



St Margaret's Conservation Area CHARACTER APPRAISAL

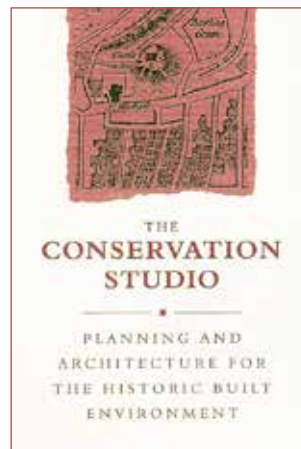
Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



This document has been written and illustrated on behalf of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk by:

The Conservation Studio
Brackendene House
Carron Lane
Midhurst
West Sussex
GU29 9LD

01730 816710
info@theconservationstudio.co.uk
www.theconservationstudio.co.uk



Executive Summary 1

1 Introduction

1.1 The legislative context	2
1.2 Public consultation	2
1.3 Assessing Special Significance	2
1.4 Location and activities	5
1.5 Geology	6
1.6 Topography and landscape setting	7

2 Historical development

2.1 Introduction to the history of King's Lynn	8
2.2 The development of the St Margaret's area	10

3 Spatial analysis

3.1 General character and plan form	11
3.2 Open spaces and trees	12
3.3 Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas	12
3.4 Property boundaries	13
3.5 Public realm	14

4 The buildings of the Conservation Area

4.1 Building types, uses and dates	15
4.2 Scheduled monuments	17
4.3 Listed buildings	17
4.4 Locally listed buildings	18
4.5 Positive buildings	18
4.6 Building styles, materials and colours	18
4.7 Shopfronts	19

5 Character Areas

5.1 Character Area 1	20
<i>Purfleet Place, King's Staithe Square and South Quay</i>	
5.2 Character Area 2	21
<i>Queen Street and Baker Lane</i>	
5.3 Character Area 3	23
<i>The Saturday Market and St Margaret's Place</i>	
5.4 Character Area 4	26
<i>Nelson Street and Priory Lane</i>	
5.5 Character Area 5	28
<i>High Street</i>	
5.6 Character Area 6	30
<i>St James' Street west and Tower Street</i>	
5.7 Character Area 7	32
<i>St James' Street east, Tower Place, Tower Gardens and Millfleet</i>	

6 Issues for the future management of the conservation area

6.1 Conservation Area boundary review	34
6.2 The buildings of the Conservation Area	34
» Statutory and local list review	34
» The control of unlisted buildings	34
6.3 Building condition, economic vitality and the role of grant aid	34
6.4 The protection of property boundaries and spatial qualities	34
6.5 The public realm	34
6.6 Traffic, parking and pedestrian management	35
6.7 Sites and buildings for enhancement	35
6.8 Advertising and shopfronts	35
6.9 The design of new development	35
6.10 Monitoring and community involvement	35

Appendices

Appendix I- Maps	36
Map 1	37
<i>St Margaret's Conservation Area Townscape Analysis Map</i>	
Map 2	38
<i>St Margaret's Conservation Area Character Area Map</i>	



Executive Summary

The St Margaret's Conservation Area forms part of the more extensive King's Lynn Conservation Area of which there are four other constituent areas – the St Nicholas Conservation Area, the Norfolk Street Conservation Area, the Walks Conservation Area, and the Friars Conservation Area. Designated in 1969, and as such one of the first conservation areas to be identified after the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, the St Margaret's Conservation Area is notable for a variety of features which make it unique.

Of special note is the legacy of the first establishment of the Benedictine priory soon after the building of the first St Margaret's Church in c1101 around which a market place was soon established. This led to the development of the area between the church and the river with a unique layout of former warehouses and domestic ranges, often grouped around a concealed courtyard, the earliest example of which dates to the 13th century. The location next to the River Great Ouse, and the development of a medieval quayside for trading, is one of the key factors in the growth of the settlement.

This medieval layout of narrow twisting lanes, lined with an important collection of almost continuously listed buildings, some of which are listed at the higher level of Grade II* or even Grade I, makes the St Margaret's area of national significance. Added to this are the remains of the Greyfriars Tower in St James' Street, another Grade I listed building which like the 15th century Guildhall in the Saturday Market Place is also a scheduled monument.



College Lane

As well as these more immediately recognisable historic features, the Conservation Area contains more modest streets such as the High Street and Tower Street which also make a contribution to the special interest of the area.

This Character Appraisal sets out what is special about the Conservation Area and provides information about its historical development, its layout, its buildings, and its open spaces. It analyses each part of the Conservation

Area and identifies both positive and negative features for each. Finally it provides a summary of the principal issues which have been used as a basis for the recommendations in the accompanying Management Plan.

Both documents have been subject to public consultation, and will be adopted by the Borough Council as relevant documents for development management purposes.

I INTRODUCTION

1.1 The legislative context

The King's Lynn Conservation Area, of which the St Margaret's Conservation Area forms a part, was first designated in 1969, with extensions and revisions in 1979, 1991, 1992 and 2003. Apart from the St Margaret's area, the King's Lynn Conservation Area comprises four other 'Character Areas', namely the St Nicholas area to the north, the Norfolk Street area to the north-east, The Walks area to the east, and The Friars area to the south and south-east.

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. A conservation area is defined as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Section 71 of the Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the St Margaret's Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It

is in conformity with English Heritage guidance as set out in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (March 2011). Government policy for historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, published in March 2012.



Greyfriars Tower, Tower Garden

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the St Margaret's Conservation Area and identify the issues which threaten its special qualities (in the form of the 'Character Appraisal');
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and also achieve the enhancement of the St Margaret's Conservation Area in the form of a proactive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the area (in the form of the accompanying 'Management Plan').

Both the Character Appraisal and Management Plan will be used by the Council to support the current (December 2013) bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant scheme which will cover part of the St Margaret's Conservation Area.

1.2 Public consultation

This document has been produced for the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk following a walkabout with local stakeholders on 22 October 2013. The draft of the Character Appraisal and Management Plan was the subject of a public consultation between 16 November 2013 and 16 December 2013. After this, a Public Consultations Report was prepared (copies are available from the Council) and amendments to the text and mapping made as appropriate. Finally, the documents were fully illustrated with photographs, historic maps and any other relevant material.

1.3 Assessing Special Significance

The significance of the St Margaret's Conservation Area is derived from a combination of factors: its past history as one of the most important medieval ports in England; its location next to the River Great Ouse, which provided the impetus to the development of this port; the rarity of the surviving medieval plan form and medieval buildings; the remains of the religious houses including St Margaret's Minster and Greyfriars Tower; the mainly domestic scale of its buildings and the intimate character of the narrow winding streets, which contrasts with the openness of the quayside frontages; the use of the varied mainly locally sourced materials

on the historic buildings; and the many views into and out of the area. The St Margaret's Conservation Area is also significant because of its close relationship to the rest of the historic core of King's Lynn, most of which is also covered by conservation area designation, and its aesthetic, cultural and spiritual contribution to the life and vibrancy of the town as a whole.

This significance can be summarised by the following, considering the historical, spatial, architectural, and cultural significance in turn:

Historical significance

- The St Margaret's Conservation Area forms a distinctive and well preserved part of the historic core of King's Lynn which is now divided into five individual Conservation Areas, these divisions reflecting the ages of development, plan form, building type and uses within each area.
- The role of King's Lynn in the economic development of the Fens and East Anglia, particularly the medieval wool trade.
- The historic trading connections with other parts of northern Europe including the Hanseatic League.
- The Conservation Area is the earliest part of King's Lynn, which was once one of the wealthiest medieval ports in England.
- The Conservation Area retains a large number of relatively unaltered medieval buildings and a recognisable medieval layout.

- The Conservation Area includes the remains of the two priories – the Benedictine priory and the Greyfriars priory – of which The Minster, the former monastic range in Priory Lane, and the tower in Tower Gardens, are the most visible surviving features.

Spatial significance

- The Conservation Area lies immediately adjacent to the River Great Ouse, which provided the impetus for the development of a port from the late 11th century onwards.
- The principal features are the location overlooking the river, with long views across the water to West Lynn, the enclosed Saturday Market Place around the Church, and the more open landscaped spaces of Tower Gardens, which is centred on the Greyfriars Tower and the 1921 War Memorial.
- Most of the buildings retain a domestic scale of only two or three storeys, punctuated by the towers of The Minster, the Elizabethan watchtower to Clifton House (No. 17 Queen Street), the Greyfriars Tower in Tower Gardens and the brick tower of the former grain store in Baker Lane.
- The western part of the Conservation Area, closest to the river, retains a complex layout of medieval streets with the buildings divided by narrow lanes leading down to the water.
- The long, gently curving medieval streets, following the original alignment of the river bank, particularly Queen Street, St Margaret's Place and Nelson Street.



Marriott's Warehouse, South Quay



View over River Great Ouse



Former monastic range, now Nos. 12-20 consec. Priory Lane

Architectural significance

- The Conservation Area provides an outstanding and unique collection of listed buildings including seven listed at Grade I, fifteen at Grade II*, and seventy at Grade II – these buildings are most highly concentrated in Queen Street, around The Minster and in Nelson Street.
- There are two scheduled monuments in the Conservation Area, Greyfriars Tower and the Guildhall – both of these are also listed Grade I.
- Opposite St Margaret's Church, and therefore focal within the Conservation Area, is an outstanding collection of municipal buildings, the 15th century Guildhall, the 18th century Gaolhouse and Assembly Rooms, and the 19th century Town Hall.
- The Conservation Area retains a large number of medieval buildings, built as houses or warehouses around enclosed courtyards, and although many were extended or refronted in the 17th, 18th or 19th centuries, they retain substantial amounts of 14th or 15th century fabric.
- The Conservation Area also retains a number of large but good quality 20th century buildings such as the Majestic Cinema, dating to 1927 and listed Grade II, the Bingo Hall dating to 1938, the Police Station (Norfolk Constabulary) of 1953 facing St James Road, and Nos. 33-39 (odd) St James Street (1908).
- The St Margaret's area is notable for the early use of brick, with examples dating to the 14th century

– these narrow plum-coloured bricks make a major contribution to the character of the alleyways and lanes closest to the river.

- Carstone from nearby Snettisham is another local material, seen in a variety of buildings including the Greyfriars tower and the Carnegie Library.
- The Carnegie Library on the corner of Tower Gardens is a Grade II listed building which overlooks the busy London Road and therefore forms the most visible edge of the St Margaret's Conservation Area.

Cultural significance

- The survival of a well preserved medieval layout of streets and buildings, forming part of the wider historic town of King's Lynn.
- The role of St Margaret's Church in the spiritual life of the local community.
- The shops and businesses in the High Street, the Saturday Market Place, Tower Street and St James' Street which all make a major contribution to the local economy.
- The attractive setting and buildings draw many visitors to the town, with the South Quay area and the Saturday Market Place being particularly popular.
- The long association with the Hanseatic League and the influence of the north European countries which resulted from the trading between these countries and King's Lynn.



King's Staithe Square from Purfleet Quay



The former Maltings, now apartments, off Nelson Street



The Police Station



High Street



The Town Hall, Saturday Market Place



Greyfriars Tower, Tower Garden

1.4 Location and activities

King's Lynn is located at the outlet of the River Great Ouse into The Wash in West Norfolk. It lies some 97 miles north of London and 44 miles west of Norwich. In 2007 the population was around 43,000, making it the second largest town in the county after Norwich. Although its historic wealth was based on its function as a port, today King's Lynn is more important as an administrative and service centre for the surrounding rural area, which is mainly used for agriculture. The town retains a large industrial park at Hardwick which also provides local employment, and the redevelopment of part of the town centre in the 1960s has provided a popular shopping area called the Vancouver Centre – this was refurbished and extended in 2005. Within King's Lynn there are also three secondary schools and one college, as well as a range of well supported cultural facilities including two theatres, museums, cinemas, and sporting venues. It is also a significant attraction to tourists who enjoy the historic streets, the many high quality historic buildings, and the attractive setting next to the river.

