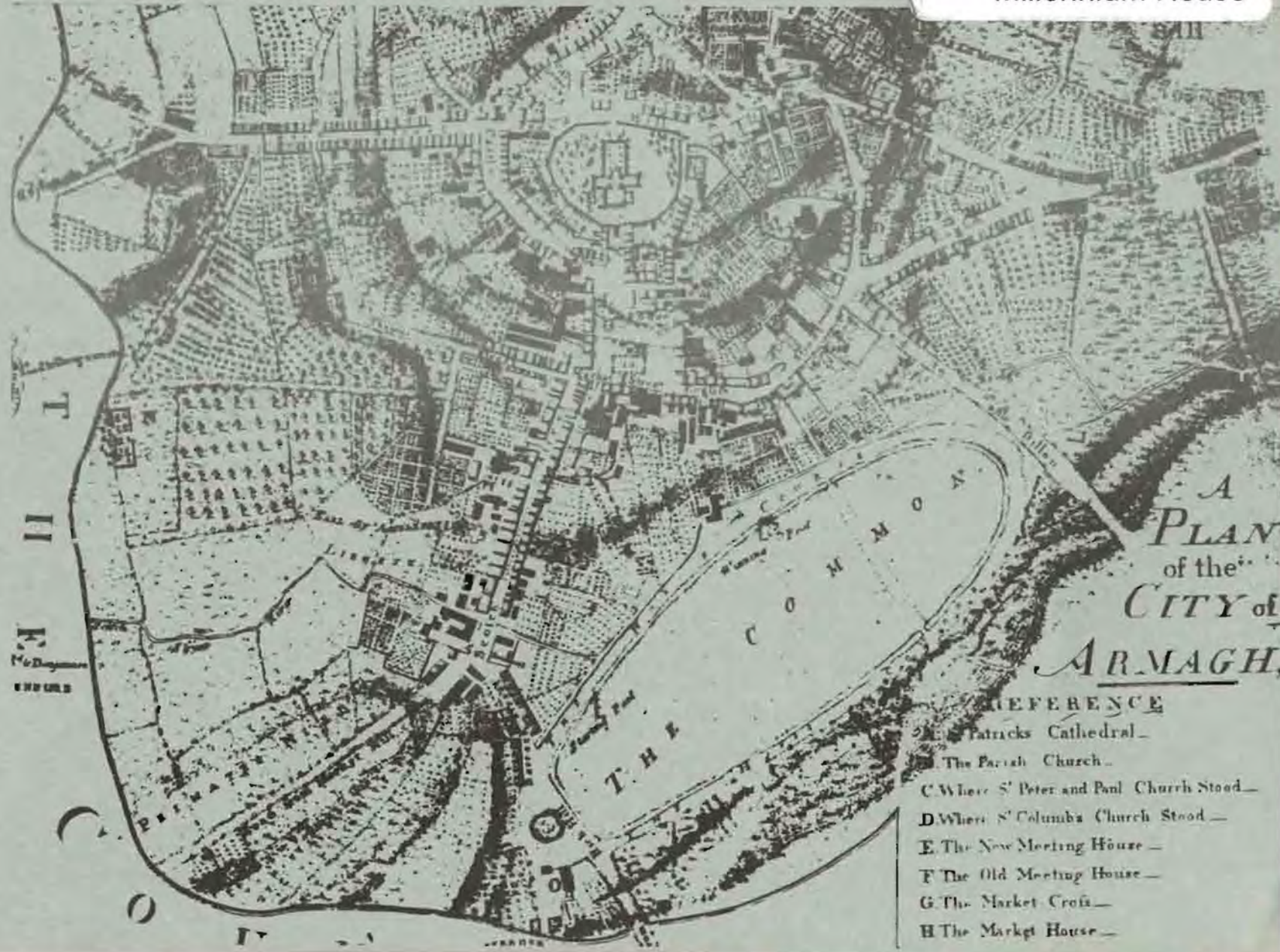




ARMAGH Conservation Area

Department of the

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A
PLAN
of the
CITY of
ARMAGH.

- REFERENCE
- A. St. Patrick's Cathedral.
 - B. The Parish Church.
 - C. Where St. Peter and Paul Church Stood.
 - D. Where St. Columba Church Stood.
 - E. The New Meeting House.
 - F. The Old Meeting House.
 - G. The Market Cross.
 - H. The Market House.

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The aims and policies set out in this booklet are for the guidance of the District Council, public bodies, local residents, landlords and tenants, intending developers and amenity and other groups.

PART I sets out the general objectives of designating Conservation Areas and the principles of designation;

PART II contains a brief history of Armagh City the formal designation and a map of the Conservation Area;

PART III describes the Conservation Areas, contains a brief for persons erecting new or altering existing buildings and sets out some of the opportunities which exist for improving the environment within the Conservation Area.

