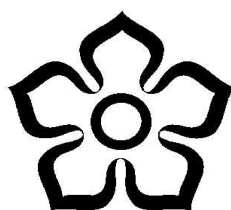


St George's Conservation Area Review 2008



Leicester
City Council

**MONITORING AND REVIEW REPORT
ON THE
ST. GEORGE'S
CONSERVATION AREA**

2003-2008

**This is the first review of the St George's
Conservation Area Character Appraisal since
its adoption in July 2003. It should be read as
an addendum to that report.**

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PART A CHARACTER APPRAISAL 2003 - UPDATE

1.0 Introduction

Background to the Review

1.1 This review is part of a planned review of all 24 of the city's conservation areas that is being carried out to comply with the Council's duties under ss. 69(2) and 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These duties require that, from time to time :

- Conservation area designations and boundaries are reviewed; and
- Proposals for the management and enhancement of conservation areas are formulated, considered at a public meeting and published.

1.2 The purpose of the review is :

- to assess the changes in the area since its designation;
- to determine whether action has been taken to address the impact of the buildings and land that were identified in the 2003 Character Appraisal as having a negative impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area, and the success of such action;
- to identify any new issues that have arisen since the 2003 Appraisal;
- to report on the findings; and
- to develop and consult on the management proposals

1.3 Since the designation of the conservation area in 1989 the St George's area has been at the heart of the city regeneration. It has therefore been subject to considerable development pressure and there have been many changes in the area since the first character appraisal was adopted in 2003. This review is the first to be undertaken since that date.

The Planning Policy Context since 2003

1.5 In 2004 a new plan making system was introduced in the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*. The new system replaced Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks within which Local Development Documents (LDDs) would set out the spatial strategy for the city. LDDs will comprise development plan documents (DPDs) with development plan status and supplementary planning documents (SPDs). The city's first DPD, the 'Core Strategy', is currently in preparation and will include generic city-wide policies on conservation.

1.6 An interim arrangement was put in place so that the Local Plan 2006 and its attendant Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPGs) – the St George's North and South and Odeon Cinema SPGs - were 'saved' for 3 years. The three years expired in January 2009. Conservation policy for the city therefore follows the principles set out in Planning Policy Guidance documents (PPGs) – PPG 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* and PPG 16 *Archaeology*. The Leicester Regeneration Company Masterplan for the Office Core Intervention Area (that includes the south part of the conservation area) also remains in place to guide future development.

2.0 Findings

Background

- 2.1 The designation of the St George's Conservation Area in 1989 was the formal recognition by the Council of the importance and value of the area's high quality architecture and townscape. However, it was also driven by more general concerns at the time about the contraction of the city's traditional boot, shoe, hosiery and knitwear industries and the impact this could have on the many large and well-designed warehouses and factories in the St George's area. Buildings were becoming vacant at an increasing rate as businesses lost their markets to foreign competition; and, once vacant, they were remaining so for a long time. Being unsuitable for modern industrial needs because of their large size, access problems and floorspace configuration, some buildings were being adapted for use by small manufacturing businesses but many conversions were undertaken with little respect for the original building fabric and appearance. Windows would be boarded up or removed altogether, new delivery access points punched through external walls, poorly designed signage installed randomly across façades etc. While this provided some employment, many units and buildings remained vacant or under-used. It was clear that a new purpose had to be found for the area and that new development and refurbishment needed to be focussed and directed if the area's sensitive historic environment was not to be irrevocably damaged or lost.
- 2.2 Following the publication of the Government's Urban White Paper in 2000, and reflecting a national trend, private sector interest in the conversion of some of the area's vacant buildings for apartments became apparent (projects such as the Queen Street Apartments in the former R Rowley premises). That same year the City Council identified St George's as the city's new "Cultural Quarter" and began work on an Urban Design Framework to guide and direct future development in the area. This work was superseded in 2001 when the Leicester Regeneration Company was appointed to deliver a Masterplan for the regeneration of five 'intervention areas' (one of which was centred on the St George's conservation area).
- 2.3 The draft Masterplan was published in March 2002, and included, at least as far as the St George's area was concerned, a crucial recognition of its 'fine heritage of Victorian buildings'. However, while a number of planning approvals for new apartments were in place by then, progress on regeneration generally remained slow, partly owing to private sector uncertainty about the Council's commitment to the Cultural Quarter. There was still a large number of vacant buildings, derelict sites and surface car parks in the area and this was having a considerable and detrimental effect on the character and appearance of St George's. Map 7b illustrates the extent of the problem at that time.
- 2.4 By the time the Conservation Area Character Appraisal was published in July 2003 the Council's first arts-related project for the Cultural Quarter, the Cultural Heartlands Incubator unit (CHIC), was already on site at the former LCB bus depot at 31 Rutland Street. The Council had also appointed the world-famous architect, Raphael Vinöly, to design the new theatre for the vacant site opposite the Odeon Cinema. Elsewhere, the location, high quality buildings and unique townscape of St George's had begun to attract residential conversion projects such as Exchange Buildings on Rutland Street and the Foister Building on Charles Street. Developers had also shown interest in similar apartment schemes at St George's Mills and Alexandra House.