The St Margaret's area forms the core of the historic town where planned development first started around the new church in the early 12th century, although there is evidence for earlier settlement. The bulk of the existing buildings in the western part of the Conservation Area between the church and the river (Queen Street, St Margaret's Street, Nelson Street and Priory Lane) are mainly in residential uses, with large prestigious historic houses intermixed with former warehouses which have mainly been converted into apartments. Marriott's Warehouse, skillfully restored

to provide a new café and meeting rooms, is one of the few commercial uses, along with the Bank House Hotel, both of which overlook the river. In the centre of the Conservation Area, the High Street, the Saturday Market, St James' Street and Tower Street are mainly in retail or office use with some residential uses on the upper floors. Facing St Margaret's Church is a very important group of historic buildings (the Guildhall, the Town Hall, the former Gaol, and the Assembly Rooms) which provide valuable local facilities including the Registrar's Office. In December 2011 the Bishop of Norwich dedicated the Priory and Parish Church of St Margaret as 'King's Lynn Minster'- this is the key focal building within the Conservation Area and provides spiritual support to the local community. Where appropriate we have therefore referred to this building throughout the rest of this document by its correct title "The Minster" although many locals continue to refer to it as St Margaret's Church.

On the eastern fringe of the St Margaret's area are a number of prestigious 20th century 'public' buildings, namely the 1905 Public Library and the nearby Police Station, which dates to 1953. Tower Gardens, created in 1911, provides a pleasant public garden with mature trees which centres on the remains of a medieval priory tower and an early 1920s War Memorial – both are listed. Close by, in Tower Place, are a number of 1920s and 1930s buildings in mixed commercial uses including a garage, some workshops, and a very large and visually dominant former cinema of 1938, now used as a bingo hall, which turns the corner into St James' Street.

Interleaved within the historic streets are three separate backland sites which are used as surface car

parks – two of these, accessed from Regent Way and Stonegate Street, currently lie outside the Conservation Area. A third, accessed via Baker Lane, lies within the existing boundary. Whilst these are not particularly attractive they form an important function in supporting the local businesses and also provide a useful facility for residents, as the houses which face the narrow historic streets rarely have their own parking. It should also be noted that any development on these open spaces is likely to require a full archaeological evaluation, because of their proximity to the medieval town.

1.5 Geology

King's Lynn lies close to the Fens, famous for their deep deposits of ancient peat, which were systematically drained between the 16th and 18th centuries to allow the fertile soil to be exploited for agriculture. Whilst there are visible chalk deposits further east, around King's Lynn the underlying strata are largely made up of older rocks including red chalk, carstone and gault clays, which intervene between the chalk to the east and the Fenland silts and clays to the west. Historically, the carstone was quarried at Snettisham, about six miles to the north of King's Lynn, and it can be seen on the exterior elevations of many buildings in the town, most noticeably on the exterior of the Public Library. It is also visible on the priory tower in Tower Gardens where it is mixed with higher quality Oolitic limestone, probably from the quarries of Northamptonshire, from where it was brought down the River Nene in barges to The Wash. Carstone is a 'gingerbread' stone, dark brown, gritty and rather soft, but it needs to be protected by a good ashlar when exposed to wear, hence the detailing on the tower. Red chalk can be

found in the cliffs at Hunstanton, a further three miles beyond Snettisham, and although a good deal harder than the normal white chalk, it was not usually quarried, although it can be seen occasionally in walling.

Whilst the chalk deposits lie a little way from King's Lynn, they do provide a reasonably local source of flint pebbles and cobbles, such as can be seen in the paving around The Minster. Knapped flints are also used for the adjoining historic buildings, particularly to create the chequer-board pattern on the Guildhall and Town Hall elevations.

King's Lynn is particularly well known for the use of locally made bricks, an industry which appears to have started in the late medieval period. These were made from the glacial clays, loams and brick earths, as well as the Jurassic clays of the Fens, which could all be found in the vicinity of the town. The earliest visible bricks appear to be in the Greyfriars Tower in Tower Gardens and probably date to the 15th century. These long and thin plum coloured bricks can also be seen in many of the other historic buildings in the St Margaret's area, and by the 17th century they had become the material of choice for the merchants' houses and warehouses in this part of King's Lynn, incrementally replacing the timber-framed structures which had been the norm until then. It is recorded that in the late medieval period boats between East Anglia and Bruges traded wool in one direction, then brought back bricks to England as ballast, the brick-making industry having started much earlier in the Low Countries.



The Public Library, London Road



Early brickwork in King's Staithe Lane

1.6 Topography and landscape setting

King's Lynn developed on the eastern side of the River Great Ouse on flat land which is subject to flooding, hence the modern flood-prevention works which have been built along South Quay. The land in the St Margaret's area is therefore similarly flat with some gentle undulations due to the proximity of the two small rivers, the Purfleet in the north, and the Millfleet in the south, which define the boundaries of this part of King's Lynn. These very slight changes in level are more marked on the eastern boundary to the town in The Walks area, next to the remains of the medieval town walls. However, because of this topography (or rather, lack of) there is little perception of a landscape setting to the St Margaret's area or even to King's Lynn more generally.

Historically, the western edge of the settlement has expanded over the river embankment, as both quays and buildings were provided for the merchants of King's Lynn. The alignment of Queen Street, St Margaret's Place and Nelson Street reflects the line of the early medieval river bank, whilst the 15th and 16th century extent of the river is shown in the location of the west ranges of Hampton Court, Hanse House and Thoresby College. Marriott's Warehouse was originally located on a small island linked to the east bank by a short causeway. Early 19th century maps show the quay edge along the line of the west wall of Marriott's warehouse, the much larger and more formalised quayside apparently being reclaimed from the river bank during the later part of the 19th century.



South Quay



View of the St Margaret's area from the western bank of the river



View westwards across the river from King's Lynn

The western boundary to the town is formed by the wide expanse of the River Great Ouse, which separates King's Lynn from the much smaller settlement of West Lynn. Spectacular views towards West Lynn and along the river to north and south can be seen from South Quay in the St Margaret's area, and similarly interesting views can be seen looking back towards the town from West Lynn. Because the river is tidal, the 'riverscape' changes hourly but largely the views are of long flat raised banks with lines of trees and the outline of the houses in West Lynn beyond. The only interruption is the squat tower of West Lynn church, which breaks the skyline. The flat landscape beyond is therefore hardly visible unless from a raised viewing point, such as The Minster tower.

2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction to the history of King's Lynn

King's Lynn, originally known as 'Lin', is thought to have derived its name from the Celtic word for lake or pool, and it is recorded that a large tidal lake originally covered the King's Lynn area. A small settlement had developed by the 11th century, and the place is recorded as 'Lun' or 'Lenn' in the Domesday Survey of 1086, when it was described as the property of the Bishop of Elmham. Norwich Cathedral was founded in 1096 and the Cathedral Priory (of which King's Lynn was a daughter cell) has a foundation deed dated 1101. By this time the area had come under the control of Bishop Herbert de Losinga of Norwich who commissioned the building of The Minster. The charter establishing the new church also refers to the Cathedral Priory so it is likely that the new church and the Cathedral Priory have a similar date. Losinga's charter also states that a monk was to be sent to King's Lynn to officiate in the new church which appears to confirm that at this point, the local priory had not been established. Both The Minster and its sister church, St Nicholas' Church in Great Yarmouth, celebrated their 900th anniversaries in 2001.

The establishment of a new Benedictine priory, the setting out of a new town between the Purfleet and Millfleet, and permission to hold a market on Saturdays next to the church all followed soon after 1101. Whilst some later books quote a date of 1095 for the establishment of St Margaret's Priory there is no

known documentary evidence for this. In the 1140s Bishop William Turbe laid out 'the Newland' or second medieval town between the Purfleet and Fisherfleet, and St Nicholas Chapel was founded to the north-east of the new market place (the Tuesday Market), effectively creating two small townships. The Greyfriars established a second priory in the St Margaret's area in c1230 in what is now Tower Gardens.

In 1204 King John granted Lynn its first royal Charter making it a borough with a degree of self government, but the Bishop of Norwich remained the Lord of Lynn with overall control. The town was called Bishop's Lynn from 1101 to 1537 when a charter from Henry VIII changed the name to 'Lynn Regis' – King's Lynn.

The merchants of Bishop's Lynn grew rich due to increasing trade along the waterways which stretched inland from Lynn. Even more important was the sea trade with Europe, which was dominated by the Hanseatic League. This was a powerful trading organisation made up of merchants from Northern Germany and other Baltic countries, who found the location of King's Lynn convenient for their business. The only surviving Hansa building in the country is Hanse House in St Margaret's Lane, a former warehouse which was known as a steelyard (from the old German word for sample yard) and was built in the late 15th century following the Treaty of Utrecht which allowed the Hansa to establish a trading depot in Lynn for the first time. The north side of Purfleet Quay appears to have been operating as a wharf from at least the 13th century and a limestone quay is known to have existed by 1547.



The Tuesday Market Place



The Courtyard behind Hanse House



Thoresby College

The merchants formed their own Trinity Guild to promote their business interests and built the Guildhall opposite The Minster which was completely rebuilt in 1421 following a disastrous fire – this was used for storage with a treasury on the first floor. In c1510 Thomas Thoresby, a local merchant, built a college for 13 chantry priests attached to the Trinity Guild between the river and The Minster. Called Thoresby College, it was restored and converted into apartments and offices in the 1960s and is home to the Preservation Trust. The town lost all of its religious houses in the 1530s during the Dissolution and this would have impacted on the prosperity of the area as land was sold off and properties either demolished or rebuilt.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the town's main export was grain, plus some timber and iron. As a result of the Civil War in the 1640s, the medieval town walls were partly demolished and many buildings were lost. The construction of a new Custom House on the north side of Purfleet Quay in 1683 suggests a growing economy and was built by Sir John Turner MP as a merchants' exchange. By the end of the 17th century the importing of wine became a major contributor to the prosperity of the town, and the draining of The Fens from the mid-17th century onwards also increased the amount of farm produce that could be shipped down to London. Other significant industries were ship building, fishing and glass making.

Throughout the 17th century and 18th centuries King's Lynn still remained an important port, but in 1751 the Hanseatic League sold their last building in the town and this reflected a general decline in the economic fortunes of the town around this time. This was reversed in the 1840s when the coming of the railways, with improved



historic map of King's Lynn 1812

communications to London, meant that the town once again began to expand. Brewing became an important local industry and many civic buildings were constructed including the Town Hall in 1895. The King's Lynn Museum opened in 1904, the Carnegie Public Library in 1905 and the adjoining Tower Gardens in 1911.

In the 1920s and 1930s Lynn remained an important port as well as a location for various industries such as Campbells Soups. During the 1960s King's Lynn

was designated as an overspill town for London, which led to the addition of new housing, including Hillington Square, and a new shopping centre in the middle of the town. New employment was provided on the adjoining Hardwick Industrial Estate which now provides the rather disappointing access into the town from the main road to the south-east. To the north of the town centre, two large docks remain with a further industrial site to the north closer to the junction of the river with The Wash.