The booklet should be regarded as **but a first step** in securing the special architectural or historic interest of the designated Area. It is anticipated that local initiative and discussion will give rise to proposals for repair and restorative works and developments which will not only preserve but will positively enhance the Area's special character. Designation will be of little practical value without this local support.

The cover is reproduced by permission of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. It is taken from a topographical map of the County of Armagh to which is annexed plans of Newry and Armagh by John Rocque circa 1760.

July 1981

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July 1981

PART I

A. Introduction

The Planning (NI) Order 1972 provided legislation for the first time in Northern Ireland for the protection of the Province's heritage of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and for the designating of whole areas of similar interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

While responsibility for the statutory listing of Historic Buildings and for the designating of Conservation Areas rests with the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland one vitally important principle needs to be established at once. The task of conserving the heritage of Ulster cannot be left solely to Government Departments and a sprinkling of voluntary bodies and a band, albeit a growing one, of responsible conservationists.

The message that 'conservation in Northern Ireland is the concern of everyone' must find its way into board rooms of every kind, into public and voluntary bodies with diverse aims and objectives, into schools and universities, into factories and shops and into the homes of every citizen.

The aim of conservation must not be confined simply to keeping areas and buildings pleasant to look at or as a record of some aspect of history. It must additionally involve the continuing life and function of the areas in a present day context.

B. Development Control

Development within a Conservation Area will be controlled with the primary aim of ensuring the retention and importance of the Area's character. Every possible effort will be made to preserve the individual buildings and groups of buildings on which that character depends.

This control will be exercised as follows:—

Where permission is sought to demolish or alter a building which has been

listed under the Planning (NI) Order 1972 as of special architectural or historic interest it will be necessary to demonstrate that such works would in themselves be an enhancement or that they are required for overriding and exceptional reasons relating to the development of the Area.

New buildings will be expected to take account of the character of their neighbours. They should, in mass and outline, continue (where applicable) the rhythm of the street scene.

Materials should generally be sympathetic in texture, colour and quality to traditional local usage.

Changes of use necessitating a planning application which are likely to have an adverse effect on land or buildings which contribute significantly to the character of Conservation Areas will not normally be permitted.

The siting of new open spaces will be carefully considered to ensure that they make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and that proper provision is made for their maintenance.

The Divisional Planning Office will normally expect planning applications, submitted in respect of sites or buildings within Conservation Areas, to be submitted with full details in order to ensure at the initial planning stage that the development is satisfactory in all respects to the needs of the Conservation Area. It is desirable that applicants should consult informally with the Divisional Planning Office before the preparation of detailed plans.

Development near, but not within, a Conservation Area and visually related to it, should be sited and designed in size, form and materials, to be in harmony with the buildings and general appearance of the Conservation Area.

Under the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1973 certain types of development do not require specific planning permission. However, the

Department has power to direct that in any particular area these types of development should require planning permission. Such directions could be applied in this conservation area.

C. Positive Action

Schemes will be encouraged to initiate and, where appropriate, to undertake works for the visual improvement of buildings and sites. It is anticipated that District Councils may play a leading role in the formulating of such schemes. These would include the re-painting of neglected buildings, the removal or replacement of rusted and broken fences and the clearing away of rubbish.

Appropriate steps will be expected to be taken by those responsible, to tidy up, improve and enhance the appearance of Conservation Areas by the control of street furniture, overhead transmission lines of all kinds and to ensure the removal of undesirable examples of the latter where at all possible.

Existing advertisements and signs of all types displayed in the Area will be the subject of special consideration and it is hoped that with the co-operation of local business men the number of advertisements displayed within a conservation area could be reduced to a discreet level. That the quality of design and materials used in advertisements be carefully considered having regard to the overall appearance of the building to which they are to be appended and the character of the surrounding area.

Preservation Orders will be made, where necessary, to protect trees or groups of trees which form an essential feature in the character of the Conservation Area. The general appearance of many of these may be further enhanced by the selective planting of additional and replacement trees and sowing of grass areas.

In some conservation areas, schemes for pedestrianisation might be appropriate and as such would be carried out by the Department. Present security

arrangements have accustomed people to the concept of vehicle-free areas and it is widely accepted that the opportunity should now be taken to create permanent pedestrian zones. It will be the intention of the Department to carry out works for the improvement of the amenity of such areas.

The Roads Service will take all possible action to ensure the management of pedestrian and vehicular traffic movement in the interests of the amenities existing in the Conservation Area. Action will also be taken wherever possible to ensure that the parking of motor vehicles and the location of car parks is carried out in such a manner as to have the minimum effect on the character of an Area.