2.5 However, the greatest changes began in 2004. The funding for the new theatre had been put in place and the "LCB Depot", as CHIC had become known, opened in July. This was rapidly followed by other private sector regeneration projects such as the refurbishment of the Odeon cinema (the "Athena"), new build apartments on Colton Street and an office/residential project for the police station site. By late 2008, when the new Curve theatre opened, significant progress had been made in reducing the number of vacant buildings and sites in the conservation area. Map 7c refers.

Key changes

2.6 The most significant change in the conservation area has been the change in its *character* from that of an industrial and warehousing quarter, active primarily during the day, to a commercial, residential and leisure zone, where activity has extended into the evening hours. Fortunately, developers have recognised the value of St George's historic buildings and special townscape in this process of change. Its important buildings have been largely preserved and re-used and the townscape of the 'canyon' streets (Rutland Street, Wimbledon Street and Colton Street) remains intact. A detailed assessment of the new townscape and the impact that regeneration works have had follows at paragraphs 3.1 onward.

2.7 The *physical changes* that have taken place in the conservation area between 2003 and 2008 can best be seen by comparing Maps 6b and 6c. They show that many of the vacant sites and buildings have been redeveloped or converted for other uses, generally apartments. The key projects that have been undertaken are :

- the completion and opening of the new Curve Theatre;
- the conversion and re-opening of the former Odeon cinema as the "Athena" entertainment and conference centre;
- the conversion of the Grade II listed Alexandra House at 42 Rutland Street and (the unlisted) St George's Mills to apartments;
- the conversion of the former Charles Street police station to offices with 'new build' office and apartment buildings;

2.8 However, more buildings have become vacant since 2003, notably the factory at 11-13 Erskine Street and the group of mixed warehouse and industrial buildings on the west side of St George Street between Southampton Street and Queen street. An analysis of all the changes that have taken place in the area and their consequences, if any, for the townscape and public realm, is set out in paragraphs 3.1 onwards.

Key issues 2003

2.9 The 2003 Appraisal identified a number of factors contributing to loss of character in the area. These are summarised below, together with details of how they have been addressed.

- *Vacant and under-used buildings* – a comparison of Maps 6b and 6c shows how the majority of vacant buildings have now found new uses. However, the continued vacancy of the buildings at 82-96 Rutland Street remains an issue.

- *Vacant site between 68 Halford Street and 68 Rutland Street* – this site, plus some adjoining buildings, is now the site of the new ‘Curve’ theatre. Its impact on the townscape will be addressed in paragraph 3.7.4 below.
- *Poorly considered alterations* – the refurbishment of St George’s Mill has reversed much earlier damage to its façade but the poor quality signage and blocked up windows at 37-43 Rutland Street continue to be damaging to the appearance of the conservation area, particularly the new theatre and Orton Square.
- *Quality of footway surfaces* – part of the pedestrian public realm has been improved under the Council’s 2006-2008 city centre ‘Streets and Spaces’ project using its common palate of materials – grey granite paving slabs for pedestrian areas, grey and pink granite kerb edgings, grey blister paving, tarmac for vehicle routes, stainless steel street furniture such as bollards, cycle racks etc. These have been installed in Rutland Street, Halford Street and the new public square outside the Curve theatre, Orton Square (after the internationally renowned Leicester-born playwright, Joe Orton), and are an integral part of the design. A new through pedestrian route, created as part of the Colton Square development, has also been formed to link the west end of Colton Street with St George Street. It is laid with grey concrete pavers with grey granite edgings that extend into the private courtyards at the Colton Square development.