Hampton Court



The Majestic Cinema, Tower Street

2.2 The development of the St Margaret's area

The principal factors which have affected the layout and character of the St Margaret's area are considered to be:

- The construction of the first St Margaret's Church in c1101
- The laying out of the new town from c1101 between Purfleet in the north and Millfleet in the south
- Gradual expansion of the buildings westwards over the embankment to the river
- The construction of the adjoining Greyfriars priory started in c1230
- 13th and 14th century expansion due to the growth of King's Lynn as one of England's most important ports trading with the Hanseatic League
- The surviving warehouses from this period include Hampton Court (early 14th and 15th century), Hanse House in St Margaret's Lane, and Marriott's Warehouse in South Quay
- In 1421 the Trinity Guild rebuilt the Guild Hall in Saturday Market
- The development of the streets between the church and the river side between the 15th and the 16th centuries with a range of warehouses and prestigious houses, often built in courtyard or quadrangle form
- Thoresby College founded between 1508 and 1510 to accommodate 13 chaplains for the Trinity Guild
- The Dissolution of the priories in the late 1530s when many of the religious buildings were demolished or converted for other uses
- St Margaret's Church extensively rebuilt in the 1740s after storm damage
- Prestigious houses built in Queen Street and Nelson Street in the 18th and 19th centuries, often refrontings of earlier buildings
- The Assembly Rooms added to the Guildhall in the 1770s and the Gaolhouse built in 1785 – the Town Hall was added to the group in 1895
- The High Street and Tower Street were largely developed with houses from the late 18th century onwards, with purpose-built shops appearing from the late -19th century, although Tower Street does contain one late 15th century building – No. 21
- The Carnegie Library opened in 1905 and Tower Gardens opened in 1911 to commemorate the coronation of King George V
- Some 1920s and 1930s development in Tower Place, the Majestic Cinema in Tower Street (1927) and the Bingo Hall facing St James' Street (1938)
- The Police Station facing St James' Road, dated 1953
- 1960s development resulted in the new shopping centre, now called the Vancouver Shopping Centre, which forms the northern boundary to most of the St Margaret's Conservation Area, and new housing, which forms the south eastern boundary beyond Stonegate Street



Queen Street



Nelson Street



Tower Gardens

3 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

3.1 General character and plan form

The St Margaret's Conservation Area retains a largely medieval street layout centred on the Saturday Market Place and The Minster. Of note are the narrow streets which lead into the Market Place, namely Queen Street from the north, Nelson Street from the south, and St James' Street from the east – these formed the centre of the medieval settlement and retain a very high concentration of listed buildings, most of which are located on the back of the pavement. These mainly two or three storey buildings have the appearance of the 18th or 19th centuries, but many of them conceal much earlier buildings behind. The sinuous curves of Queen Street and Nelson Street follow the line of the early river edge, the land being developed with warehouses and prestigious merchant's houses from the 14th century onwards. Some of these remain, albeit altered, and these add to the special character of the area along with the narrow alleys and partly concealed courtyards which can be glimpsed from the public thoroughfare. The mainly residential uses in this western part provide a more peaceful ambiance, although there is more activity along the wide expanse of South Quay (which forms the western boundary of the Conservation Area) due to the busier traffic and, in good weather, the many pedestrians who are out enjoying the views across the river.

To the north and east of the Market Place, the streets are more open in character and in more mixed uses. High Street and Tower Street have lower concentrations

of listed buildings, but do contain a good density of historic buildings which mainly date to the 19th or early 20th centuries and which are considered positive in their contribution to the character of the area. Once in residential uses, many have now been converted into shops. Both of these streets have also been pedestrianised as they form the southern edge of the modern Vancouver Shopping Centre. Again, there are no front gardens and the buildings are located on the back of what was once the pavement. St James' Street, a much earlier route, retains listed buildings of the mid-15th century, including very early purpose-built shops. This street is also narrow with continuous buildings along both sides of the street.

In the far eastern corner of the Conservation Area, Tower Gardens provides the only truly green public open space in the Conservation Area with mature trees and grass lawns. This is dominated by the medieval tower of the former priory and the adjoining War Memorial.

The setting to the Conservation Area has been compromised in several locations by modern roads and poor quality 20th century development. This is particularly noticeable along Stonegate Street and Millfleet to the south, and off Regent's Way to the north east. Three car parks, two of which lie outside the Conservation Area, are also considered to be negative in their visual impact although they undoubtedly serve a useful purpose in assisting the economic vitality of the town.

3.2 Open spaces and trees

The principal open space is the Saturday Market Place with the adjoining The Minster and its churchyard, which contains a number of mature trees and is partly enclosed by cast iron railings. The Saturday Market Place is an informal, irregularly-shaped space, somewhat dominated by parked cars and traffic, although there is a new landscaping scheme currently under discussion which seeks to improve the setting of the many high quality listed buildings in the immediate vicinity including The Minster and the medieval Guildhall, both of which are listed Grade I. Tower Gardens is a public park and was upgraded about 13 years ago to provide a very pleasant public open space. These gardens contain the only other group of mature trees in the Conservation Area. On the west edge of the Conservation Area, Purfleet Place and South Quay are attractive open spaces which have been subject to a carefully designed hard landscaping scheme carried out with Millennium funding. Otherwise there are occasional trees in public car parks or in private gardens, the most notable of which is the horse chestnut in the garden of No. 11 Nelson Street which can be seen from Devil's Alley and South Quay.

3.3 Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas

A number of focal buildings are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map. These are important in both long and short views within the Conservation Area. They include a notable group along the north side of the Saturday Market Place, The Minster (the most

important focal building in the Conservation Area) and a further group in the eastern end of the Conservation Area in or around Tower Gardens. For many parts of the Conservation Area, the similar heights of the mainly residential buildings have resulted in none particularly standing out.

The best views are from South Quay over the river towards West Lynn and St Peter's Church, a Grade II* listed building built in the late 13th century after the original church was destroyed in a flood. Similar views in the opposite direction from the western river bank are also important and are therefore marked on the Townscape Analysis Map. These take in the Custom House on the north side of Purfleet, Bank House on Purfleet Place, the Elizabethan tower to Clifton House, the twin towers of The Minster, and Marriott's Warehouse and Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse, both of which front the river. Views of the Greyfriars Tower and across the Saturday Market Place are of special merit, with the twin towers of The Minster being visible in 'glimpsed' views from many locations.

Although frontages are largely intact, there are glimpses in some locations of the three large car parks which have been created on backland sites between Queen Street and High Street, between High Street and Tower Street, and alongside Church Street. Because of the tightly built urban form, these car parks provide a number of glimpsed views within the Conservation Area, although they also, and not so attractively, allow views of the backs of some of the buildings which front the principal streets. When walking around the Conservation Area, it is also noticeable that some of



Saturday Market Place



The Gaolhouse, Guildhall and the Town Hall (far left)

the surrounding areas are of poor quality, particularly where wide modern roads have intruded.

3.4 Property boundaries

Because most of the properties front directly onto the pavement, there are few opportunities for front gardens although some houses do have small gardens which are defined by attractive cast or wrought iron railings. The most notable are:

- The railings in front of the Burkitt Homes Almshouses in Queen Street, dating to 1909 and Grade II listed
- The railings in front of Nos. 22, 24 and 26 Queen Street dating to the late 19th century
- The railings to Bank House, King Staithe Square, specifically listed Grade II and dating to the late 18th century
- Cast iron railings around St Margaret's Churchyard, which came from Narford Hall and are Grade II listed
- The plain railings around Tower Gardens, presumably dating to 1911.

Occasionally, substantial brick walls, some of them dating as far back as the 15th century, are visible from the public domain, particularly from side alleys where views into back gardens can be seen. Others are hidden from public view although they have been listed. The most important ones are:

- The boundary wall to St Margaret's Vicarage, St Margaret's Place, listed Grade II
- The very tall and substantial garden wall to Ladybridge House Nelson Street which is dated 1818 and listed Grade II
- The south boundary wall to Friarscot, Church Street, listed Grade II



The railings in front of the Birkett Homes Almshouses

- The boundary wall to No. 23 Queen Street which dates to the 15th century and once formed part of a warehouse Grade II (not visible)

Further information about the use of brick in the Conservation Area is included in Chapter 4.

3.5 Public realm

The public realm covers all of those features which make a contribution to the public spaces between the buildings, particularly the street lights, surface treatments, and street furniture such as litter bins, bus stops, street signage, and street nameplates. In the St Margaret's area, a comprehensive upgrading of some of the streets has been carried out so, for instance, the street lights are generally a uniform plain grey steel standard with a stylish modern lantern, and the litter bins and finger posts are both to a standard design and colour – a sage green. In addition, the street nameplates are all a simple metal plate usually fixed directly to the buildings with plain black letters on a white background. All of these designs are cohesive, well maintained, and suitable for the area. There are, however, exceptions such as the dated street lights in Nelson Street and the clutter of bollards and signage at the junction of Tower Street and St James' Street.

The surface treatments are more mixed. There are some very good examples of traditional paving, most notably the granite setts in College Lane, Devil's Alley, King's Staithe Lane, and King's Staithe Square. There is a small area of flint pebbles and some York stone paving around The Minster, as well as good quality modern metal bollards which are in keeping with the area. Otherwise the most notable historic feature is the large amount of narrow (150 mm) or wide (300 mm) Aberdeen granite kerbing which can be found throughout the area. South Quay was relandscaped about 13 years ago with Millennium funding. The materials are modern but effective including two types of concrete blocks (Tegula) and some rolled

tarmacadam surfaces. Heavy steel bollards and mooring posts have also been introduced, along with simply designed black or sage green metal and glass shelters and plain black litter bins. The overall effect is robust and appropriate to this maritime location. South Quay also retains some examples of historic mooring posts and some modern street art.

In various locations metal plates in the ground indicate the route of one of the tourist walks around the town. These are set in the pavements which for the most part comprise small or large concrete slabs. Rather poor quality modern paving, with possibly 1960s brick planters in need of replacement, can be seen in the High Street. Slightly better quality and more recent paving can be seen in Tower Street, although again, the brick planters are in need of replacement.



Devil's Alley



South Quay



Historic paving in College Street

4 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

4.1 Building types, uses and dates

The St Margaret's Conservation Area retains one of the most significant collections of late medieval buildings in the country, all located within a relatively small area. Of special note are the remains of the warehouses and domestic ranges in the western side of the Conservation Area, the earliest of which retain 13th century fabric. These buildings are interesting in that the residential accommodation was usually built next to the warehouse and the buildings grouped around a courtyard for security. Whilst the residential use faced the street, or was sometimes used for a small shop, the warehousing backed onto the adjoining river bank for ease of access by boats. These relate to the development of King's Lynn as an important port and trading centre from the 13th century onwards. Good examples include Clifton House, Hampton Court and Hanse House. Marriott's Warehouse facing South Quay is another early building with the ground floor fabric dating to the early 14th century which appears to have been first constructed on a small island linked to the main bank by a short causeway. The Guildhall facing The Minster dates to the 1420s and was rebuilt at a time of great prosperity for the merchants of Lynn. An unusual survivor is the group formed by Nos. 6-14 even St James' Street, a long row of single cell, two storey buildings (now somewhat altered) which was built in c1450 with a ground floor shop with an unheated chamber or solar above. Thoresby College of c1511 is probably the last (surviving) building to be erected in the St Margaret's area before the Dissolution of the 1530s.



Clifton House, Queen Street



Hanse House, St Margaret's Place



Nos. 6-14 even St James' Street

Of equal significance are the remains of the two priories of which the parish church of St Margaret's is the most obvious. Whilst the present building dates to a 13th century rebuilding, and has been altered since, it sits on the site of the earlier church which was constructed in c1101 and around which the new Benedictine priory was subsequently established. Other surviving remnants of the priory can be seen at Nos. 12-20 consec. Priory Lane. This is a former monastic range which dates to the 15th century and was converted into houses after the Dissolution and then further altered and restored in 1975. After the Dissolution, substantial numbers of other priory buildings in King's Lynn were either demolished or converted for alternative uses. Within Tower Gardens can be seen the last remaining fragment of the Greyfriars priory, founded in c1230. This tall structure was the central tower of the Greyfriars Church and was built in the 15th century on an earlier base. In 1911 a Saxon cross dating to the 9th or 10th century was placed underneath the tower but it has since been moved to King's Lynn Museum for reasons of safety although it is currently (December 2013) being restored off site by specialist conservators. St Margaret's Priory passed to the Dean and Chapter of Norwich Cathedral, successors to the Cathedral Priory, in the 1530s and the property and land remained with the Diocese until 1886. Greyfriars Priory was taken into the ownership of the Crown in the 1530s before eventually being purchased by Lynn Corporation, presumably also in the late 19th century.