The use of floodlighting at night could in many cases be particularly effective.

If before designation of an Area, individual listings of buildings of special architectural or historic interest have not already been considered, early action will be taken by the Department after consultation with the Historic Buildings Council and the appropriate District Council to consider appropriate listings. In this Conservation Area "listings" are complete subject to periodic review.

D. Financial Assistance

In considering schemes for conservation the potential for self-financing operations should not be lightly ignored and the fullest consideration should be given at an early stage to the use of voluntary contributions, gifts, income from sales and leases etc. — see under "other grants" below.

Department of the Environment (NI)

The Department may give financial assistance towards the cost of repairs or maintenance of buildings which have been listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. There is no fixed rate of grant and each case is considered on its merits. Grants are made on the recommendations of the Historic Buildings Council for Northern Ireland. Churches in use for ecclesiastical purposes are not eligible for grant-aid.

The Department may also on the recommendations of the Historic Buildings Council consider for grant aid expenditure to be incurred in connection with the preservation or enhancement of a Conservation Area. Such expenditure is normally expected to be part of a co-ordinated scheme.

Details from:—

Historic Buildings Branch
Department of the Environment (NI)
1 Connsbrook Avenue
BELFAST BT4
Telephone: Belfast 653251

Department of Education

District Councils have a duty to secure for their areas adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities and the approved expenses of a District Council for such purposes may be grant-aided under the Recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order 1973.

The acquisition of lands for public open spaces for these purposes may also be grant-aided by the Department of the Environment (NI).

Grants may be made under Section 16 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1966.

Details from:—

Sports and Recreation Branch
Department of Education
Londonderry House
Chichester Street
BELFAST BT1 4JJ
Telephone: Belfast 32253

Conservation Branch
Department of the Environment (NI)
Stormont
BELFAST BT4 3SS
Telephone: Belfast 768716

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Housing (NI) Order 1976 enables the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to pay grants towards the cost of improvement and conversion up to certain maximum amounts.

Grants may also be paid to help meet the cost of improving houses by providing for the first time such standard amenities as a fixed bath, wash-hand basin, water closet, hot and cold water supply at certain fixed points.

Grants towards repairs may also be paid. All grants are subject to certain conditions and full details may be obtained from any office of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Northern Ireland Housing Executive grants do not necessarily exclude historic buildings grants.

Details from:—

any offices of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Headquarters Address:—

The Housing Centre
2 Adelaide Street
BELFAST BT2 8PB
Telephone: Belfast 40588

Local Office:—

48 Dobbin Street
ARMAGH
Telephone: Armagh 523379

Other Grants

Charitable Trusts are sometimes willing to help with conservation of buildings in charitable or other non-profit making ownership. The Pilgrim Trust may be prepared to give grants of this sort. The Landmark Trust is interested in purchasing properties of historical or architectural interest which can be converted into lettable holiday houses. They particularly favour buildings of individual character. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust makes grants to

support countryside projects of various kinds. These include schemes for practical conservation but not for the preservation of buildings. Details may be had from:—

- (a) Pilgrim Trust, Fielden House, Little College Street, London SW1P 3SH
England.
- (b) Landmark Trust, Shottesbrooke, White Waltham, Berkshire, England.
- (c) Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, Comely Park House, Dunfermline, Fife,
Scotland.

For details of other grant-giving bodies, reference may be made to "The Directory of Grant-Making Trusts" published by the National Council of Social Services.

PART II

Armagh Conservation Area

History and Designation

The City of Armagh has a prime place in Irish history and is one of the earliest established urban settlements in Ireland.

The hilltop where the Church of Ireland cathedral is situated was probably occupied in early Christian times by a large earthwork this appears to be the rath mentioned in "The Annals". It has not been ascertained whether or not this earthwork was made before or after St Patrick reputedly founded his church here C 440.

Few medieval or earlier buildings have survived the ravages of time. To the south of the city are the ruins of a 13th century Franciscan friary (now a monument in state care). The church which is now the Church of Ireland cathedral was built to its present plan by Archbishop O'Scanlon (1261-70); his work may well embrace earlier fragments; however, the building's present appearance is largely the outcome of a heavy restoration for Archbishop Beresford by architect L N Cottingham during the years 1834/6.

Relatively peaceful times during the late 17th century brought a new prosperity. As, elsewhere, the wars between the O'Neills and Elizabeth's generals had been the cause of widespread destruction and subsequent attempts at a plantation were not immediately successful. The establishment of a Royal School, planned in 1608, was not implemented until after the unrest of the 1640s but by the beginning of the 18th century much of the street pattern as we know it today was in being.