However, the majority of road and footway surfaces remain unimproved, with many being uneven, patched and laid in uncoordinated materials. The majority of unimproved streets retain their original pink diorite kerbstones, however, that are important Leicester ‘floorscape’ features.

- *Visual clutter* – the refurbishment and occupation of many of the buildings that were vacant in 2003 has helped to reduce the incidence of flyposting and other signage clutter. The latter was an unfortunate feature of storage or industrial multi-occupation south of Humberstone Road, but has now virtually ceased. Badly designed shopfronts and/or signage such as that at 120 Charles Street, 37-43 Rutland Street and Humberstone Gate East continue to damage the appearance of the conservation area in places.

3.0 Spatial analysis 2008

Townscape

- 3.1 Visual and photographic appraisals of the townscape of St George’s have been undertaken to record the changes that have taken place over the last five years. The changes are set out below, together with an assessment of the impact that each has made on the character or appearance of the conservation area (**positive, negative or neutral**).
- 3.2 The greatest changes have been confined to the south of the conservation area – in Charles Street, Colton Street, Rutland Street and Morledge Street – but much of the area’s original character and appearance has been retained. This is particularly evident in the ‘canyon streets’ such as Wimbledon Street and Rutland Street where original windows have been retained, refurbished or replaced to match. *For the most part these changes have been to the benefit of the character and appearance of the conservation area.* However, the unified 1930s

frontage of Charles Street, between Rutland Street and Church Street, has lost much of its character.

3.3 Charles Street

3.3.1 122 Charles Street

Two major changes have been made here – the site has been redeveloped and a second roof extension has been added on the Charles Street side. Although the roof extension provides additional living accommodation, the design is unsympathetic to both the building and Charles Street. Its bulky mass and unrelieved grey cladding overpowers the site and has been added at the expense of the *character and appearance* of this part of Charles Street which, as a result, *has been seriously compromised*. **Effect – negative.**

3.3.2 132-140 and 142 Charles Street

The demolition of the Charles Street buildings has created gaps in what was an architecturally unified grouping of 1930s brick buildings. The street has lost the strong horizontal rhythms that they had provided to the detriment of both its character and appearance. The demolition of the Spread Eagle pub on the Church Street corner has robbed the street of an important landmark and corner feature. The delay in implementing the approved planning permissions for both sites is unfortunate. **Effect – negative.**

3.3.3 Charles Street Police Station

The alterations and additions to this landmark Grade II listed building, now known as Colton Square, have been sensitively achieved through the careful use of scale, massing, material and quality of workmanship. The new blends with, and complements, the original but also expresses its modernity in its use of proportion, colour, materials and glazing. **Effect – positive.**

3.4 Church Street

3.4.1 2 Church Street

The 1930s Spread Eagle public house on this prominent corner site has been demolished but the redevelopment for which planning permission has been granted has not yet begun. As a result, the blank side elevation of 57 Colton Street and its new, similarly blank, two storey steel-clad roof extension have been exposed to view. Until redevelopment takes place, this site will continue to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area. **Effect – negative.**

3.4.2 The Squirrel Building, 4 Church Street

This early 20th century building has been converted into apartments with a two storey roof extension. The form of the original steel windows has been incorporated in the new glazing, thus maintaining the patterns and rhythms expressed in the original building. Unlike the roof extension to the police station opposite the two storey roof extension here is bulky and overpowering, despite being set back behind the building line. At present the roof extension, because of its high visibility from surrounding streets, detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Once screened by new development of the Charles Street side, however, its impact will be less but its massing and scale mean that the building does not enhance the conservation area. **Effect – neutral.**

3.4.3 Side elevation to the Colton Square development

There are two new buildings on the north-west side of Church Street and both make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The careful choice of coloured render for each façade has ensured that the new work not only expresses its difference but also echoes the original building materials around it. The Portland stone of the police station is complemented by pale render on a polished concrete base while the dark red render of the residential block reflects the city's red brick building traditions. Further visual interest is achieved by the contrasting level of detailing, such as the glazing bars and rusticated stonework of the police station ground floor elevations with the smooth render and plain green glazed areas in the new offices. **Effect – positive.**

3.5 Colton Street

3.5.1 Site of 8-12 Colton Street

This is the rear service access to the LCB Depot courtyard. The new buff pink brick building is of an appropriate scale for the area and the unusual fenestration of the front and courtyard façades add visual interest to the street. **Effect – positive.**