The Conservation Area also includes a number of 16th and 17th century buildings of note, some of which were refronted or altered in the 18th or 19th century, so their original date of construction is not evident from

the street. These buildings were in a variety of uses, and include some mid-16th century warehouses in King's Staithe Lane, which appear to have been built to service Clifton House; No. 29 Queen Street, an early 17th house with a late 18th century front; Friarscot in Church Street, another house of c1530; and several houses in Nelson Street, again probably developed on land which was once part of the priory, so post-dating the 1530s. Nos. 2-10 Nelson Street are properties which were acquired by the priory in 1487 and then let out, retaining that status under the Dean and Chapter after the 1530s. Except for Nos. 2-4 they have all been re-fronted or rebuilt in the 18th or 19th centuries.

During the 18th century, Lynn continued as a relatively successful port and the quality and number of the new buildings in the St Margaret's area bears testimony to this. New Assembly Rooms were added to the Guildhall in 1766, and soon afterwards, in 1784, a new gaolhouse, court and prison were built on the adjoining site. A new banking hall was built in 1782 next to Bank House on King's Staithe Square, a possibly late 17th century house which was remodelled and extended in the early 18th century. New warehouses were built, including what is now called the Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse on South Quay. At about the same time, a warehouse which forms the east range to Hanse House was built, possibly when the Hanseatic League sold the property in 1751. Within the immediate vicinity of The Minster, a number of prestigious new houses were built such as Ladybridge House in Nelson Street and No. 25 Queen Street. Clifton House, which had been extended and altered throughout the previous 400 years, was refronted and given an impressive doorcase in 1709.



The Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse, South Quay



Bank House, King's Staithe Square



Nos. 14-20 Nelson Street

This incremental change continued throughout the 19th century, with both new structures being built and existing buildings being refronted or upgraded. Many of the buildings in the High Street, Tower Street and parts of St James' Street appear to date to this period, replacing the buildings shown on the late 17th century map. A new theatre, the Theatre Royal, was built in 1815 on the site in St James' Street now occupied by the Bingo Hall, and in Nelson Street, Nos. 14-20 were built in 1819 and provide one of the few examples of a planned terrace in the Conservation Area.

The coming of the railway in the 1840s encouraged further new investment, such as the construction of The Maltings at the southern end of Nelson Street in 1868, this building supporting the local brewing industry. A new Town Hall was added to the group formed by the Gaolhouse and Guildhall in 1895, the front elevation of the new building carefully mimicking the chequer pattern of the medieval building next door.

At the turn of the 20th century, two very important buildings were constructed – the Carnegie Library in Tower Gardens in 1904 (opened in 1905), and the Burkitt Homes Almshouses in Queen Street, built in 1909. In the 1920s and 1930s there was further development in the area, mainly in the Tower Street/ Tower Place area, with more industrial and commercial buildings. In 1936 the Theatre Royal was demolished following a fire and the current Bingo Hall built in its place as a cinema in 1938. This forms a group with other buildings in the immediate vicinity of a similar age. The Majestic Cinema (1927) in Tower Street and the current Debenhams store in the High Street are further buildings of the same period.

There has been little development in the Conservation Area since the 1930s apart from the Police Station of 1953, some 1960s shops and offices in the High Street and Tower Street, and some new housing in Baker Lane, built in a quadrangle form but centred on the former corn store. This is an eight storey building, now much altered, which probably dates to c1900. There has been further new housing, in a neo-Georgian style, along both the north-western and eastern sides of Queen Street, but the sites are relatively small so the visual impact of these new developments is relatively muted. Hanse House was sold by the County Council in 2012 and is now in private ownership.

4.2 Scheduled monuments

There are two scheduled monuments in the Conservation Area, Greyfriars Tower and the Guildhall. Both of these are also listed Grade I.

4.3 Listed buildings

There are over 90 listed building entries for the St Margaret's Conservation Area. Of these, there are seven entries at Grade I, fifteen entries at Grade II*, and seventy entries at Grade II.

The Grade I listed buildings are:

- Hanse House, St Margaret's Place
- No. 17 (Clifton House) Queen Street
- Nos. 31 and 33 (Thoresby College) Queen Street
- Nos. 1, 3 and 5 (Hampton Court) Nelson Street
- St Margaret's Church, now a Minster
- Trinity Guildhall, Saturday Market Place
- Greyfriars Tower, Tower Gardens

The Grade II* listed buildings are:

- Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Purfleet Place
- Bank House, King's Staithe Square
- No. 25 Queen Street
- No. 29a and 29b Queen Street
- No. 1 St Margaret's Place
- No. 2 St Margaret's Place
- No. 9 Nelson Street
- Nos. 11 and 13 (Burnham House) Nelson Street
- Nos. 15 and 17 Nelson Street
- No. 19 (Oxley House) Nelson Street
- Nos. 17 and 18 Church Street
- Nos. 12-20 consec. Priory Lane
- Marriott's Warehouse, South Quay
- Gaolhouse, Saturday Market Place
- Saxon Cross, now in the King's Lynn Museum

The highest concentration of listed buildings is in the western part of the Conservation Area, facing Queen Street, the Saturday Market Place, Nelson Street and Priory Lane. The listed buildings include late medieval houses and their associated former warehouses, which date to the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries, the Parish Church of St Margaret's, the 15th century Guildhall, the adjoining 18th century Assembly Rooms and Gaolhouse, and the late 19th century Town Hall, which form a group of particular merit. There is also a large number of prestigious houses of the 18th and some of the 19th century, some being a remodeling of earlier structures. Some of these retain particularly good interiors which have been recorded on the list description and are listed Grade II*. More unusual listings include the 19th century cast iron cannon in St Margaret's Lane, which is used as a traffic bollard, and



No. 2 St Margaret's Place



Nos. 17 and 18 Church Street

the Majestic Cinema in Tower Street, a purpose-built cinema of 1927. Further information about individual listed buildings is provided in Chapter 5 Character Areas.



Back of Nos. 12-20 consec. Priory Lane



No. 9 Nelson Street



Nos. 11 and 13 Nelson Street

4.4 Locally listed buildings

There are currently no locally listed buildings in the St Margaret's Conservation Area although the previous Appraisal provided a list of structures which might be considered for local listing. Pending the agreement of an approved list of criteria for local listing by the Council, this Appraisal has identified a number of buildings, marked on the Management Proposals Map, which should be considered for local listing at some stage in the future.

4.5 Positive buildings

The Conservation Area contains a number of unlisted historic buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Most of the 'positive' buildings in the St Margaret's Conservation Area are 19th or early 20th century buildings which retain most or all of their original architectural details and materials. Where these features have been lost or heavily altered, and restoration is not practicable, they are not considered to be 'positive'. Similarly good quality buildings in a derelict state are not considered to be 'positive' although they could be once restored. Together, these buildings make an important contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area and they should be protected from demolition or inappropriate alteration or extension.

4.6 Building styles, materials and colours

The historic buildings in the St Margaret's area are built in a variety of materials, with limestone from Northamptonshire (or further afield) for the early

monastic buildings, Snettisham carstone for priory and later medieval structures, timber-framing for the 14th, 15th and 16th century houses and warehouses, and, from the 15th century onwards, the almost universal use of brick. This must have been encouraged by trade with the Netherlands where brick makers were more advanced in their methods of production, and this knowledge presumably found its way back to King's Lynn via the trade between the two countries. Many of the buildings between South Quay, Queen Street and Nelson Street are therefore built from local bricks – these tend to be long and thin and a deep plum colour.

Building styles vary from late medieval vernacular houses and associated warehouses, built from timber framing, stone or brick, with steeply pitched roofs and small windows, to the more grandiose houses of the 18th or 19th centuries, with more 'polite' Georgian frontages – large sash windows, good quality doorcases, and string courses and cornicing. Very early (15th century) timber-framed structures can be seen in Nelson Street and St James' Street. The former priory buildings in Priory Lane (Nos. 12-20 consec.) date to the mid-15th century and are built using brick with some limestone and carstone. Because many of the older houses in the Conservation Area have been refronted in the 18th or 19th century, visible examples of early doors and windows are limited although there are some very good 17th or early 18th century mullioned and transomed windows in Nelson Street – No. 9 (which also has a late 15th century door) and Nos. 11/13 Burnham House. Some of the timber-framed houses, such as Hampton Court (Nos. 1, 3 and 5 Nelson Street) have been painted in limewash, in this case, a deep orangey-ochre colour.

Handmade clay tiles appear to be the principal roofing material for most of the buildings in the Conservation Area prior to the 19th century, their early use allied to the development of a local brick industry from the 15th century onwards. Thatch would have been prevalent at one time but its use was banned as a safety measure. Curving clay pantiles can be seen on the Sommerfeld and Thomas warehouse, on Thoresby College, on the roofs of the listed buildings facing Church Street, and on the roofs of more secondary buildings such as outbuildings. From the mid-19th century onwards, Welsh slate became more readily available and this led to the roofs having lower pitches. This can be seen more obviously in some of the buildings in the High Street or Tower Street. In some locations, such as Thoresby College, the steeply pitched roofs have dormer windows with long, gently pitched roofs which almost follow the roof line – a typical detail in this part of East Anglia.

4.7 Shopfronts

Twelve well preserved shopfronts in the Conservation Area have been identified which can be found in the Saturday Market Place, St James' Street and Tower Street. These largely date to the late 19th or early 20th century. They are built from timber and retain original features such as moulded front doors, their original moulded window mullions, classically-inspired pilasters and capitals, and moulded cornicing over the fascias. Nos. 2 and 4 St James' Street retains some historic curved glass. Most, but not all, are located in listed buildings so they have additional protection. The future enhancement of shopfronts is considered in the Management Plan.



Rear elevation of Thoresby College



Historic shopfront in the Saturday Market Place



Traditional shopfronts in Tower Street, some of them historic

5 CHARACTER AREAS

These Character Areas have been identified to enable a more detailed analysis of each part of the St Margaret's Conservation Area to be carried out. Each separate area is considered in terms of its location, historical development, the principal buildings, and public realm features. Most importantly the negative features, which will be carried forward into Chapter 6 Issues for the future management of the conservation area have been identified and described. A summary of the special significance of each Character Area is also included.

The seven Character Areas are:

» *Character Area 1:*

Purfleet Place, King's Staithe Square and South Quay

» *Character Area 2:*

Queen Street and Baker Lane

» *Character Area 3:*

The Saturday Market and St Margaret's Place

» *Character Area 4:*

Nelson Street and Priory Lane

» *Character Area 5:*

High Street

» *Character Area 6:*

St James' Street west and Tower Street

» *Character Area 7:*

St James' Street east, Tower Place, Tower Gardens and Millfleet

5.1 Character Area 1: Purfleet Place, King's Staithe Square and South Quay

Location and uses

Purfleet Place and South Quay provide the river frontage to the St Margaret's Conservation Area. To the north, Purfleet Place looks across at Purfleet Quay, the dominant, Grade I listed Custom House and towards King Street, which leads up to the Tuesday Market Place. South Quay is a large open space which forms the western boundary to the Conservation Area and looks out over the River Great Ouse to West Lynn. Of note are the views westwards over the river and glimpses eastwards into the back courts and gardens of the houses which face Queen Street, St Margaret's Place and Nelson Street, although these are often blocked by buildings. Also interesting are the narrow alleyway (King's Staithe Lane) leading to Queen Street, and the historic warehouses, now largely converted into apartments, which line this way through. Uses are mixed, with a hotel in Bank House, a café/restaurant, bar and meeting rooms at Marriott's Warehouse, and in the Hanse House, but with mainly residential for the rest. Other commercial businesses have gradually closed and it appears that residential uses are incrementally becoming the norm.



