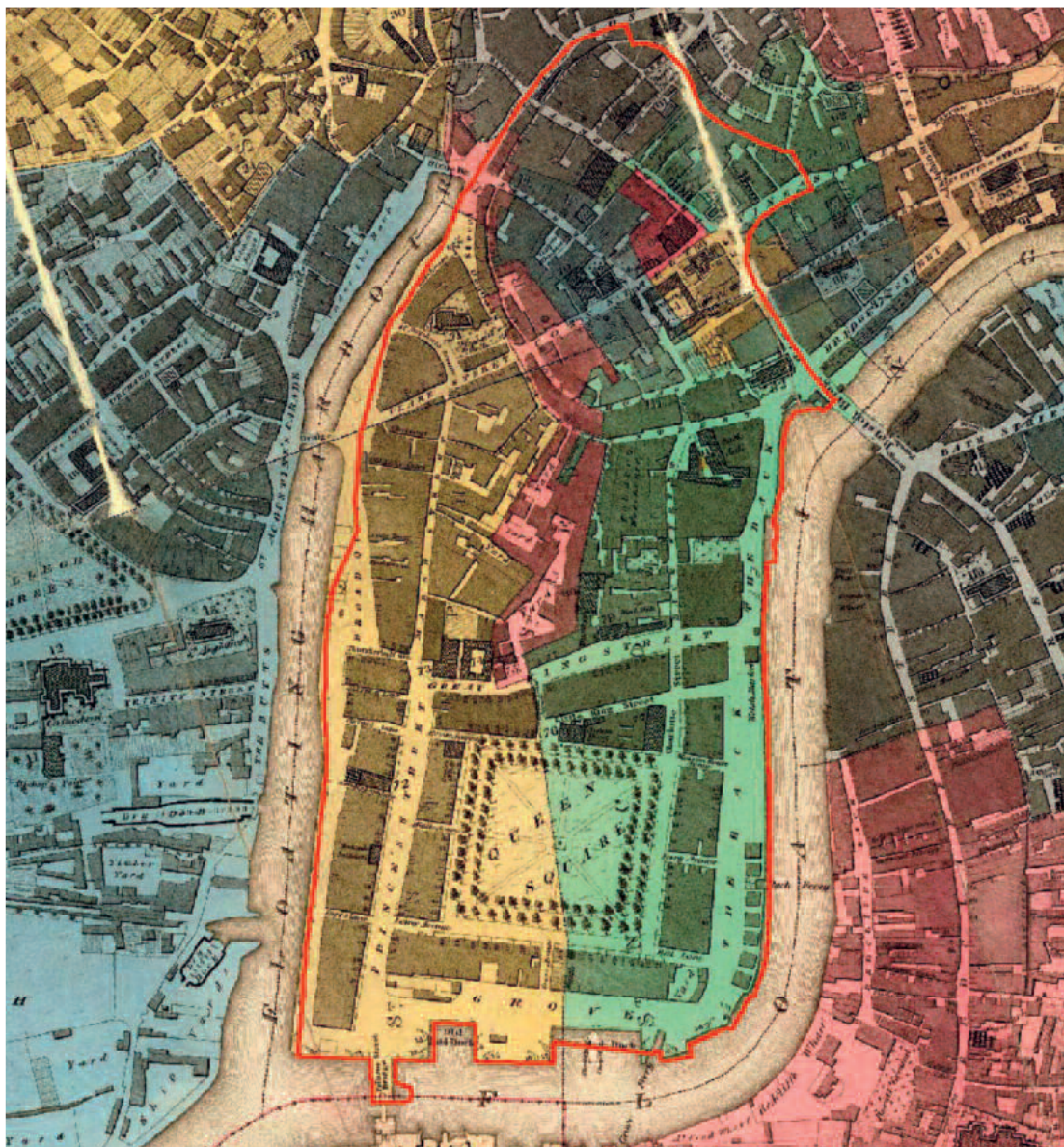


Figure 5: Plumley & Ashmead's Plan, 1828

## 19th Century

- 5.15 Bristol became an early centre of the abolitionist movement, but after the slave trade was abolished, Bristol continued to decline as a port and city. Nevertheless, the 19th century city fathers contributed important public buildings such as the Commercial Rooms (1809-11) in Corn Street and Robert Smirke's Old Council House (1823-7) also in Corn Street.
- 5.16 Bristol was a centre of progressive politics in the early 19th century, and when the second Reform Bill was blocked by vested interests in 1831, there was rioting in Bristol that resulted in destruction of many properties in Queen Square.