The peak of Armagh's importance in modern times, was reached in the second half of the 18th century. It was at this time and particularly under the direction and influence of Archbishop Robinson that most of the more imposing stone buildings, eg the Courthouse, were erected in the classical style. In the same period the trees which form so important a part of the urban scenery, were planted in The Mall, College Hill, the grave yards of St Mark's and St Patrick's and also in the archbishop's demesne.

Prosperity and building continued beyond the mid 19th century including a series of banks, churches, institutions and housing. Then several factors combined to bring about a gradual decline.

The choice of trunk routes by the railway companies avoiding the city but providing it with a branch line was enough to bring only their disadvantages – the influx of cheap manufactured goods and the end of the fashionable "winter seasoning". The moving of the British Army GHQ to Belfast and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1870 also contributed.

Nevertheless, today the city remains an important cultural and commercial centre. Unique is the priceless collection in the Armagh Public Library, the Museum (probably the first in Ireland outside the centres of Dublin and Belfast), The Observatory established under an enactment by George III and still a serious centre of ongoing astronomical study and the more recent establishment of The Planetarium (the only other in the British Isles being in London). The city has few rivals in Ireland in the quality of so many of its buildings and the beauty of its setting. Careful conservation can pass this heritage on to future generations, with neglect it will quickly disappear for ever.

The Designation

Notice is hereby given that the Department of the Environment (NI) in pursuance of powers conferred upon it by Article 37 of the Planning (NI) Order 1972 has designated the area on the map below as a Conservation Area being an area of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

A map of the designated area has been deposited at the District Council Offices, Divisional Planning Offices and the District Development Office at the addresses indicated below:—

Armagh District Council, Council Offices, Palace Demesne, Armagh.

Divisional Planning Office, Marlborough House, Central Way, Craigavon.

District Development Office, 2 Hartford Place, Armagh.

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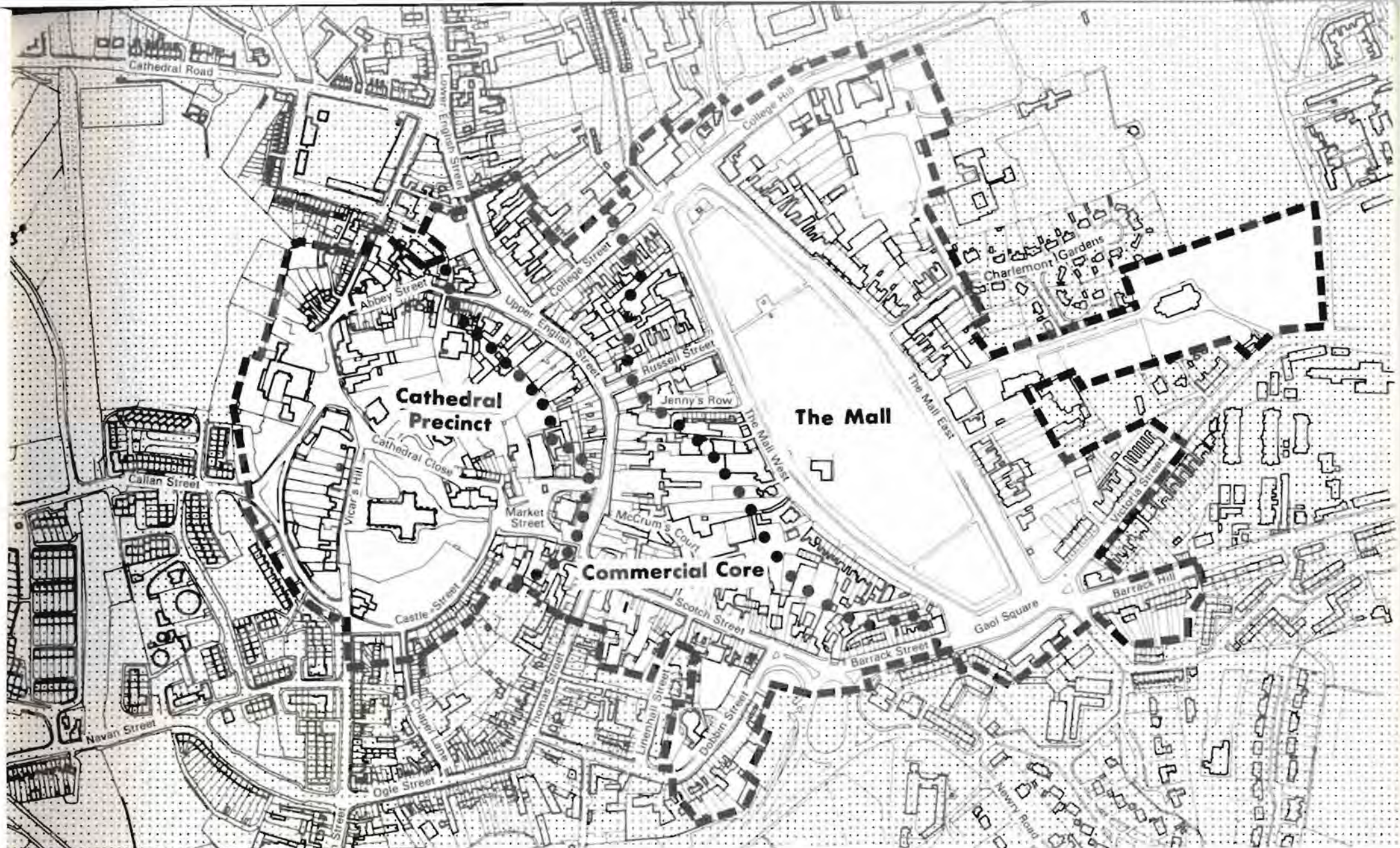
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Central Area Study