Corner of King's Staithe Square



King's Staithe Lane



South Quay



South Quay showing view to lookout tower of Clifton House

Historical development

Purfleet Place and King's Staithe Square is shown on the 1686 map but not South Quay which appears to have been created on reclaimed land in the late 19th century, as the map of 1830 shows the warehouses abutting directly onto the river.

Buildings

This part of the Conservation Area retains some early warehouses which connect through to the residential properties facing Queen Street, St Margaret's Place and Nelson Street. The most important buildings are:

» *Bank House Grade II**, and the adjoining former banking hall Grade II

This is a unique group, with a possibly late 17th century house which was extensively altered in the early 18th century, and to which a banking hall was added in 1782. Of note are the very extensive brick-lined cellars. The materials are a deep red brick and the style is Georgian, with a very fine symmetrical façade to the north-facing elevation facing King Staithe Square. The railings are separately listed Grade II.

» *Marriott's Warehouse Grade II**

This was possibly built for the Hanseatic League in the early 14th century using ashlar blocks with a 15th and 16th century upper floor. The list description suggests that it once stood on a small island in the Ouse estuary and was connected to the shore by a short causeway. Originally one storey high, it has been incrementally extended upwards and has a 20th century roof structure.

Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse Grade II

This buff brick three storey building dates to the mid 18th century and retains seven symmetrical bays with loading bays and small casement windows, currently shuttered. The roof is covered in clay pantiles. At the back is a large modern warehouse, concealing sixteen metres of early walling to the Hampton Court warehouse of the 16th century with a blocked two light window.

Public realm

The whole area was comprehensively re-landscaped in around 2000 as described in Chapter 3. Some traditional paving remains in King's Staithe Square, King's Staithe Lane, College Lane and St Margaret's Lane.

Significance/special interest

- Attractive location on the banks of the River Great Ouse with notable views westwards over the river and eastwards over the rooftops to the towers of The Minster and the lookout tower to Clifton House
- Historic quay although most of South Quay was built on reclaimed land in the 19th century
- Comprehensive landscaping scheme has provided simple but robust public realm features
- Glimpses to the backs of the mainly listed buildings and former warehouses facing Queen Street, St Margaret's Place and Nelson Street

- Key buildings are Bank House, Marriott's Warehouse and the former Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse
- King's Staithe Lane, College Lane, St Margaret's Lane and Devil's Alley retain the character of medieval alleyways and are closely contained by mainly historic buildings

Negative features

- The Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse is vacant, boarded up and at risk
- The adjoining site, once the location of historic buildings which have been demolished, is in need of sensitive redevelopment
- Devil's Alley, which passes through this site, should be upgraded as part of any new development
- A certain amount of traffic, some of it looking for parking spaces along South Quay
- Some 20th century development, somewhat over-scaled for the setting

5.2 Character Area 2: Queen Street and Baker Lane

Location and uses

Queen Street is a long curving street which connects King Street, the Millfleet and the Saturday Market Place. It appears to be entirely in residential uses. The car park in Baker Lane is owned by the Council.



Door to Thoresby College



Door to Clifton House, No. 17 Queen Street

Historical development

The street is one of the earliest in Lynn and probably dates to the early 12th century. The earliest structure in the street is provided by the mid-14th century undercroft to Clifton House, which retains some 13th century features. Historic maps show built-up frontages on both sides, but on the east side this has largely been lost with some late 19th and early 20th century development, followed by late 20th century housing.



Entrance to Queen Street from the Saturday market Place



Nos. 22, 24 and 26 Queen Street

Buildings

Queen Street retains some very high quality houses on the west side of the street, some listed Grade I or II*. Whilst some of these were built as new buildings in the 18th century, some are refronted or altered buildings of much earlier date. These include:

» No. 17 (Clifton House) Queen Street Grade I

Clifton House is the finest of all of the houses in the Conservation Area and its history is closely linked to the 16th century warehouse which lies between it and the river along King's Staithe Lane, which has now been converted into apartments. The house was built as two hall houses partly over an undercroft, sections of which date to the 13th century. There were later alterations in the 16th and 17th century, and then a major upgrading in 1709 when the present barley-twist columns were added to create a new more prestigious entrance. Whilst the frontage is apparently early 18th century, there is much earlier fabric inside. A particular feature is the Elizabethan brick look-out tower, the only surviving example in Lynn. This is a major feature in views towards Lynn from West Lynn.

» No. 25 Queen Street listed Grade II*

No. 25 is a fine mid-18th century house with a good interior including the original staircase. It is built from brown brick with red brick dressings and has Georgian sash windows to the street and a timber modillion eaves cornice.

» Nos. 29a and 29b Queen Street listed Grade II*

This building dates to the early 17th century on an earlier plot and has a mid-18th century frontage to Queen Street. An extensive warehouse range dating

to c1650 originally ran westwards towards the quay and then back again slightly to the south to form a courtyard. This was partly demolished in 1982 leaving the range closest to the river free-standing. The present plan follows the medieval layout with a street front which probably had a shop with a chamber over it, and a hall one side with a kitchen and solar on the other.

» *Thoresby College Grade I*

Thoresby College was built in 1511 to house thirteen chantry priests attached to the Trinity Guild. The structure is two storeys high and is faced in orange brick with quadrangle plan form. Although the Queen Street elevation has 18th century sashes, the timber front door is original and has tracery decoration and a smaller pedestrian door within it. The conversion of the building to residential uses in 1964 has resulted in a high degree of alteration.

Public realm

The pavements are covered with concrete slabs with wide granite kerbs, and the street lights are fixed directly to the buildings. Obtrusive 'no parking' yellow lines have been added on both sides of the carriageway due to the narrowness of the road.

Significance/special interest

- Queen Street is an attractive gently curving road of probably 12th century origins, connecting the Saturday Market Place to the Tuesday Market Place
- Continuous frontages of listed buildings (four listed at Grade I or II*) on the west side without any front gardens

- The survival of a number of medieval merchants' houses and warehousing, the most important of which is Clifton House which retains some 13th century fabric
- Thoresby College is early 16th century in date and is built around a quadrangle
- Burkitt's Almshouses on the east side of Queen Street are early 20th century Gothic, with notable frontage railings
- The former granary in Baker Lane car park has been imaginatively converted into new housing as part of the adjoining residential development

Negative features

- The concrete paving slabs, modern street lights, and wide yellow 'no parking' lines would all benefit from improvements
- The Baker Lane car park to the east of Queen Street would benefit from general enhancements including improvements to the rear boundaries of the properties which are located around it

5.3 Character Area 3: The Saturday Market Place and St Margaret's Place

Location and uses

This forms the centre of the medieval town although today commercial activity is more focused in the Tuesday Market Place and the modern Vancouver

Shopping Centre to the north. The buildings around the church are now in very mixed uses with some shops, a small hotel, some houses and some restaurants or public houses.

Historical development

The first church was built in c1101 and Benedictine priory was first established soon afterwards. The church was rebuilt in the 13th century and then altered and rebuilt at several later stages. A market charter was granted at the same time so there must have been markets (and therefore buildings) around the church from an early date. Apart from the church, the next earliest building is the Guildhall of 1421. Other buildings on the north side date to the 18th and 19th centuries. On the west side, the continuation of Queen Street is called St Margaret's Place, and this contains buildings of which the earliest dates to the late 15th century (No. 1).

Buildings

This Character Area contains six buildings listed at Grade I and II*, the highest concentration in the Conservation Area. The principal building complex is provided by the group on the north-west side of Saturday Market Place comprising the Town Hall, Assembly Rooms, Trinity Guildhall, and the Gaolhouse, of which the last two are listed Grade I or II*. On the west side of St Margaret's Place are four buildings, all listed, of which three are listed Grade I or II*. St Margaret's Church (now a Minster) itself is listed Grade I.



St Margaret's Church "The Minster"



Saturday Market Place to east of junction with the High Street



The Trinity Guildhall

» *Town Hall Grade II*

The Town Hall was built in 1895 by Tree and Price of London. The building is faced in stone and flint in a chequer-pattern to mimic the adjoining Guildhall, and has a slate roof and cupola above providing a focal point. The style is Elizabethan and Gothic Revival.

» *Trinity Guildhall Grade I*

The Guildhall was completed in 1428 when the first stage, to provide a meeting hall above a store, was completed. It was built by the Trinity Guild, formed by local merchants to further their business interests. In 1624 a second building was added to the west of a smaller footprint to provide a new entrance and further offices. The earlier section has a tall Perpendicular window facing the street, and the later section has a central entrance with stone embellishment including the coat of arms of Queen Elizabeth I. Of note is the flint and stone chequer-work on both fronts which were copied by the designers of the adjoining Town Hall.

» *Assembly Rooms Grade II*

The Assembly Rooms were added to the Guildhall in 1768 in gault brick. The relatively plain exterior of the building can only be seen from the Baker Lane car park, and is two storeys high and five bays long.

» *The Gaolhouse Grade II**

The Gaolhouse was built in 1784 to the immediate east of the Guildhall as a courthouse and prison, and now houses offices and a small museum. It has a three storeys high gault brick elevation facing the Market Place with ashlar dressings, under a plain tiled roof. The symmetrical building has rusticated quoins and string

courses between each floor; and a central rusticated entrance bay rising two storeys high and ending in a pediment.

» *St Margaret's Church "The Minster" Grade I*

A church was built soon after 1101 when the first Benedictine priory was established, but this was rebuilt in the 13th century and has a mainly 15th century limestone exterior. The central lantern and south-west spire collapsed in 1741 after which there was a large amount of internal rebuilding between 1745 and 1746. The building was restored by Scott in 1875. The twin west towers are one of Lynn's most notable landmarks.

» *No. 1 St Margaret's Place listed Grade II**

The oldest part faces College Lane and dates to the 15th century and has a mid-17th century gable facing the Market Place. The adjoining elevation has symmetrical Georgian frontage, five bays wide with tall sash windows and a centrally placed front door with an Ionic doorcase and fanlight. This building is used as offices and fronts a very large Magistrates' Court and associated offices which date to the early 1980s and which fronts (or rather backs) onto South Quay.

» *No. 2 St Margaret's Place Grade II**

No. 2 is a 17th century two storey building with low eaves and a pitched roof facing the Market Place, with 18th century sash windows. The undulating brickwork laid in English bond on the front elevation suggests its earlier date as does the large entrance on the right which leads through to a rear courtyard. Recent repairs have exposed some timber framing and a large chimney stack which may suggest an even earlier date.

» *St Margaret's Vicarage, St Margaret's Place Grade II*

Whilst only listed Grade II, this early 19th century building is a notable building within the Conservation Area partly because it has a side garden with planting and trees which are partly visible from the street, and because it has very well detailed and symmetrical elevations in a plum coloured brick with Georgian details and a slate roof. The tall boundary wall is separately listed.

» *Hanse House, St Margaret's Place listed Grade I*

This very substantial building was built as a warehouse and domestic quarters around a quadrangle in c1475 as the Hanseatic Steelyard, although the east range which was the domestic quarters and faced St Margaret's Place (St Margaret's House) was rebuilt in the mid-18th century, possibly when the Hanseatic League sold the building. It was restored in 1970 and converted into offices for Norfolk County Council. The structure is timber-framed and brick with clay pantiles to the roof.