Figure 6: Ordnance Survey, 1880

5.17 The Victorian era saw many new buildings in the City Centre. Charles Cockerell designed the Bank of England in Broad Street, and next-door is R.S Pope's Guildhall (1843-6). The Assize Courts in Small Street (1867-70) by Pope and Bindon are an attempt at the Gothic Revival style. Pope was also responsible for Acramans Warehouse (now Bush House) on Narrow Quay. Gingell and Lysaght designed the Lloyds TSB building in Corn Street (1854-7), and in the same street

Gingell was the architect of the former Liverpool, London and Globe Insurance offices (1864-7). Alexander Ponton was responsible for shops in St Nicholas Street (c1866) and Pointing's Chemists in the High Street. About 1865, Foster and Wood created the imposing Grand Hotel in Broad Street. Right at the end of the century Alfred Waterhouse designed the rather delightful Prudential Building in Clare Street.

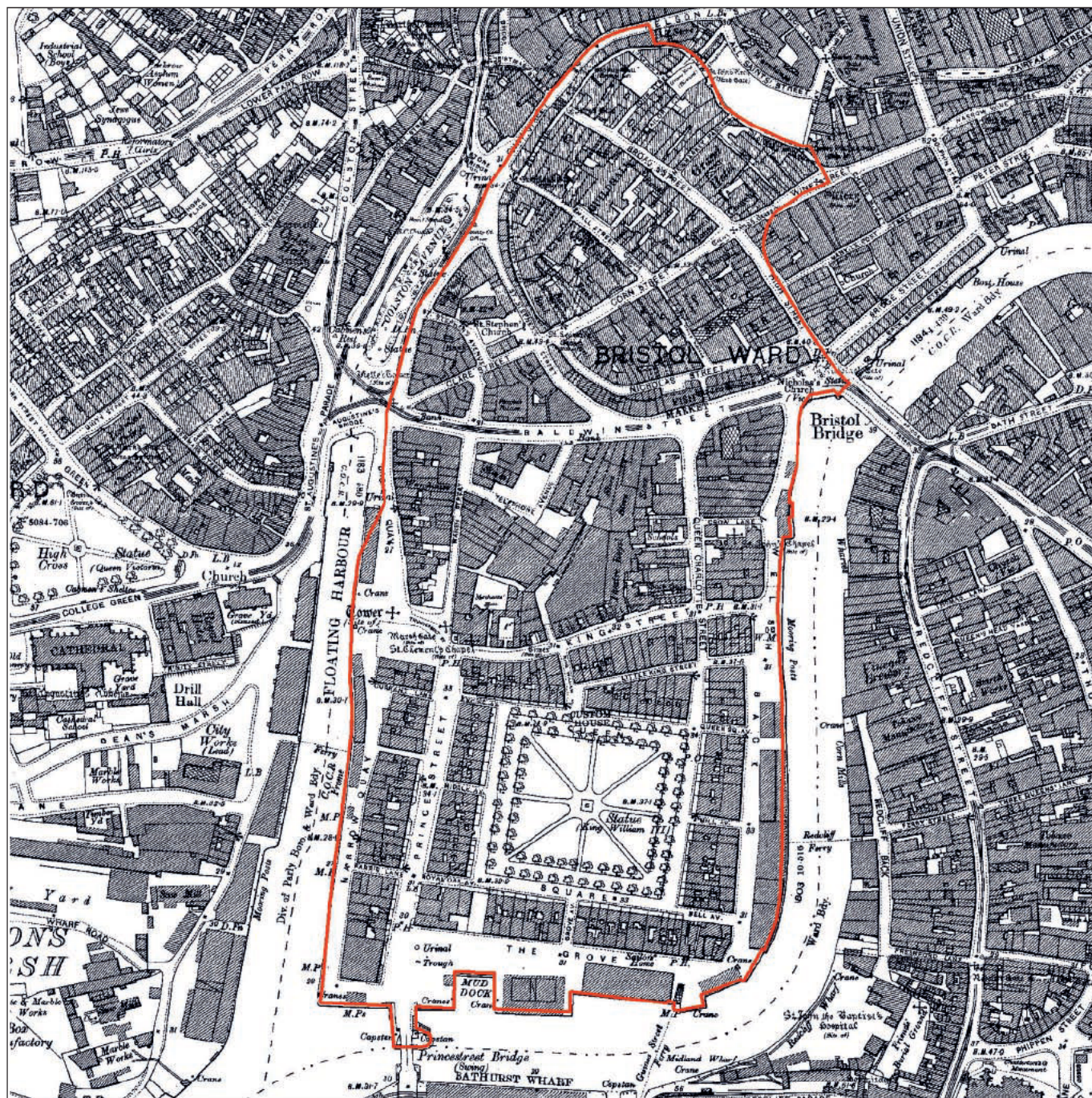


Figure 7: Ordnance Survey Map, 1903

## 20th Century

5.18 The bombing of Bristol during the blitz of World War II saw the area, that is modern day Castle Park, destroyed with the loss of important historic buildings such as the Dutch House. Historic street patterns were completely eroded in places, such as the area around St Mary le Port and notably with the creation of the Inner Ring Road in the 1930s.

This cut Queen Square in two, completely compromising the sense of enclosure, destroying its quiet ambience, and causing the demolition of buildings at the two opposing corners. At the same time the character of the terraces was undermined by the removal of railings and the creation of off-street parking in front of the facades.



5.19 Twentieth century buildings, with a few exceptions, do not seem to have made a very successful contribution to the character of this part of Bristol. 1960s office development left the City over-supplied with brutalist tower blocks particularly around Nelson Street and The Pithay on the northern boundary of the Conservation Area.