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ARMAGH Conservation Area

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PART III

Armagh Conservation Area

Introduction

The attraction of Armagh as a professional and commercial centre must depend to a significant degree on its visual quality and interest and if the city is to retain and expand its economy this quality is a valuable resource which should be preserved and exploited. It is towards the conservation of this atmosphere that the developer's brief following in this report is directed.

The purpose of this developer's brief is to offer advice and guidance on repair, alteration or new building within the conservation area and to establish a consistent framework for evaluating development proposals. The developer's brief aims to ensure that change will protect and enhance the existing character by avoiding new designs and alterations which do not relate sympathetically to each other or to the character of the conservation area.

It is recognised that the visual interest and variety which presently exists is the result of individual expression working within the style of changing periods of design. The intention is therefore to provide a framework which will seek to protect the essential scale and character of the area without being rigid or stultifying.

The conservation area contains buildings from different periods and of different styles and uses. It would be impossible to provide a design guide for every situation but it is possible to provide guidelines to avoid insensitive development.

New commercial, industrial and service buildings should be judged as individual cases in relation to their surroundings but should observe general principles of scale, proportion, materials and detailing as set out later in this brief.

Churches, halls, educational and community buildings because of their importance to the community, their generally more prominent locations and sheer size require

exceptionally careful treatment.

New housing within the conservation area should avoid excessively low densities and aim to achieve a distinctly urban character while retaining and strengthening, if necessary, the existing street line. The scale, proportion, materials and rhythm of new houses should be sympathetic to their surroundings and it is these aspects which are important rather than the details of design.

Indeed it is the intention to provide maximum flexibility of design within these broad constraints.

Developers should ensure that the accommodation provided in new buildings is not in excess of or below the capacity of the site.

Rehabilitation of existing buildings should be encouraged wherever possible. The opportunity may be taken at the same time to restore buildings to their original design. It is important for the property owner in a terrace, where the individual unit is repetitive, to carry out alterations to his property including fittings and finishes in a way which will enhance the entire group of buildings and harmonise with the whole.

The conservation area may be divided into three distinct sub-areas each with its own individual character and form. These are:—

1. The cathedral precinct;
2. The commercial core of the city centred on Scotch Street, Market Street and Upper English Street; and
3. The Mall together with Gaol Square, St Mark's Churchyard and College Hill.

The developer's brief will deal with each of these sub-areas in turn.



This important view of the Cathedral brings its presence into the commercial centre of the city.

1. The Cathedral Precinct

Sited on one of the four major hills on which the city is built this precinct is visually prominent. Dominated by the cathedral itself the medieval city which clustered around it, meeting at Market Street, has determined the pattern of later developments which took place to the north, east and west. Thus the present pattern of streets forming a concentric growth around the focal point of the cathedral and reflecting pre-Christian earthworks was established at an early date.

The character of this area is derived mainly from the cathedral and the open space surrounding it defined by mature trees which provide a distinctive landscape element. The streets immediately surrounding the cathedral are predominantly residential in character and scale comprising mainly two and three storey terrace buildings generally of simple rectangular form with pitched roofs and gabled ends.

The curved nature of these streets provides a continuous sense of enclosure revealing changing vistas along their length, which together with their architectural quality and human scale give the streets their particular character. The enclosed square at Market Street forms an appropriate junction to these streets while providing access and an open vista to the cathedral building and its surroundings.

The ecclesiastical and institutional character of the area is reflected in the other main buildings situated in close proximity to the cathedral such as Armagh City Hospital, Armagh Public Library and the new See House.

