

KING STREET



Key Characteristics

Townscape Elements

The alignment of King Street has remained unaltered for centuries and many ancient yards and lanes connecting King Street to the river survive. Long extended burgage plots running from east to west down to the river are a key characteristic of the area (**k**). Some courts also survive on the west side of the street and recent new development, such as that on the former Morgan's Brewery site has sought to recreate these traditional yards.

Some of the narrow streets leading west off King Street were lost after the Second World War when the area was redeveloped and modern open plan housing or commercial developments replaced the former tight urban grain. The local authority housing, and particularly Normandie Tower, dominates the southern end of King Street where it joins Rouen Road (**l**).

The impact of motor vehicles has fortunately been significantly reduced as a result of both King Street and Mountergate being closed to through traffic, but the impact of cars is still too readily visible with the garage blocks which serve the C20 housing developments (**m**). More recent development has dealt with the motor car in a more sensitive manner with rear parking courts.

The remaining traditional buildings along King Street are typically on the back edge of

the footway (**n**) which contrasts sharply with the mid-C20 local authority housing and the more recent commercial buildings which are generally set well back (**o**).

The area is currently undergoing vast redevelopment, which is removing many of the negative buildings and areas which detract from the townscape. The reinstatement of many building lines and reuse of the good traditional buildings, such as Reeds Mill, will create a more cohesive streetscape and provide a strategic link between the Riverside and the rest of the city centre.

Building Types

There are two very fine examples of early houses along King Street. The Music House was owned by a wealthy Jewish family and dates from the C12. It is thought to be the oldest surviving house in the city and is unusually built of stone. Dragon Hall, a former merchants' hall, dates from the C14 and has a timber framed first floor over a flint rubble and brick ground floor.

A number of C17 and C18 properties are dotted along King Street, with the greatest concentration at the northern end of King Street. Many have later alterations, but they are predominantly of 2 – 3 storeys, as are the handful of C19 houses and inns interspersed among the earlier buildings (**p**). No.91 King Street is dated 1811, but has a

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C15 undercroft, one of an important group within the City Walls.

5 and 6 storey C19 warehouses, a major feature of the area, are mainly located by the riverside and typically have large ground-floor footprints. A small remnant of the numerous 2-storey terraces that housed the warehouse workers in the C19 and which used to dominate the area, survives at the southern end of King Street in Stuart Road and Alan Road.

C20 flat-roofed local authority housing is a common building type in the area. The modern buildings on King Street that turn the corner in to Music House Lane are single storey with flat or monopitch roofs which allow views of taller buildings behind including the stark gable wall of the 5 storey flats. By contrast, recent developments on King Street itself have attempted to replicate the traditional Norwich courtyards, and the domestic scale of the older properties. The building lines are, however, slightly more recessed from the street than the existing traditional properties, thereby creating slightly wider footways (q).

The three churches in the area all date from different centuries. The Church of St Peter Parmentergate originates from the late C15 and St Ethelreda's from the C12; St Julian's is, in origin, the earliest dating from the C11, but it was largely rebuilt after extensive war damage.

Building Details

The earliest buildings in the area are timber framed, often over flint rubble or brick ground floors which are usually painted. The Music House, is unusually, built of stone, displaying the wealth of its original inhabitants. Many of the C17 buildings are rendered and this material continues into the C18. Red brick begins to dominate from the mid C18 and throughout the C19; sometimes the brick is painted.

Most buildings have pantile roofs, although a very few examples of plain tiles are also found, e.g. Nos. 27 & 29 King Street. Only the terraced housing and C19 factory buildings have Welsh slate roofs, although some of the terraced properties now have replacement concrete tiles.

Many properties have sash windows, usually multi-paned, but some early casements survive on the oldest buildings, including two large 6-light transom and mullion windows with pediments on the front elevation of the Music House. Dragon Hall has a jettied first floor and lucams are found on Nos. 168 – 172 King Street (r).

The mid C20 Council housing is predominantly flat-roofed and uses a grey/brown modern wirecut brick. Openings usually have a horizontal emphasis and details are very simple or non-existent. More successful and interesting contemporary

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building details include the use of horizontal painted weatherboarding, found on the Community Church (s).

The three churches are all of flint with stone and brick dressings with black pantile (St Julian's), plain tile (St Etheldreda) or slate (St Peter Parmentergate) roofs. The flint rubble remains of the King Street boom towers can be seen on the opposite side of the river (t).

Management & Enhancement

1. New development must tighten up grain of area, reflecting the historic building plots and streets that survive and those that were destroyed (B2.2, C1.1, D3, D7, E4)
2. Access via narrow lanes to the riverfront must be retained (LP: TVA 3 & SR 11)
3. Scale of new development along King Street should reflect the existing traditional buildings, with larger buildings more appropriate at the south east end (D1, D2.1, D6, E1.1)
4. Public realm works to create a high quality and unified streetscape along the whole length of King Street (B1.2)



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