Public realm

There is traditional pebble paving around the north side of the church, and some areas of York stone to the access pathways. Otherwise the pavements are narrow and covered in concrete slabs. The street lights are modern lamps fixed to the buildings. Modern steel bollards are well designed and in keeping. The church is flood-lit at night.

Significance/special interest

- This Character Area represents the earliest planned development of King's Lynn in 1101 when the Benedictine priory was established



The Vicarage, St Margaret's Place



Nos. 1 and 2 Nelson Street

- Outstanding collection of historic buildings in a very small area, several listed Grade I or II*
- The focal point created by The Minster (listed Grade I) and its churchyard
- The tightly packed buildings on the backs of the pavements, with very few visible gardens or trees apart from the trees and grass to the south side of The Minster
- The Guildhall, Gaolhouse and Town Hall make a major contribution to the setting of the church and to the quality of the spaces around the church
- The Guildhall is a scheduled monument and is listed Grade I

Negative features

- The parked cars in the Saturday Market Place, adversely affecting the setting of the Guildhall and The Minster
- The parked cars in the informal parking area within the churchyard to the south of the Church
- The busy traffic through the Saturday Market Place
- The poor quality surfaces to the parking area around the Church
- The poor quality pavements
- Some of the buildings facing the Saturday Market Place are in need of repair or maintenance
- Some poor quality shopfronts

5.4 Character Area 4: Nelson Street and Priory Lane

Location and uses

Nelson Street and Priory Lane form the south-west corner of the Conservation Area, immediately to the south of The Minster. The southern boundary is provided by the Millfleet.

Historical development

Much of the land between Nelson Street and The Minster formed part of the land of the Benedictine priory as confirmed by the surviving buildings in Priory Lane. The buildings between Nelson Street and the river date to the early 14th century onwards with some particularly fine examples of 18th century town houses. The close location of the Maltings (parts of which are dated 1868) to these prestigious houses in Nelson Street suggests that by the late 19th century, this part of the town had lost its social standing, a decline which clearly continued well into the middle of the 20th century when Hampton Court was saved from ruin by a local benefactor and the King's Lynn Preservation Trust.

Buildings

The largest and most prestigious houses, many of medieval origins, lie on the west side of Nelson Street between the street and the river. The houses on the east side are more modest and mainly date to the late 18th or 19th century although many are earlier buildings which have been refronted. Nos. 2-4 are the best preserved with jettied frontages. Nos. 14-20

Nelson Street (dated 1819) are unusual in that they provide the only example in the Conservation Area of a cohesive terrace built as a whole. Priory Lane is notable for the surviving range from the priory (Nos. 12-20 consec.) which dates to the mid-15th century.

» Nos. 1, 2 and 3 (Hampton Court) Grade I

Hampton Court is named after the 17th century baker John Hampton and is a four range structure arranged around a courtyard with four distinct building periods. The earliest part of the building is the south range which dates to the early 14th century and contained the hall. The west wing was probably built as a warehouse and faced the river but by the 17th century the river had receded and the building was converted into a house. The east wing is timber-framed and jettied, and investigations have confirmed that it was probably built with ground floor shops facing the street. This has now been limewashed a bright orangey-ochre colour. The north wing appears to date to the 17th century when the whole complex was modernised. The different elements of the building are built in stone,



No. 19 Nelson Street (Oxley House)

timber-framing and brick, with plain tiled roofs. The building fell into dereliction and was purchased by a local benefactor who restored two of the four ranges in the late 1950s, the other two being completed by the King's Lynn Preservation Trust in 1960. In 1962 it was converted into flats.

» No. 9 Nelson Street Grade II*

This is another building which was probably once built around a courtyard although only the street front remains. It dates to the late 15th century although it was extensively rebuilt in the 19th century. Whilst the original structure was probably timber-framed, the frontage today retains a gault brick ground floor with a rendered (and jettied) first floor. The steeply pitched tiled roof, first floor 17th century mullioned and transomed windows, and 19th century sash windows with their original shutters behind are all of note. The very fine late 15th century door is highly decorated and retains an image of a pelican – the town's badge at the time. It is now a solicitors' office.



Nos. 12-20 consec. Priory Lane

» *Nos. 11 and 13 (Burnham House) Nelson Street with attached walls Grade II**

Now two properties, this building was a courtyard plan structure of the late 15th century which was divided at an early date and remodelled in c1700. The first floor is brick, with similar brick to the ground floor of No. 11 only, this brick being moulded at first floor level. No. 13 has a painted plaster ground floor. The windows are a mixture of mullioned and transomed windows with leaded lights of c1700 and probably slightly later sashes, plus one small casement. There are doorcases to both of a similar date, and a carriage entrance on the south end which leads through to Devil's Alley and on to South Quay. Although not obvious from Nelson Street, the buildings retain many features of the original build including a 15th century basket arch to the west end of the carriage way.

» *Nos. 15 and 17 Nelson Street Grade II**

This building dates possibly to the 17th century but was heavily rebuilt and refronted in c1740. The front elevation is a tall and impressive three storeys high and six bays wide, so the grand stone-lined Tuscan doorcase is off-centre. Each corner is defined by rusticated stone quoins which match the doorcase. The ground floor windows are rather odd nine over six sashes. The roof is concealed by a brick parapet over a modillion eaves cornice.

» *No. 19 (Oxley House) Nelson Street Grade II**

Whilst the front of this high status house dates to the early 18th century, the building behind it retains elements of the 17th century. The painted two storey front is symmetrical, with a central entrance defined

by engaged Doric columns supporting a segmental parapet and containing a six panelled door. This is reflected in the small pediment above which rises out of a timber modillion eaves cornice. Inside, there are features of the 17th century such as a plank and muntin screen and parts of an attic staircase.

» *The Maltings, Nelson Street Grade II*

This was a maltings and warehouse and part of it is dated 1868. It is two or sometimes three storeys high and is built from the local brick, parts of which are painted. It was converted into flats and offices in the 1980s.

» *Ladybridge House, Nelson Street Grade II*

This building retains early 18th century features with additions of the mid to late 18th century. It is built from brown brick with red brick dressings, is two storeys high and four bays wide. The front door is framed by a timber doorcase comprising a pair of engaged fluted Roman Doric columns supporting an open pediment above a frieze. The garden wall, a major feature as Nelson Street curves around to join Church Street, is separately listed Grade II. Ladybridge House is important as one of the area's few purpose-built (rather than rebuilt) houses of this period.

» *Nos. 2 to 4 Nelson Street Grade II**

This building, once a shop and a public house, is now a private dwelling. It forms part of a longer group of houses which were purchased by the priory in 1487 with sitting tenants and then let out. This use is confirmed in a document of 1532. The structure is timber-framed with some brick, now rendered and

colour washed. The first floor jetty facing Nelson Street is a particular feature with a covered underside which hangs out over the pavement. The north-west corner reveals a dragon post at first floor level with a carved screen, possibly representing the Annunciation, to the inside. The roof is covered in plain clay tiles.

» *Nos. 12-20 consec. Priory Lane Grade II**

This once formed part of the monastic range belonging to the Benedictine priory of St Margaret. The building probably dates originally to the 14th century but the accounts of 1445-48 record the construction of new hall. The building was altered in the 18th century to provide a number of small cottages – this use being confirmed by a map dating to the 1840s. The group was again altered and restored by the Preservation Trust in 1973-4 to provide just six dwellings. The two storey external elevations are mainly brick with some ashlar and carstone, and the roof is covered in plain clay tiles. Most of the windows are 20th century.

» *Nos. 17 and 18 Church Street Grade II**

Located a few yards from the end of Nos. 12-20 Priory Lane, this is a building of similar provenance and dates to c1470. It appears to have been subdivided after the Dissolution and was refaced in the 18th century but retains 14th century elements to the rear. No. 18 is two storeys high, with a painted frontage, 19th century sashes, and a tall steeply pitched pantiled roof. No. 17 is wider, with a similar roof but with 18th century sashes and a simple probably early 19th century doorcase.

Public realm

Nelson Street: This retains large concrete slab pavements and wide granite kerbs. Street lights are generally fixed to the buildings, but the circular lantern outside Hampton Court is incongruous. There are wide yellow 'no parking' lines. Part of Devil's Alley is paved in traditional granite setts, but the rest is modern concrete.

Priory Lane: This retains a similar palette with large concrete slabs, wide tooled granite kerbs, and modern street lights fixed to the buildings.

Church Street: The pavements are made up from small concrete slabs with red granite narrow kerbs, and the standard modern street lights which can be seen throughout the town.

Significance/special interest

- Winding narrow streets with enclosed views although there are glimpses through small openings towards the river to the west
- Nearly all of the buildings are listed or considered to make a positive contribution
- Part of this Character Area lies over the site of the Benedictine priory, and this is confirmed by the survival of the former monastic range dating to the mid-15th century which survives in Priory Lane and has now been converted into residential accommodation

- Overall, a very high concentration of medieval buildings listed Grade I or II* including former merchants' houses and warehouses
- Hampton Court is the only quadrangle development with elements dating to the early 14th century
- The Maltings provides an unusually large and complete example of a late 19th century brewery complex, although the buildings have now been converted into apartments or offices

Negative features

This part of the Conservation Area is particularly well preserved and cared for, so there are few issues to resolve apart from:

- The poor condition of Devil's Alley and the site at the western end of it towards South Quay
- Improvements to the concrete slab pavement would be welcome, but the granite kerbs must be kept
- Possible improvements to the NCP car park off Church Street such as additional planting and better quality boundaries
- Residents report that repairs are needed to parts of Nos. 12-20 consec. Priory Lane

5.5 Character Area 5: High Street

Location and uses

The High Street runs parallel to Queen Street and King Street and connects the Saturday Market Place to the Tuesday Market Place. The modern shopping centre, the Vancouver Quarter, lies to the east of the more northerly part of the High Street. The southerly section of the High Street only lies within the St Margaret's Conservation Area and nearly all of the buildings are in retail, finance or similar commercial uses. Debenhams is a key contributor to the vitality of the street, occupying a wide frontage on the east side with rear access from the Regent Way car park behind.

Historical development

The High Street is shown on the late 17th century map and must have medieval origins, due to its role in connecting the two market places. However, none of the buildings in this part of the High Street are any older than the early 19th century, possibly because the commercial uses have resulted in a greater degree of change.

Buildings

This section of the High Street retains only six listed buildings, as well as some unlisted buildings dating to the late 19th or early 20th century which are considered to be suitable for local listing including the former Hogshead Public House, dating to 1898. The styles, ages, materials and quality of the buildings are very varied with some poor quality 20th century additions.



High Street



High Street



The southern end of the High Street

Of the listed buildings, the following are considered to be the most noteworthy:

» *Nos. 102 and 103 b High Street Grade II*

Nos. 102 and 103b comprise a 13 bay two storey block built from gault brick in the early 19th century. Although the composition is not readily evident, the central seven bays project forward. It is now four different units with varied shopfronts, some of them discordant in their visual impact.

» *Nos. 1 and 2 High Street Grade II*

Nos. 1 and 2 dated 1816 and are built from gault brick with slate roofs and well designed shopfronts, parts of which date to the early 20th century. These buildings turn the corner into the Saturday Market Place so they are particularly important.

Public realm

Overall, the public realm in this part of the Conservation Area is poor. The street has been pedestrianised in the past, but the concrete paviors and concrete block paving



The High Street looking north

(Tegula) is in poor condition and needs upgrading. There are small amounts of historic granite kerbs, which should be retained or reused in any enhancement scheme. The 1960s planters and bicycle racks also need to be replaced. The litter bins are standard bins painted the King's Lynn sage green. The street lights are mixed but include cast iron historic standards painted sage green with modern, probably 1960s lanterns, which are not unattractive.