Of the residential streets surrounding the cathedral enclosure, Abbey Street is in the best structural condition and contains some fine examples of Georgian and Victorian houses. Also in Abbey Street are a number of important public buildings including the Methodist Church and church hall, the Unionist Club and a former Presbyterian Church now used as a welfare workshop.



The other residential streets in this area, ie the upper end of Dawson Street, Vicar's Hill and Castle Street are generally in poor structural condition, this is especially true of Castle Street most of which has reached an advanced stage of dereliction following bomb damage in 1976.

Apart from the ecclesiastical and institutional uses, the predominant land use is residential, but due to dereliction there has been a substantial drop in the number of people living in the area.



Above – Part of Castle Street as it now exists. The proposed redevelopment and

Below – Castle Street as it was before its recent sad decline.



Scale

This is an area of mixed institutional and residential use and of considerable architectural and historic merit. Apart from the main religious and institutional buildings the common scale of the residential streets is narrow frontage, two and three storey dwellings with pitched roofs. New buildings and rehabilitation should reflect this domestic scale of the existing residential streets. Two and three storey houses of simple rectangular form with pitched roofs and gable ends are appropriate. Narrow and medium frontage terraced buildings are acceptable but large developments with long, monotonous frontage would be inappropriate. New developments should respect the existing street pattern. Maintenance and repair work on existing buildings should be carried out in a manner which is historically correct and so as to retain the original design of the buildings.

Proportion

Design for new residential developments and for alterations should reflect the good proportions of the existing dwellings, for example in Abbey Street. Facades should have a balanced proportion with generally a preponderance of solid walls over window area. Window shapes should have a definite vertical emphasis and should diminish in height on the upper stories.

Materials

Facing materials are important in determining the character of the area so the finishes on new and rehabilitated buildings should relate to those already used in the area. Existing stone should be used for the reconstruction of the facades of the Castle Street houses, elsewhere smooth rendered and painted elevations will be suitable.



Above — This dormer window is out of character with the simple but attractive terrace house it is added to.

Below — This sketch shows that a smaller dormer with a pitched roof looks more appropriate.



Vicars Hill — part of this street dates from 1724. It is essential that it be conserved.

In some instances, roughcast finishes will also be satisfactory. Natural slate should continue to be used for roofing purposes although best quality black asbestos slates may be permitted.

Details

The detailing of all renovated and new buildings is important, eaves and roof details, chimneys, dormers and the general skyline should reflect those of existing buildings. Sash windows must be used except where casement windows are historically correct. Downpipes and gutters should be made of cast iron or cast aluminium and not of plastic.

Landscape Design

Trees are vital elements in the urban landscape, they give scale, perspective, contrast, visual relief and emphasise seasonal change. In recognition of the need to introduce trees and landscaping into the city the Armagh District Council has developed a town park between Castle Street and the cathedral curtilage. A survey of existing trees around the cathedral has shown that the greater proportion have now reached maturity and will decline progressively. Phased replacement is necessary to retain the character of the area. Where appropriate trees of significant landscape value will be protected by a Tree Preservation Order to ensure their proper management within the conservation area. It is desirable that an intensive landscape scheme should be incorporated in the proposed Castle Street redevelopment/rehabilitation scheme. Planning approvals will be subject to the retention of existing trees and shrubs and be accompanied by Tree Preservation Orders as necessary. New planting and replanting of suitable species may be a condition of planning approval.

Ground Surfaces

These can be regarded as an extension of buildings and should be chosen to match the surroundings. Armagh marble paving slabs and kerbs of local stone should be retained.

Street Furniture

Outdoor fittings and furniture should respect the character of the area as well as serving their function effectively. It is also important that necessary elements of street furniture should be appropriately designed and located.



Old and new buildings combine to make McCrum's Court an interesting and attractive place.

2. The Commercial Core

While the initial growth of Armagh was centred on the site of the Church of Ireland Cathedral, subsequent growth has developed most markedly along three radial axes; Irish Street, Scotch Street and English Street. It is the area bounded mainly by these streets which forms the commercial core of the city and reflects its growth in both concentric and radial fashion.

The streets which formed the pattern to the historic centre are now mostly enclosed by continuous building frontages, a feature which substantially contributes to the urban character and clearly defines the urban centre as the visual core of Armagh.

The central area derives its visual quality and interest mainly from the relationship and sequence of enclosures and spaces presented on movement through the area. Armagh possesses a rich and varied mixture of such sequences with the junction of Scotch Street, Market Street and Thomas Street being a prime example which conveys a strong sense of 'place'. The visual interest and sense of enclosure at this junction is further emphasised by views of the cathedral and surrounding trees when seen from lower Scotch Street. The sequence of views revealed by the changing direction of movement along McCrum's Court lends interest to an otherwise unimportant laneway. The visual interest in Jennys Row is created by the changes of level and the feeling of enclosure due to its narrow width which is strengthened by the arches across the street.