3.5.2 Zenith Buildings, 14-38 Colton Street

The redevelopment of this site has done much to improve the character and appearance of Colton Street, although the loss of the small Arts & Crafts influenced warehouse at 26 Colton Street is regrettable. The new building has a tall, deeply articulated façade and is of a sufficient height to reinforce the canyon-like character of the street. The pale materials used in its construction help to add and reflect light while the demolition of the service bridge link to the building opposite has opened up views towards Rutland Street. **Effect – positive.**

3.5.3 Colton Square

The redevelopment of this large area as part of the police station project (see paragraphs 3.2.3 and 3.3.3 above) has not only added three new sensitively designed buildings to the townscape but now also affords dramatic views down the 'canyon' of Colton Street. The continuous view from St George Street to Rutland Street, punctuated by the vertical rhythms and contrasting colours of new five storey buildings, is a positive addition to the townscape. **Effect – positive.**

3.5.4 Squirrel Building, 57 Colton Street

See paragraph 3.4.2 above.

3.6 Halford Street

47 Halford Street

3.6.1 Most of the changes in Halford Street have been in the public realm and these are discussed in paragraph 3.8 below. Of the buildings along the street only the short block known as 47 Halford Street has been altered since 2003. Its height has been increased by one storey, a change that has not only improved the proportions of the original building but has also enhanced the townscape by making the building's scale and mass more sympathetic to its four and five storey neighbours. **Effect – positive.**

3.7 *Morledge Street*

3.7.1 The Atrium

The conversion of this large three storey factory into apartments has unfortunately resulted in the loss of all its original windows, including the original steel windows at second floor level. These have been replaced with poorly proportioned plastic frames to the detriment of the appearance of the building and to the conservation area generally. However, the extension at the north end, constructed in a contrasting material and colour is a more positive feature, although the covered parking area is poorly finished. Despite these changes this building does not detract from the character of the conservation area. **Effect – positive.**

3.7.2 r/o 7 & 9 St George's Mill

The refurbishment of St George's Mills on Wimbledon Street included the provision of three large extensions onto the rear service yard. This was an unsightly space with partly demolished walls, uneven levels and poor quality alterations. By redeveloping the yard the new extensions have certainly improved the appearance of the back of the site and have removed an eyesore. However, despite respecting the original building by carrying through the same window lines, the square window proportions have made the overall design somewhat bland and uninteresting. Neither has the red tile cladding been entirely successful in reflecting the red brick character of this area. The unfinished public footway along Morledge Street is particularly unfortunate. The new buildings and their surroundings do not therefore enhance the conservation area but neither do they detract from it. **Effect – neutral.**

3.8 *Queen Street*

3.8.1 Queen Street Apartments

The large extension on the north side of the original R. Rowley factory presents a rather bland frontage to Queen Street, although it is somewhat enlivened by two decorative panels at the Rutland Street end. However, it is set back from the building line and is separated from the original building by a paved yard, thus mitigating the differences between the respective building heights and window lines and forms. The retention of the original Baroque service gateway, gates and yard space has maintained a fine view through to St George's Church. **Effect – neutral.**

3.9 *Rutland Street*

3.9.1 LCB Depot, 31 Rutland Street

When it was built in the late 1960s the white tile cladding and horizontal windows of this building made a stark contrast with the surrounding Victorian architecture. However, it was re-faced in 2003/4 in buff pink bricks with a different fenestration pattern and the character and appearance of the new façade presents a radically altered frontage to the street. Although the original building was 'of its time' and made a very particular architectural statement in the townscape the LCB Depot's new façade and neon signage do not detract from the appearance of the conservation area. **Effect – positive.**

3.9.2 former Odeon Cinema (now 'Athena')

There have been no substantial alterations to this 1938 cinema building, although a glazed black tile and stainless steel single storey extension in a 1930s 'American diner' style has been added along the Queen Street frontage. Now

restored and reoccupied this important building continues to be one of the conservation area's most recognisable landmark features. **Effect – positive.**

3.9.3 Exchange Buildings, 34-50 Rutland Street

Refurbishment of this unusual block of shops and offices was under way at the time of the 2003 conservation area character appraisal. The works included the addition of third storey penthouse apartments as well as the conversion of the first and second floors to flats and the refurbishment of the shop units. The roof extension, set back behind the parapet line, has been sensitively achieved around the central feature, a French pavilion roof, while the preservation of the original shopfronts and leaded windows preserves the visual interest along both elevations. Exchange Buildings remains one of the conservation area's landmarks. **Effect – positive.**