Significance/special interest

- Historic route lined with buildings of mixed ages and quality
- Some good quality late 18th or 19th century buildings, several of them listed Grade II
- A few of the unlisted but positive buildings may be of sufficient interest to merit local listing

Negative features

- Some vacant buildings at risk, namely the former Hogshead Public House
- Poor quality public realm
- Garish and poorly designed modern shopfronts
- Underused or vacant upper floors
- Redundant signage and wiring on the buildings
- Poor quality security shutters
- Some very poor quality infill development, probably of the 1960s

5.6 Character Area 6: St James' Street west and Tower Street

Location and uses

St James' Street links the east end of the Saturday Market Place with Tower Gardens and the London Road. Uses are mainly commercial on the ground floors although there are flats over many of the shops. There are also the RAOB Social Club, a public house (the White Hart), several hairdressers, a launderette, and a shop specialising in produce from Eastern Europe. Tower Street leads northwards and connects St James' Street to the modern shopping centre (Vancouver Quarter). Most of the buildings are shops with flats above.

Historical development

St James' Street is a medieval route which once led to the Greyfriars priory. It retains one group of buildings dating to the mid-15th century although the majority of the buildings date to the 19th century or later. Tower Street retains one timber-framed listed building of the late 15th century (No. 21) and one late 18th century house (No. 29 – Whincop House) which might be 17th century in origin, otherwise the buildings are largely of the 19th century with some modern infill.

Buildings

The quality of the buildings is very mixed with some Grade II listed buildings grouped with a number of reasonable quality 19th century buildings, most of which are considered to be positive in their contribution. Nos. 9 and 11 Tower Street retain some attractive

shopfronts, based on historic precedent, which could be copied elsewhere. Original historic shopfronts can also be seen in St James' Street. Virtually the whole of the south side of this part of St James' Street is listed.

The most important listed buildings are:

» Nos. 6-14 even St James' Street Grade II

These are the most significant buildings in this Character Area. Dating to the mid-15th century they appear to have been built as shops, with a small ground floor room to the street with an unheated solar or chamber above. Although they have been much altered, they provide a rare example of this building type. Although the timber-frame is largely concealed by later external plaster, the jettied front suggests their original method of construction.

» The Majestic Cinema, Tower Street Grade II

This was built in 1927 in a freely interpreted mix of Jacobethan and Baroque details, using brick with reconstituted stone. The corner clock tower is a major landmark in the area.

» No. 21 Tower Street Grade II

This was built in the late 15th century as a house and possibly had a shop at ground floor level, similar to the properties in St James' Street and also with a jettied front. The building was extensively restored in the 1980s.

» No. 29 (Whincop House) Tower Street

This mid-18th century house has a possibly 17th century core. It is built from dark red brick with a plain tile roof. Four bays wide, the front door is not symmetrical but retains a high quality panelled front door and the original mid-18th century doorcase with Corinthian pilasters and a delicate cast iron fanlight.



St James' Street west end



St James' Street west end towards the Saturday Market Place



The White Hart, St James' Street west



Tower Street



No. 21 Tower Street

Public realm

St James' Street: This retains very narrow pavements covered in large concrete slabs with narrow granite kerbs. The street lights fixed to the buildings. Parking is meant to be controlled by single yellow lines during the day but short-term parking appears to be popular.

Tower Street: Tower Street has been pedestrianised and repaved using concrete paviors and slabs. The overall effect is relatively simple and robust. The granite kerbs have been reused but not in situ. Street lights are modern and fixed to the buildings. There are standard litter bins, painted sage green, and some reproduction park seats, painted black. There are brick planters, possibly of the 1960s.

Significance/special interest

- Both streets are historic routes but their back boundaries are now contained by modern car parking
- St James' Street connects the Saturday Market Place to the site of the former Greyfriars priory, so the route must be of medieval origins
- It retains one group of particularly important Grade II listed buildings, Nos. 6-14 even, which are timber framed and were built as small shops in the late 15th century
- Over half of the buildings in this street are listed, but there has been some demolition and rebuilding
- There are some historic shopfronts as well as well detailed modern versions

- Tower Street has only three listed buildings, one of which dates to the late 15th century, but is otherwise lined with mainly 19th century houses with ground floor shops

Negative features

- Poor quality shopfronts, mainly in Tower Street
- The planters and street lights in Tower Street need replacing
- Some derelict buildings, particularly in St James' Street (Nos. 9-11)
- The backs of many of the buildings in St James' Street and Tower Street are easily visible from the public car parks and show a general need for repairs and improvements
- Tower Street has been bisected by the route of Regent Way, built in the mid-20th century to provide access to the backs of the properties in St James' Street and to the public car park



Whincop House, Tower Street

5.7 Character Area 7: St James' Street east, Tower Place, Tower Gardens and Millfleet

Location

This part of the Conservation Area forms the extreme south-east corner of the original medieval settlement. St James' Street has both retail and residential uses with some offices. Tower Place is in similarly mixed uses with a small garage and other commercial uses as well as two residential cottages. Millfleet retains an early 20th century school, now extended and used as a youth training centre. Tower Gardens is a pleasant public park which provides the Conservation Area with its only example of a 'green' public open space. The Carnegie Public Library is the main library for King's Lynn.

Historical development

St James' Street led originally to the Greyfriars priory, and, in the 18th century, to the workhouse which was located on the edge of town but within the town walls. The Greyfriars priory was established by Franciscan monks in the 13th century but was dissolved by Henry VIII in the 1530s. The only remaining feature is the former central tower of their church, now a repaired and consolidated ruin within Tower Gardens. This is listed Grade I and is a scheduled monument. The Carnegie Public Library was built facing London Road in 1904 and opened in 1905. The Gardens were created in 1911 to commemorate the coronation of King George V, and the three stone arches were erected at the same time from a demolition site in the Tuesday Market Place. Previously this block of land appears to have been almost vacant apart from the tower itself and the former Theatre Royal, dating to 1813, which

was demolished in 1936 following a fire and a new cinema built on the site which is now used as a Bingo Hall. A War Memorial was erected in Tower Gardens in 1921 and is now listed Grade II. Other Inter-war properties, some in commercial uses, stand nearby in Tower Place. The Gardens were relandscaped and upgraded in 2006.

An interesting feature, but outside the Conservation Area boundary, is the small Jewish cemetery on the south side of Millfleet, which has Grade II listed 16th and 18th century walls.



St James' Street east, north side



Tower Place



Greyfriars Tower and the War Memorial, Tower Gardens



The southern edge of the Conservation Area faces Millfleet



Detail of the Carnegie Library facing London Road

Buildings

None of the terrace of properties along the north side of St James' Street is listed but most of them are considered to make a positive contribution. Nos. 33-39 date to 1908. Currently vacant, this could be an imposing addition to the streetscene if carefully detailed. Beyond, Nos. 41-55 odd are a mixed group of 19th century building some of which may be earlier although the front facades have been altered. Some of these are in very poor condition. The Police Station lies on the adjoining corner and is a fine 1953 building which is almost unaltered and has neo-Georgian elevations typical of the period.

The most important buildings are as follows:

» *The Greyfriars Tower, Tower Gardens listed Grade I and a scheduled monument*

This dates to c1230 and was built as the central crossing tower of the Church of St Francis Priory of the Greyfriars Order. It was enlarged in c1300, but recent restoration revealed that the tower is a late 15th century (not late 14th century as quoted in the list description) addition to an earlier base. It is built using brick and carstone with ashlar dressings. The tower is notable for being the best surviving example Mendicant tower in the country exhibiting the under-tower north-south passage, with the exception of St Andrew's Church, Norwich.

» *Cross formerly beneath Greyfriars Tower Grade II**

Although it has been described as dating to the 13th century, the list description suggests that it is Saxon and dates to the 9th or possibly the 10th century. The stone

cross bears images of Christ on both sides. It has now been moved to King's Lynn Museum for safe-keeping.

» *Stone arches in Tower Gardens Grade II*

These three stone arches were removed from a 14th century house which faced the Tuesday Market Place until it was demolished in the early 20th century. They were rebuilt in the Gardens when the Gardens were laid out in 1911 and are built from flint and carstone with ashlar dressings.

» *War Memorial, Tower Gardens Grade II*

The War Memorial was designed by Oswald Milne and retains the names of men killed in both World Wars. It was first erected in Tower Gardens in 1921.

» *Carnegie Library Grade II*

This was built in 1904 to the designs of Herbert Green. The exterior is faced in cut carstone and red brick with terracotta dressings, and the roofs are tiled. It was largely financed by the American millionaire Andrew Carnegie who unusually attended the opening ceremony on 18 May 1905. The style is Gothic with Arts and Crafts influence.

Public realm

The pavements in this part of the Conservation Area are faced in large concrete slabs with narrow granite kerbs. The street lighting is provided by lanterns fixed to the building, or, in Millfleet, by tall steel standards. Tower Gardens is a notable public open space with well maintained hard and soft landscaping and a number of mature trees.

Significance/special interest

- Site of the former Greyfriars priory, of which only the tower of the church remains as the principal focal point in Tower Gardens
- The tower is a scheduled monument and listed Grade I
- Tower Gardens is an attractive public park with some mature trees which dates to 1911 – it has recently (2006) been upgraded and improved and now provides the only public green space in the Conservation Area
- Mixed early 20th century development along Tower Place and Millfleet
- Some interesting but unlisted 19th century buildings along the north side of St James' Street
- Other significant buildings are the Carnegie Library (Grade II) and the Police Station of 1953
- The Bingo Hall, built as a cinema in 1938, has the potential to make a much more positive contribution to the special interest of the area

Negative features

- Some vacant commercial properties
- The poor condition of some of the buildings on the north side of St James' Street
- The Bingo Hall needs some improvements
- Some poor quality Inter-war buildings in Tower Place
- Busy traffic along Millfleet, which is a dual carriageway

6 ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Based on the negative features identified in the Character Area analysis, the following issues are considered to be the most important matters to be addressed in the St Margaret's Conservation Area Management Plan:

6.1 Conservation Area boundary review

A number of small changes are proposed to the existing conservation area boundary so that the boundary more adequately reflects the area of special architectural or historic interest. These are detailed in the Management Plan.

6.2 The buildings of the Conservation Area

Statutory and local list review

The statutory list for the St Margaret's Conservation Area has been drawn up after detailed research including site inspections. This suggests that there is little need for further additions to the statutory list.

However, some of the unlisted buildings which are considered to be 'positive' are of particular merit and quality and pending the agreement of a list of criteria for local listing, a number of suggestions are included in the Management Plan for local listing which should be confirmed at a later date.

The control of unlisted buildings

There is already an Article 4 direction in force in the entire King's Lynn Conservation Area which covers alterations to unlisted family dwellings. This brings under planning control a number of minor changes which would otherwise be considered 'permitted development'. The scope for revising this direction, and the implications for property owners in the St Margaret's Conservation Area, is set out in the Management Plan.

6.3 Building condition, economic vitality and the role of grant aid

It has been noted that in various locations within the St Margaret's Conservation Area, buildings are vacant, poorly maintained, or in several cases, actually derelict. These tend to be commercial buildings in the eastern side of the Conservation Area, as the residential properties in the western side are generally well maintained and cared for. The influence of the large Vancouver Shopping Centre to the north of the Conservation Area has not always been positive in that it has drawn shoppers away from the shops in the Saturday Market Place, St James' Street, the southern part of the High Street, and Tower Street. The lack of a 'draw' and the poor visual appearance of some of the buildings in these streets is also affecting footfall adversely. Grant aid could reverse this decline but needs to be focused on the most visually important buildings and sites.