The city council will seek to maintain and strengthen the traditional form of individual streets, including development in the area of the 'missing quarter' as promoted by the Broadmead Shopping Area: Expansion and Redevelopment Strategy and ensure that new development is in keeping with its surroundings both in character and appearance.

There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not. Policy B22 (I – II) should be consulted.





## 6. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Routes & Spaces

- 6.1.1 The historic street layout and the relationship of built form to open space define the framework of an area. The traditional pattern of development, building lines and plot sizes should be respected and used to dictate the scale and level of enclosure or openness appropriate to the Conservation Area.
- 6.1.2 Special interest derives in part from the preservation of the medieval street pattern and the relationship between the main streets, back lanes and size and form of the building plots.
- 6.1.3 There is heavy use of the area by vehicular traffic, particularly on Baldwin Street and Prince Street. Service vehicles need to access many buildings in the area, which reduces the possibilities of pedestrianisation. The upper part of Corn Street has been pedestrianised, and traffic around Queen Square has been much reduced. Car parking takes up a large amount of space in Prince Street and Charlotte Street.
- 6.1.4 The Old City is characterised by narrow main streets crossed by a number of narrow alleyways, which makes for a very permeable layout for pedestrian access. Penetration by vehicles is more of a negative factor, with unfortunate effects, for example, the double yellow lines in Leonard Lane.
- 6.1.5 Corn Street is partly pedestrianised but lacks unity in the treatment of the streetscape and particularly its surfaces. Historic stone pavements should be used throughout.
- 6.1.6 Baldwin Street is an impressive space that could be yet more impressive if townscape detailing was improved and a pedestrian-friendly environment developed.