3.9.4 Curve Theatre

The huge curved glass frontage of the new theatre by Raphael Vinöly dominates the Rutland Street/Queen Street/Halford Street junction and is a dramatic visual 'stop' at the west end of Queen Street and Southampton Street. As it is built without structural columns (the building hangs from its structural roof members) there are no interruptions to the view into the interior. During daylight hours its fifteen horizontal brises soleil (sun screens) lead the eye around the site and down into Rutland Street while at night the façade disappears as the interior lights come on to show the orange and purple drums containing the performance spaces. The façade also has a considerable overhang on the street side and this creates a profound 'sense of arrival' at ground floor as well as a powerful visual contrast when viewed against its 19th and 20th century Rutland Street neighbours. **Effect – positive.**

3.9.5 Pfister & Vogel, 78-80 Rutland Street

The conversion of this Grade II listed building to its current use as serviced apartments has been completed without any alterations to its original facades. **Effect – positive.**

3.10 St George's Churchyard

3.10.1 The churchyard has not altered since 2003 although a clean-up in 2008 has considerably improved its appearance; removal of the ivy that had been smothering the historic 19th century monuments and slate gravestones has opened them up to view and restored much of the visual interest of this quiet backwater.

3.10.2 The changes that have had the greatest impact on the churchyard have taken place around its boundaries. Once tightly enclosed by the backs of four and five storey factories and warehouses the churchyard is now overlooked by the windows and balconies of large new apartment buildings. Generally these do not detract from the appearance of the conservation area and their articulated and pale coloured façades have added some visual interest and additional light. However, the presence of many trees in the churchyard has led to complaints from the area's new residents about the effect these have on light levels in their homes. While this is acknowledged, the trees are nevertheless important to the character of the churchyard (and are protected by a Tree Preservation Order) and their wholesale removal would not be appropriate. Careful tree management, however, could resolve these issues.

3.11 The public realm

3.11.1 The first stage in the upgrading of the public realm is set out in paragraph 2.9 above. Halford Street has been closed to vehicle traffic between Charles Street and Wigston Street to create a new pedestrian link to the Curve and Orton Square and has been resurfaced in granite and tarmac. There are also several new pieces of public art. Full details are set out in Appendix 4. **Effect – positive.**

4.0 Conservation area boundary

4.1 As required by s. 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the boundaries of the conservation area have been reviewed. Various extensions/exclusions have been considered and these are shown on Map 2a and set out in the Table below together with the recommendations for each.

| Areas considered | Proposal |
|------------------------------|--|
| AREA 1 Wharf Street South | <p>This area was considered because of its relationship with the former Telephone Exchange (now 'The Exchange' apartment building) on the west side of Wharf Street North. It includes several interesting Victorian buildings – the multi-storey red brick Wheat Street Works at no. 43, a small Gothic style warehouse at no. 80, the remnants of the Hippodrome Theatre, Leicester's last-remaining Victorian theatre [and the location of Joseph Merrick's (the 'Elephant Man') first public appearances], at no. 27 and a pair of shops at 27a and 27b, attributed to the Leicester architect, Isaac Barradale. However, there is nothing left of the interior of the Hippodrome, although its historic associations with Merrick have been acknowledged in a blue plaque on the site, and the site has planning permission for redevelopment.</p> <p>However, both sides of Wharf Street have been seriously damaged by past redevelopment schemes and other alterations so that the street is no longer a visually cohesive unit with a strong architectural or historic integrity. Its physical links with the existing conservation area have been broken by the bland warehouse units between Humberstone Road and Erskine Street. It therefore lacks the special interest that would justify its inclusion in the conservation area. Recommendation - do not include</p> |
| AREA 2 Vestry Street | <p>Although neither of the buildings on each side of Vestry Street are of great merit, the exclusion of this area is illogical bearing in mind the fact that the rest of Humberstone Gate is within the conservation area. Recommendation - include</p> |
| AREA 3 Yeoman Street | <p>The small shops and former factories in this area have historic links with St George's industrial past. The factory buildings have some architectural merit. However, they form only one half of the street. As both sides of a street contribute to an areas character it would be difficult to justify extending the conservation area boundary to include this large and architecturally undistinguished multi-storey car park. Although it occupies an important historic site (the site of Leicester's former Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market) its presence means that the street has insufficient 'special' interest. Recommendation – do not include</p> |
| AREA 4 Yeoman St South | <p>Although the south end of this block forms part of the gateway into St George's its architectural interest is not of the same quality</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | as that at- the south end of Charles Street (within the conservation area). Recommendation – do not include |
| AREA 5 Charles Street | Paragraphs 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.4.1 note that the detrimental effect that new development and demolition has had on this part of the conservation area. However, excluding this block would also exclude buildings that still contribute to the special interest of the area. Recommendation – do not exclude |
| AREA 6 St George Street | This car park serves the apartments in the the Rowley Building to the west and thus form part of the curtilage. It is illogical to to exclude it. Recommendation - include |
| AREA 7 Queen Street North | This block is an important part of the townscape of both Southampton Street and Queen Street. The buildings are of no architectural merit but they are important to the character and appearance of the area. Recommendation - include |