In the commercial core most buildings are of three storeys comprising mainly nineteenth century architecture which do not vary greatly in height, thus ensuring a continuity of scale and rhythm.

Where the occasional building does not conform to the general height rule, this rhythm is emphasised rather than broken but the present balance could easily be upset.



It is the repetition of regular, narrow frontage sites such as those in Barrack Street which contributes much to the character of the commercial core.

For the most part, the width of street frontages is fairly regular and small with buildings usually having been renovated or replaced in small site units. It is this rhythm of the site unit which gives Scotch Street, Market Street and Upper English Street their architectural character and interest. It also allows for gradual change involving many different styles of building to be juxtaposed in reasonable harmony, thus retaining continuity of character.

Scale

The policy for this area is to retain a street frontage for individual new buildings which is regular and narrow. In the commercial core the width of shop frontage is generally between 5 and 7 metres. In general different sizes of shops can be accommodated by extending back from the street frontage for different depths. Clearance of extensive sites or their redevelopment in the form of large, undifferentiated masses will not be accepted. Building widths should not be greater than those of existing or previous frontages. Where two or more sites are combined in a new building, the facade design should be articulated to retain the previous scale and vertical emphasis of the street.

In the commercial core buildings are mainly three storeys high. New or renovated buildings should not disrupt the established rhythm of the street by excessive or too little height of facade and should retain the street line and consist of not less than two or more than four storeys.

Form

In the central area existing street patterns will be maintained and traditional building lines respected.



Left — The removal of the chimney from this building is destructive of street character. Also the shop front is not in proportion with the building.

Right — The sketch shows an alternative design for the shop front which puts it into proportion and forms a composition with the existing building.



Proportion Pattern Rhythm

New development should respect the vertical emphasis of existing buildings, the pattern of solid to void and the rhythm which is created by the repetition of simple elements.

Materials

The principal building materials in the city centre include the local building stone used as ashlar or rubble masonry, red brick, and more frequently render on stone, brick or block work. Render is used extensively on the shopping

frontages and is frequently painted in striking and attractive colours.

New buildings, reconstructions and alterations should make use of natural stone or be rendered, avoiding over-elaborate combinations of materials and with limits to the frequency of exposed brickwork. Modern synthetic materials are unlikely to be satisfactory as facing materials except where used as trim. Roofs should be pitched at an angle of 30° – 45° corresponding with adjacent roofs and should be covered with natural slate, new or secondhand but black asbestos slates may be permitted in certain situations.



Shop Fronts

New shop fronts should be designed so as to integrate with the existing facade of the building, avoiding the use of very large undivided plate glass windows and wide or projecting fascias. Where one business occupies several former properties the fascia should not be continuous but should be broken to define the original building sites. In general, divisions with a vertical emphasis will be most successful.

The materials used for shop fronts are important. Timber is preferred for window frames but metal can be used if painted or otherwise coloured. Bright surfaces such as milled aluminium and stainless steel are not acceptable.

The composite elements which make up a shop front fascia, lettering, lighting, windows, doors, signs and external finishes should all be carefully considered and designed as an integrated whole.



Above – The long, deep shop fascia detracts from the building.

Below – The photograph shows a modern building where the fascia has been broken so that it retains the scale of the previous shop units.



Scotch Street — A fine example of a Victorian style shop-front.



Advertisements and Signs

Signs and advertisements are important elements in the visual amenity of the commercial core; the policy will therefore be one of ensuring that their scale, design and materials are appropriate to their surroundings.

Very long or deep fascia signs will be discouraged and preference will be given to traditional hand-painted lettering on narrow fascias for example the Glencoe Bar sign.

It is important to relate the sign in the following ways to the frontage of the building to which it is appended:

- (a) in width;
- (b) in scale — i.e. symmetric buildings normally deserve symmetric signs;
- (c) signs should relate to horizontal details such as string courses, corbels, window openings etc.

Signs painted onto a plastered wall can be very successful. Style of lettering is also important. In general sanseriff lettering is not a success but individualistic and modern lettering may be acceptable.

Hanging or projecting signs will be approved where their size, colouring and design are appropriate. The typical modern plastic box sign will not be accepted. Internally illuminated signs will rarely be accepted, except where designed as an integral part of a new building. Gentle concealed fascia lighting is more flattering to the street than a completely illuminated fascia box or illuminated lettering.

These handpainted signs on plastered walls are very successful. They have a strength and simplicity which is missing from modern internally illuminated signs.