6.4 The protection of property boundaries and spatial qualities

Whilst the majority of buildings in the Conservation Area butt up to the back of the pavement, so there are no front boundaries, the rear boundaries are highly visible in a number of locations due to the intrusion of the modern public car parks. These buildings are mainly in low key commercial uses and many of them are severely neglected, which is obvious when the backs of the properties are seen from the public domain. Policies and actions to improve and enhance these privately owned boundaries are included in the Management Plan.

6.5 The public realm

The public realm varies throughout the Conservation Area. In the western side, there is good quality paving, street lighting and street furniture along South Quay and in King's Staithe Square and Purfleet Place. There has been some rationalisation of design and colour, such as the use of the sage green finger posts, sage green litter bins, and plain well designed street nameplates. Some very high quality traditional paving also remains in some of the narrow lanes which connect South Quay eastwards into the Conservation Area, as well as around The Minster.

However, parts of the Conservation Area, particularly the Saturday Market Place, High Street, Tower Street and St James' Street, would benefit from the removal of out-dated 1960s details and better quality paving and street lighting. Using the local community to carry out a public realm audit, identify issues, and suggest ways of improving the public spaces between the buildings, could be considered.

6.6 Traffic, parking and pedestrian management

Traffic flow around the Conservation Area is already limited by one way systems, but the availability of free parking spaces on South Quay has resulted in the generation of additional traffic as car owners search for unused spaces. Traffic therefore circulates up South Quay and back down Queen Street looking for parking spaces. Parking around The Minster is also in urgent need of review, as the current arrangement has a seriously adverse effect on the setting of the adjoining listed buildings and the general ambiance of the area. More pedestrian-only areas, or shared surfaces, might be advisable. In addition, there is little provision for cyclists and the roads tend to be dominated by cars. Overall, improving pedestrian flows, providing safer routes for bicycles, upgrading the quality of the pavements, controlling traffic, and reducing on-street car parking (where this impacts on pedestrians) could all be considered.

6.7 Sites and buildings for enhancement

A number of buildings and sites for improvement have been identified which are described in greater detail in the Management Plan. Whilst some of these are unlikely to happen without the use of grant aid, others might be achieved by general encouragement, the setting of higher design standards (for instance, with shopfronts) and by, where necessary, the use of enforcement action including the use of Section 215 Notices, Urgent Works Notices, and full Repairs Notices.

6.8 Advertising and shopfronts

Whilst the Conservation Area retains a number of well designed and well maintained traditional shopfronts, some of them historic, a large number of commercial premises have discordant, garish and poor designed shopfronts which could incrementally be improved as opportunities for their replacement present themselves. The adoption of detailed shopfront guidance would assist in the Council's control over these changes.

6.9 The design of new development

New development should be sympathetic to its context in terms of its scale, materials and details. It should also follow the existing pattern or grain of development, not obstruct important views, and not dominate buildings in the immediate vicinity. The uses within these new buildings should also be suitable for the area.

Whilst the St Margaret's Conservation Area is bounded by the River Great Ouse on one side, and by buildings or roads on the others, it still forms part of the cohesive whole which represents the town centre of King's Lynn. Although it has a distinct character created by its riverside location, the narrow winding medieval streets, and the very high quality of many of the buildings, this character could be threatened by poor quality development within it or around its edges. Opportunities for new development must be considered carefully and the effect of new buildings on the setting of the Conservation Area, and on views both into it and out of it, particularly taken into account.

6.10 Monitoring and community involvement

This document has been drafted following survey work in early October 2013 and is not intended to be exhaustive, so the omission of any particular feature or issue does not mean that it is of no importance. The early involvement of the local community has also been ensured by a walkabout with local stakeholders in late October 2013.

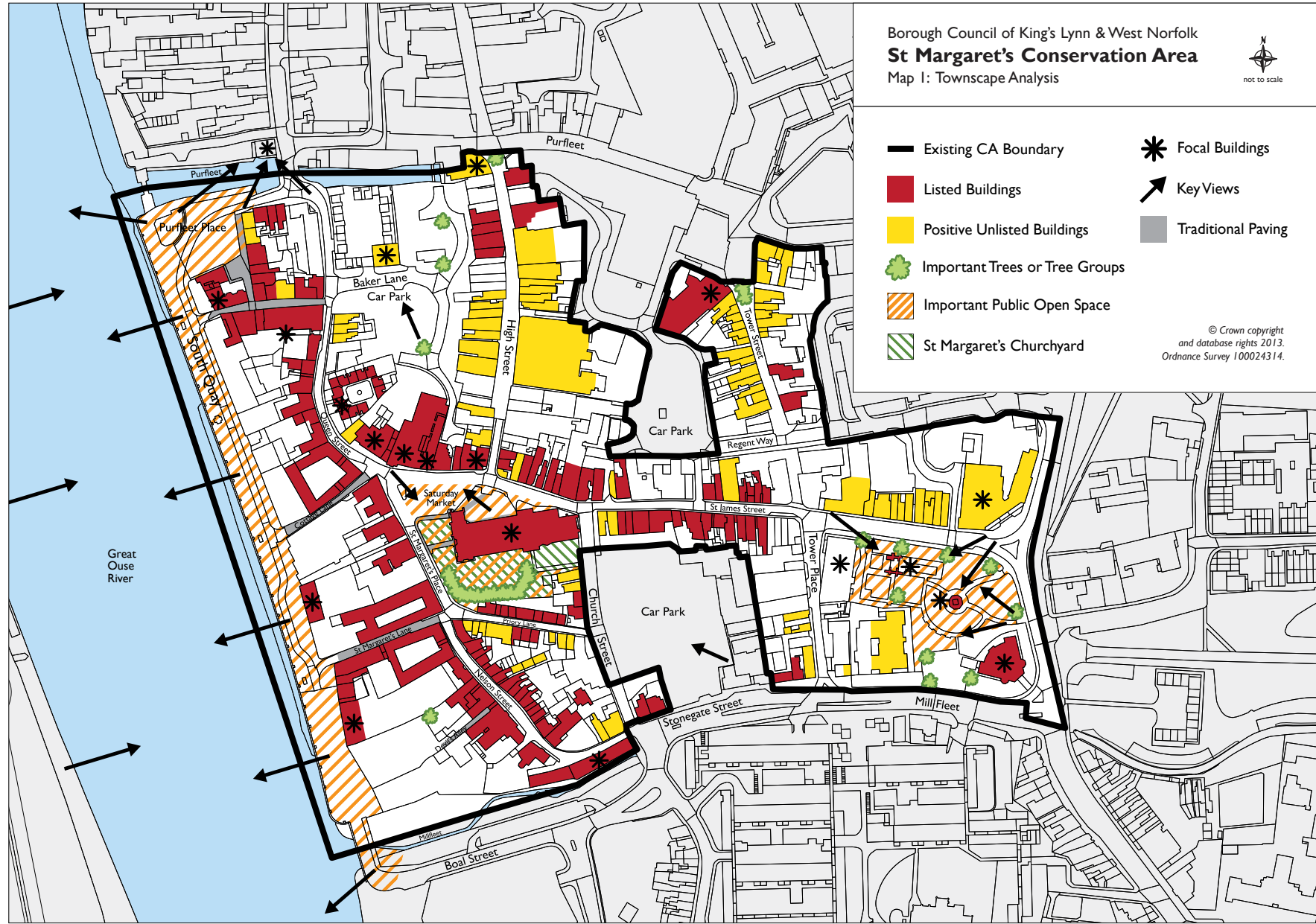
Both this Character Appraisal and Management Plan have been subject to full public consultation and have been amended as necessary after the public consultation period. These documents have also helped to inform the emerging bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a new grant scheme within the St Margaret's Conservation Area. Both documents should be subject to review as and when the funding and staff time becomes available, particularly the recommendations in the Management Plan.

APPENDICES

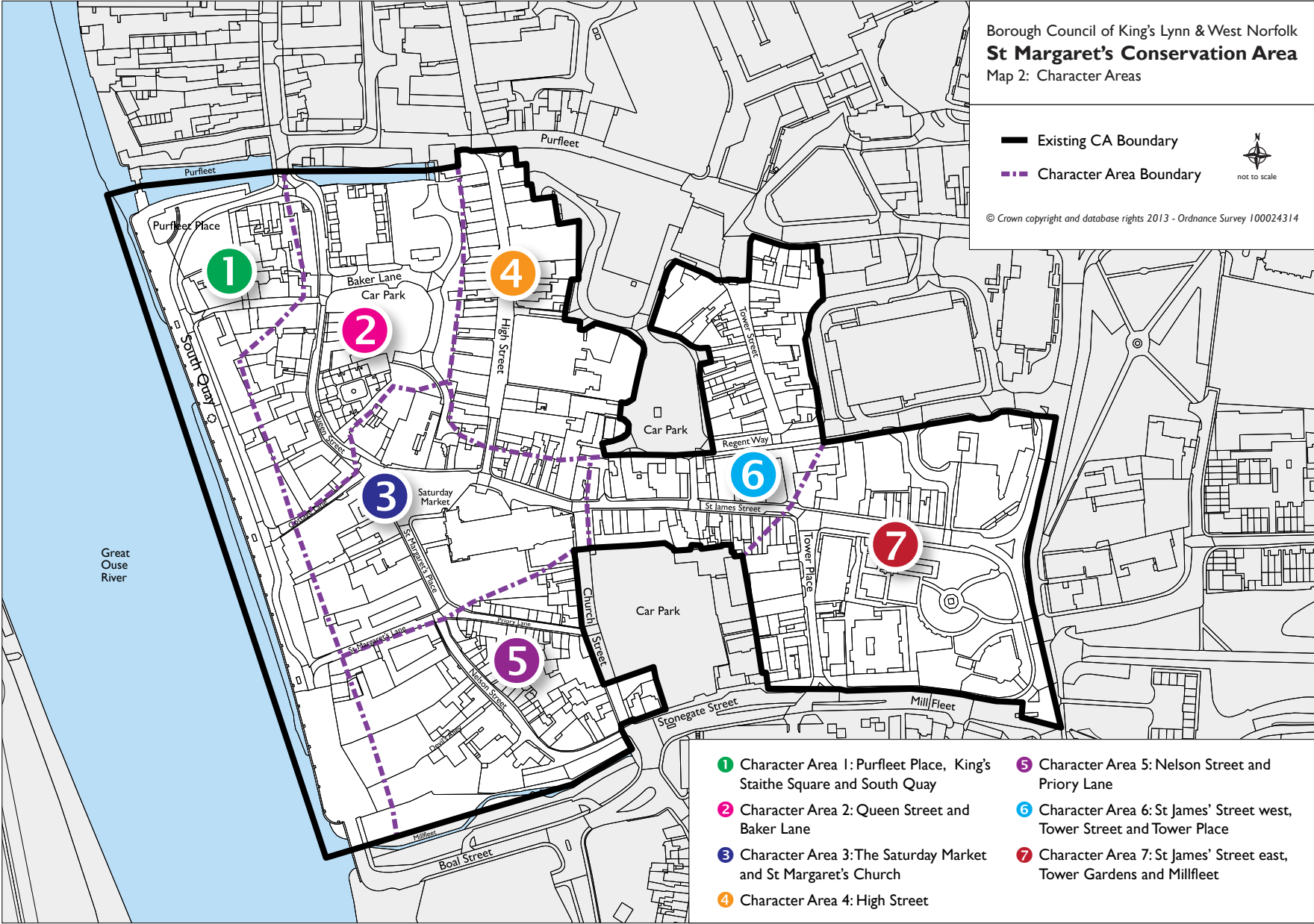
Appendix I maps

Map 1: St Margaret's Conservation Area Townscape Analysis Map

Map 2: St Margaret's Conservation Area Character Area Map



Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
St Margaret's Conservation Area
 Map 2: Character Areas





Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk