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Despite the introduction of some elements that do not preserve or enhance its character or appearance, the St George’s conservation area remains special and worthy of its conservation area status.

6.0 Consultation

6.1 Property owners have a vital part to play in helping to preserve and enhance conservation areas. They will be aware of problems and will have ideas about how areas could be improved. In St George’s the Council will therefore seek the views of local businesses, landowners and residents as well as other interested parties such as Council departments and local heritage groups. There will be an exhibition and public meeting in the area and, for those with internet access, the draft Review and original appraisal will be placed on the Council’s Consultation web page. Any comments received will be included at Appendix 3 and included in the Management Proposals as appropriate.

7.0 Contacts & acknowledgements

7.1 For further information on this, or any other, conservation area or listed building, you can contact the Conservation Team at any of the following :

- Conservation & Nature Team, Planning Policy & Design, Regeneration & Culture, Leicester City Council, New Walk centre, Welford Place, Leicester LE1 6ZG
- E-mail conservation@leicester.gov.uk
- Fax 0116 2471149
- On the Council’s website www.leicester.gov.uk/conservation_areas

PART B MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

8.0 Management and enhancement

Principal management considerations

- 8.1 National legislation and guidance set out certain factors that are 'given' in relation to conservation areas. First, there is always a **presumption against the demolition of buildings that make positive contributions to the character or appearance** of conservation areas (*Planning Policy Guidance 15*). Second, local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to **the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance** of conservation areas when exercising their planning functions [*s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*]. Third, conservation area character appraisals form part of the 'evidential base' of Council's Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and are therefore **'material' considerations**. These three elements are integral to the management of the St George's Conservation Area, irrespective of the other proposals set out in Appendix 5.

Key concerns and issues to be addressed post 2008

Vacant or underused buildings and sites

- 8.2 The continuing vacancy of many buildings remains a cause for concern. While many former factories and warehouses have been converted to apartments, or acquired for conversion, several planning permissions remain un-implemented – notably on Erskine Street. Progress in the residential market has slowed distinctly since 2007 and there may be few new starts or completions over the next twelve months because of the current banking crisis and the lack of mortgage and commercial lending. Of particular concern are the vacant listed buildings, all of which are on the Council's current 'Buildings at Risk' Register. A particular concern is the condition of the Colton Street building, where the lead has been stripped from gutters, copings and the entrance canopy, opening the building to further damage and deterioration. The buildings are :

- | | |
|--|----------|
| • Premier House, 29 Rutland Street | Grade II |
| • Mosaic (former Guild of the Disabled), Colton Street | Grade II |
| • Vacant shop units, Exchange Buildings 34-50 Rutland Street | Grade II |
| • 82-86 Rutland Street | Grade II |

- 8.3 Other vacant buildings are also causes for concern, particularly those on prominent sites. These include the former International Hotel on the corner of Humberstone Road and Rutland Street, 33 Rutland Street and the former factories at 66a and 67 Humberstone Gate/St James Street. Nearby the condition of the factories on Erskine Street and Clyde Street is continuing to deteriorate because they remain vacant. Most of the properties between Queen Street, Southampton Street and St George Street have become vacant since 2003 and have obvious redevelopment potential. Such redevelopment would have a considerable impact on the conservation area and it is therefore important that urban design guidelines are established at an early date to manage any future changes. The under-use of the upper floors of 37-45 Rutland Street is a major reason for the deterioration in its external appearance and condition.