6.1.7 Queen Square has been greatly improved over the last few years and has returned to something of the grandeur it had in its heyday. Nevertheless, its character remains vulnerable to pressures of over-use and redevelopment and must be carefully safeguarded.

6.1.8 High Street and Wine Street lack the physical enclosure that once existed at the heart of the medieval core of the city.

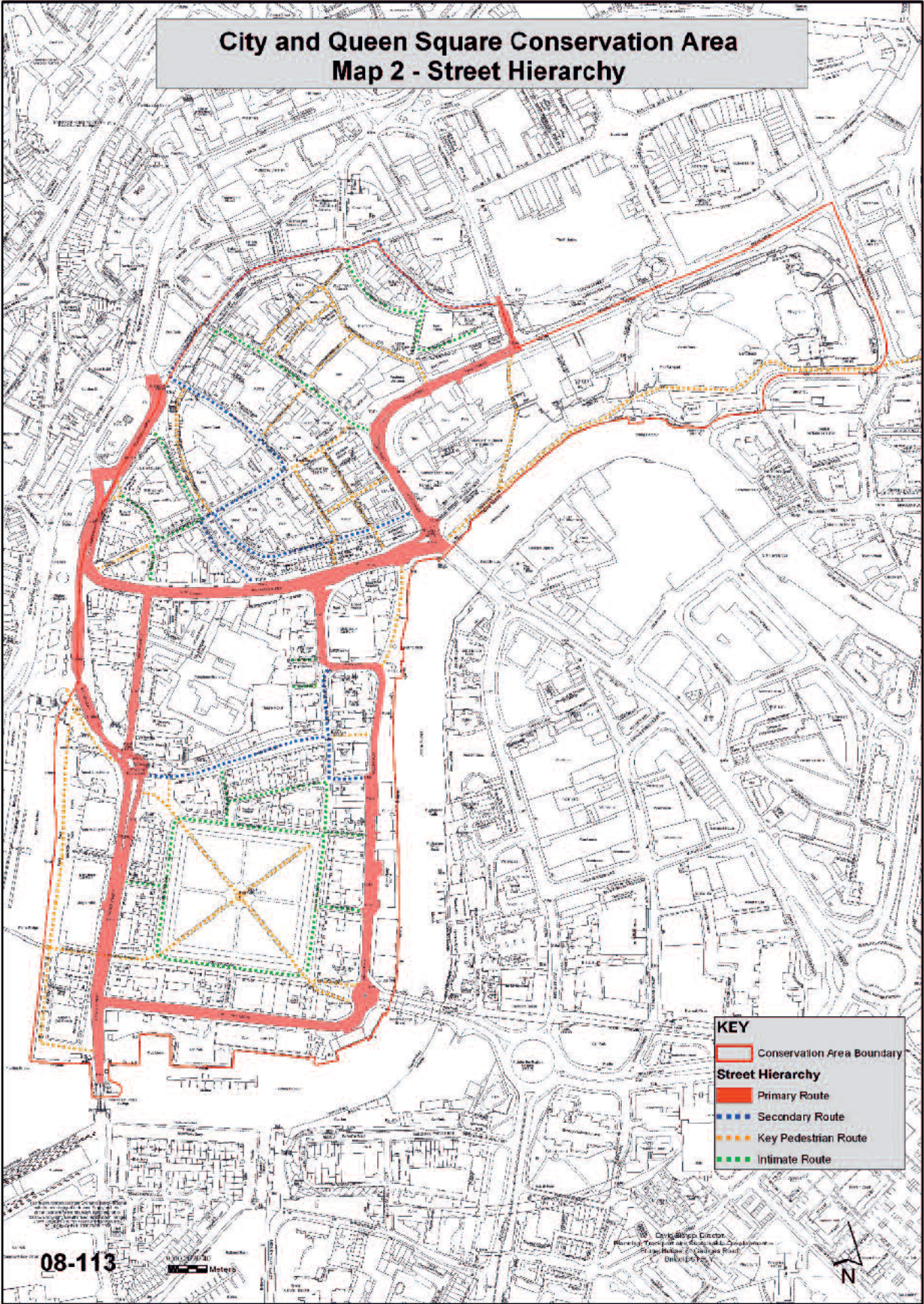
#### **The street hierarchy in the Conservation Area is shown at Map 2**

The dominant street pattern and the character of spaces should be respected. Where historic patterns remain, these should be protected and reflected in proposed schemes. Opportunities should be taken to repair the historic street pattern and enclosed character of the area. Policies B15 (I – III) should be consulted.





# Map 2: Street Hierarchy





## 6.2 Views

6.2.1 The topography of the City is unique and views across it make an important contribution to Bristol's townscape and character.

6.2.2 For the purpose of Character Appraisals, three types of views have been identified:

**Long Views** – are long-distance views across the City, to key features or landmark buildings and beyond

**Local Views** – these views tend to be shorter, confined to a specific locality and also frame landmarks

**Glimpses** - allow intriguing glances to intimate routes or spaces, they make an important contribution to local character

6.2.3 Long Views tend to be around the edge of the Conservation Area, particularly across the harbour side on the southern, eastern and western edges. One long view is obtained across Queen Square, looking towards the rising ground of the city to the northwest. Other views across Queen Square tend to be restricted in extent by trees in summer.

6.2.4 The views in the Old City tend to be very intimate glimpses down alleys, around corners or down steps. However, there are good views up Broad Street, Small Street and Corn Street, and in both directions along Broad Street although this is often limited by heavy traffic.



Figure 8: View down Broad Street towards St John's on the Wall



Figure 9: View up Small Street



Figure 10: View up Corn Street towards All Saints Church

Views in the Conservation Area are identified at Map 3

## 6.3 Landmark Buildings

6.3.1 Landmark buildings are those that due to their height, location or detailed design stand out from their background. They contribute significantly to the character and townscape of the local area, being navigation or focal points and key elements in views.

6.3.2 Landmark Buildings within the Conservation Area are:

- Bush House (Arnolfini Building) Narrow Quay
- Llandogger Trow, King Street



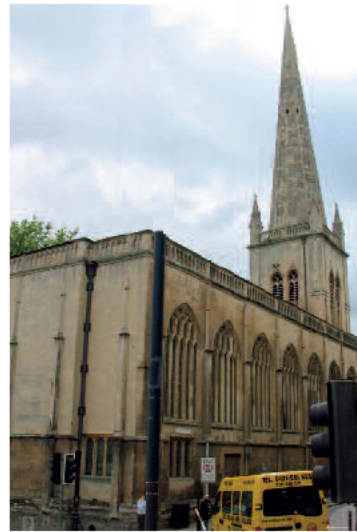
*Figure 11: Llandogger Trow*

- The Granary, Welsh Back



*Figure 12: The Granary, Welsh Back*

- St Nicholas Church, Baldwin Street



*Figure 13: St Nicholas Church*

- Bristol Bridge
- St Mary le Port Church Tower (redevelopment proposals aim to restore historic relationships of buildings in this area)
- St Peter's Church



*Figure 14: St Peter's Church from the air.*

- All Saints Church
- Old Council House, Corn Street
- The Exchange, Corn Street



Figure 15: The Exchange, Corn Street

- Radison Hotel, Narrow Quay
- St Stephens Church, St Stephen Street
- St John on the Wall
- River Station Restaurant, The Grove
- Christ Church



Figure 16: Christ Church

- Severn Shed, The Grove
- Redcliffe Bridge
- Prince Street Bridge
- Theatre Royal/Coopers Hall, King Street

**Landmark buildings in the Conservation Area are identified at Map 3.**

Development should be designed with regard to the local context. Proposals, which would cause unacceptable harm to the character and/or appearance of an area, or to the visual impact of historic buildings, views or landmarks, will not be permitted. BLP Policies B2 (I – IV) should be consulted.



### Map 3: Views and Landmark Buildings