The Glencoe Bar

T. MARLEY.
fish &
fruit.





The sketch above shows the potential for transforming McCrum's Court into an important, pedestrianised shopping street.



Charlemont Place

One of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in Armagh.

3.0 The Mall

To the east of the commercial centre and in contrast to its tightly knit character, The Mall forms a unique open space feature and show-piece of the city. Due to its central and entirely enclosed location, The Mall forms the most impressive urban open space in Armagh and perhaps in Ulster. Its shape is reinforced by the tree lined perimeter which also masks the discordant design of some of the enclosing buildings. The trees of the Royal School, St Marks and those in private gardens, contribute to the high landscape quality of the area.

The space is flanked by The Mall East and Mall West with the former fronted by many of the finest examples of Georgian and Victorian architecture in Armagh, and containing a high proportion of "listed" buildings. Surrounding The Mall are The Courthouse and Gaol, professional and government offices and a considerable number of houses still in residential use. Other houses in the area range from brick terraces in Victoria Street to dilapidated stone terraces in Barrack Hill.

Scale

In general, new development will be required to conform in height, proportion and scale to the general character of nearby buildings which vary around The Mall. This will be more important than an attempt slavishly to copy details of earlier styles. Good modern design can be quite acceptable in a conservation area, given suitable safeguards. The Mall itself contains examples of many periods from the late Georgian stone buildings of Charlemont Place to the modern brick faced offices in The Mall West. New buildings will be expected to reflect the vertical emphasis which is a feature of The Mall's architecture, long, unbroken facades with horizontal emphasis will not be acceptable.

Proportion

Solid wall should usually dominate over window voids and window shapes should have a vertical rather than a horizontal emphasis.



The fine avenue of mature trees leading to St Marks Church are an important feature of The Mall.

Materials

A variety of facing materials is appropriate in this area including suitable building stone, roughcast and facing brickwork. Where the latter is used it should relate in colour and texture to brickwork already used in The Mall. Natural slate whether new or second-hand should continue to be used for roofing purposes. Other roofing materials which harmonise with the traditional materials may be an acceptable substitute. Where wrought iron railings are used they should be simple in design and made in the form of closely spaced metal uprights joined by widely spaced horizontal bars. Generally black or white are the most appropriate colours for railings. Iron work, where used, should equal the high standards of design and craftsmanship displayed in the past.

Enclosing walls and fences are an extension of buildings and should be treated with the same care. Stone, brick and rendered walls are all acceptable where correctly selected for the site. Metal railings and vertical palisade or close boarded fencing would be acceptable where suitable, in contrast to horizontal rail, split log, woven lattice or ranch fencing which will not be approved.

Extensions to Buildings

Throughout the conservation area the policy will be to approve extensions that are similar in form, proportion and materials to the parent building. Flat roofed extensions may be approved to already flat roofed buildings and where the extension is well below the eaves of pitched roof buildings and does not feature on the skyline or other important view.



Details

This part of the conservation area is particularly rich in fine details such as the carved stoned doorframes and delicate fanlights of Charlemont Place. All detailing is important. Particular attention should be given to windows and doors. In houses and offices eaves and roof details should complement their surroundings. Vertical sliding sash windows should be used in preference to casement windows.

A number of the buildings surrounding The Mall are used for commercial purposes and although the main use is as offices there is a variety of other business uses. The use of signs and advertisements on commercial buildings must be anticipated. A careful policy of restraint in terms of size, design, illumination and location of signs will be pursued. The advice given above on advertisements and signs is also applicable and in addition advertisement hoardings will not be permitted in The Mall or on sites clearly visible from it.

Three examples of particularly fine Georgian doorways with fan lights.



These mature trees contribute to the high landscape quality of the Mall. It is essential that replacement planting takes place as required.

Landscape Design

The trees which line The Mall are one of the most distinctive and important landscape features in the whole conservation area. As in the cathedral precinct progressive replacement of mature trees is required, from time to time. Where appropriate trees of landscape value will be protected by a Tree Preservation Order to ensure their proper management.

This is an appropriate point at which to acknowledge the work of The Mall Trustees who are appointed to administer The Mall as an open space and are responsible for its maintenance including tree planting.

In this area planning approvals will be subject to the retention of existing trees and shrubs and be accompanied by Tree Preservation Orders as necessary. New planting and replanting of suitable species may be a condition of planning approval.



Above – Jennys Row one of the oldest streets in the city.



Opposite – This street could be re-vitalised as shown in the sketch.



Above — At present this disused warehouse detracts from the appearance of the Mall.

Opposite — The unsuitable floor heights of the building need not be a barrier to its serving a useful purpose. Sympathetic consideration would be given to the provision of an arcade and the use of “blind” windows as shown in the sketch.