- 8.4 Since the 2003 appraisal survey two other buildings in the area have been demolished, much to the detriment of the appearance of the conservation area. These are at 132-140 Charles Street/Colton Street and 2 Church Street (the Spread Eagle PH). These gap sites have broken what was Charles Street's 1930s architectural 'set piece'. The vacant plot between 86 and 92 Rutland Street remains a problem because of the gap it has created in what was once a continuous frontage. Its use as a car park is not an appropriate long term solution.

Map 7c shows all the buildings that are currently vacant. Comparison with Map 7b shows the 5 year change.

Humberstone Gate East

- 8.5 There are a number of problems in this area that have a negative effect on the character of the conservation area. The most obvious is the high level of traffic parking in or moving into and through the area. This consists mainly of buses but there is also an appreciable number of private cars and service vehicles. Despite its considerable width the intensity with which the street is used by traffic has resulted in a congested, noisy and polluted environment that disadvantages pedestrians and detracts from the street's other functions as a shopping and office location. Pedestrians are confined to poor quality, narrow pavements behind multiple bus shelters. Cross-street pedestrian movement is difficult and dangerous, despite the tree-shaded central refuges provided.

- 8.6 In addition, the condition of the pedestrian area and the fountain feature at the eastern end has deteriorated significantly. The concrete paver surface in dark red and grey is looking drab and dated while the high fencing enclosing the area, the poorly maintained seats, the vacant buildings and the poor quality shopfronts facing onto the space have combined to create an unattractive and unfriendly place.

Public realm

- 8.7 While major steps have been taken to improve parts of the public realm around the Curve and LCB Depot, the streets and pavements in St George's still require considerable improvement and investment. The problems around Humberstone Gate East have already been mentioned but the quality of the 'new' public realm around Curve brings into sharper focus the poorer quality of the remainder. Part of this will be resolved over the next 12-18 months when the Council widen and replace the footway on the north side of Southampton Street and upgrade Wharf Street South. However, the siting of junction boxes and road traffic signs in the new streetscapes must be more carefully considered in order to avoid the sort of visual clutter that has occurred in the north corner of Orton Square.

- 8.8 *St George's churchyard*

Local residents' concerns about loss of light due to the dense canopy of trees in the churchyard needs to be addressed but without compromising the character of this important green oasis. The Council is responsible for tree management.

Poor quality alterations

- 8.9 The conservation area has several examples of poor finishes or lack of attention to detail. The dirty and rubbish-prone recessed doorway at the rear of the Foister Building on Colton Street is a negative feature as are the unsecured parking areas at The Atrium and St George's Mill on Morledge Street. (solution – install

well designed doors, clean steps and install security gates, such as scissor gates, at back of pavement)

Lack of maintenance

- 8.10 Where properties are partly occupied, upper floors are often not well maintained. Evidence of small scale neglect such as blocked and weed-infested gutters, leaking or missing rainwater goods, peeling paintwork etc can be seen on Rutland Street, Colton Street, Morledge Street, Erskine Street and Humberstone Gate East.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of Buildings in the Conservation Area (additions shown in red, deletions shown thus ~~Lee-Circle~~)

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Camden Street | 1, 5 |
| Charles Street | 118-122, 124 (The Foister Building) , 132-142, Colton Square (former Police Station) |
| Church Street | site of Spread Eagle, 4 (The Squirrel Building) |
| Clyde Street | 2 |
| Colton Street | former Leicestershire Guild for Disabled People, 57, 2, 4, Electricity Sub-Station, Zenith Building (former Cherub Factory), 26, 36-38, 40, The Core |
| Eldon Street | 8 |
| Erskine Street | 9-15 (odd) |
| Halford Street | 41, 59-67 (odd), 68-78 demolished , Curve Theatre |
| Humberstone Gate E. | 49-81 (odd) 85, 89 , 40-84 (even), 93, Taxi Station |
| Humberstone Road | International Hotel, 8-32 (even) |
| Lee Street | Telecom Building |
| Morledge Street | The Atrium Apartments (former 51 States Building), 7 and 9 St George's Mill, (22 and service yard to St George's Mills demolished) |
| Queen Street | Queen Street Apartments, BL Scaffolding, land and buildings between BL Scaffolding and St George Street |
| Rutland Street | 29, 31 LCB Depot , 33-35, St George's Church, 37-43 (odd), Athena (former Odeon Cinema), 47 (Alexandra House), 57 (former International Hotel), The Ale Wagon PH (corner Charles Street), 24, 34-50 (Exchange Buildings), 68-74 demolished, 78-90 (even), 92, 92a, 96, car park adjacent to Queen Street Apartments |
| St George Street | 4, 3, 5 |
| St James Street | 1, car park, 17, 21, 23 |
| Southampton Street | 10 |
| Vestry Street | 2-6 (even), 1 |
| Wharf Street South | 20 (Deuce House), r/o Alexandra House, 21 (Wimbledon House, formerly Centre House), The Atrium (former Centre House) , 7-9 (St George's Mill) |
| Wimbledon Street | 2 |
| Yeoman Street | 2 |

Appendix 2

Listed Buildings and Tree Preservation Orders in the conservation area (amended)

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Charles Street | Police Station Grade II (now 'Colton Square') |
| Colton Street | Mosaic (former Leicestershire Guild for the Disabled) Grade II |
| Humberstone Gate | Taxi Station (former weighbridge) Grade II 46 (Clarence House) Grade II 73-75 (The Secular Hall) Grade II |
| Rutland Street | 29 (former Tyler House) Grade II 47 (Alexandra House) Grade II 78-80 (former Pfister and Vogel) Grade II 82-86 Rutland Street Grade II Former Odeon Cinema Grade II (now 'Athena') |

St George's Church Grade C
 34-50 (Exchange Buildings) Grade II
 37-43 Grade II

Tree Preservation
 Orders

St George's Church, Rutland Street (Ref. No. N4.349)

Appendix 3 **Results of consultation** *(to be added after end of consultation period)*

| Comments received | Council Response |
|-------------------|------------------|
| | |

Appendix 4 **Public artwork in the Cultural Quarter**
For more details go to www.cqart.leicester.gov.uk

| Name | Artist | Description |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Art on the Move (2005) | Jason Bruges | A series of lampposts decorated with steel fins with interactive coloured lights between. The series forms a link between the Cultural Quarter and the Peepul Centre in Belgrave. |
| audio trail (2008) | watch this space | A downloadable soundtrack taking the visitor around and through the history, people and atmosphere of St George's |
| Children's Trail (2008) | Jo Dacombe | A series of see-through 'ghostly' resin objects placed at various locations and heights. The object is to discover the relevance of the object to its site |
| granite floorscapes (2008) | Bhajan Hunjun & LPW | A series of sandblasted roundels at strategic entrances to St George's with pink granite 'threads' on the theme of creative culture |
| Extended Play (2008) | low brow trash | Images of past & present cultural & artistic pastimes in St George's projected onto buildings. |
| musica bollards (2008) | greyworld | Located on Orton Square, the bollards respond to movement by spinning and playing unique fragments of sound. A matrix of LED lights are set around the top and down the length of each bollard. |
| Vestige (2008) | Jason Bruges | An interactive light based installation in each of the three main vestibules of the Curve theatre – colour changes and intensity reflect theatre activity and visitor densities. |

Appendix 5

Management & enhancement proposals

| Location | Management & enhancement proposals |
|--|--|
| Public realm generally | Improve road & footway surfaces to complement new surfaces, retaining any original streetscape features such as pink granite kerbs |
| Conservation area boundary | Exclude 'The Exchange' apartment building on Wharf Street South from the conservation area |
| Conservation area generally | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor condition of vacant buildings and seek cooperation of owners to maintain them whilst vacant 2. Seek the early re-use of vacant buildings wherever possible |
| Churchyard | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult with appropriate interests to establish an effective tree and open space management programme to maintain tree health and form but resolve daylight issues to adjacent residential uses. 2. Resurface footpath, increase lighting if required and repair/repaint railings |
| Colton Street | Investigate condition of Guild of Disabled to determine if Urgent Works Notice is required to secure repairs |
| Humberstone Gate East | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek funding in the long term to improve the street to upgrade its appearance, reduce the impact of buses and provide a better pedestrian environment ; 2. Improve the appearance of the eastern end in the short term by removing railings and providing trees in tubs; 3. For all new commercial uses at ground floor, seek improvements to shopfronts and signage. |
| Morledge Street | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete repaving works in the public highway; 2. Encourage owners to improve the appearance of apartment building parking areas such as repairing rainwater goods, areas of damage, etc and to prevent rubbish dumping, litter etc |
| Queen Street/St George Street/Southampton St | Prepare Site Development Guidance to direct and manage the redevelopment of this important large site. |
| Queen Street | Provide interpretation panel for the artwork at the Rowley Building |