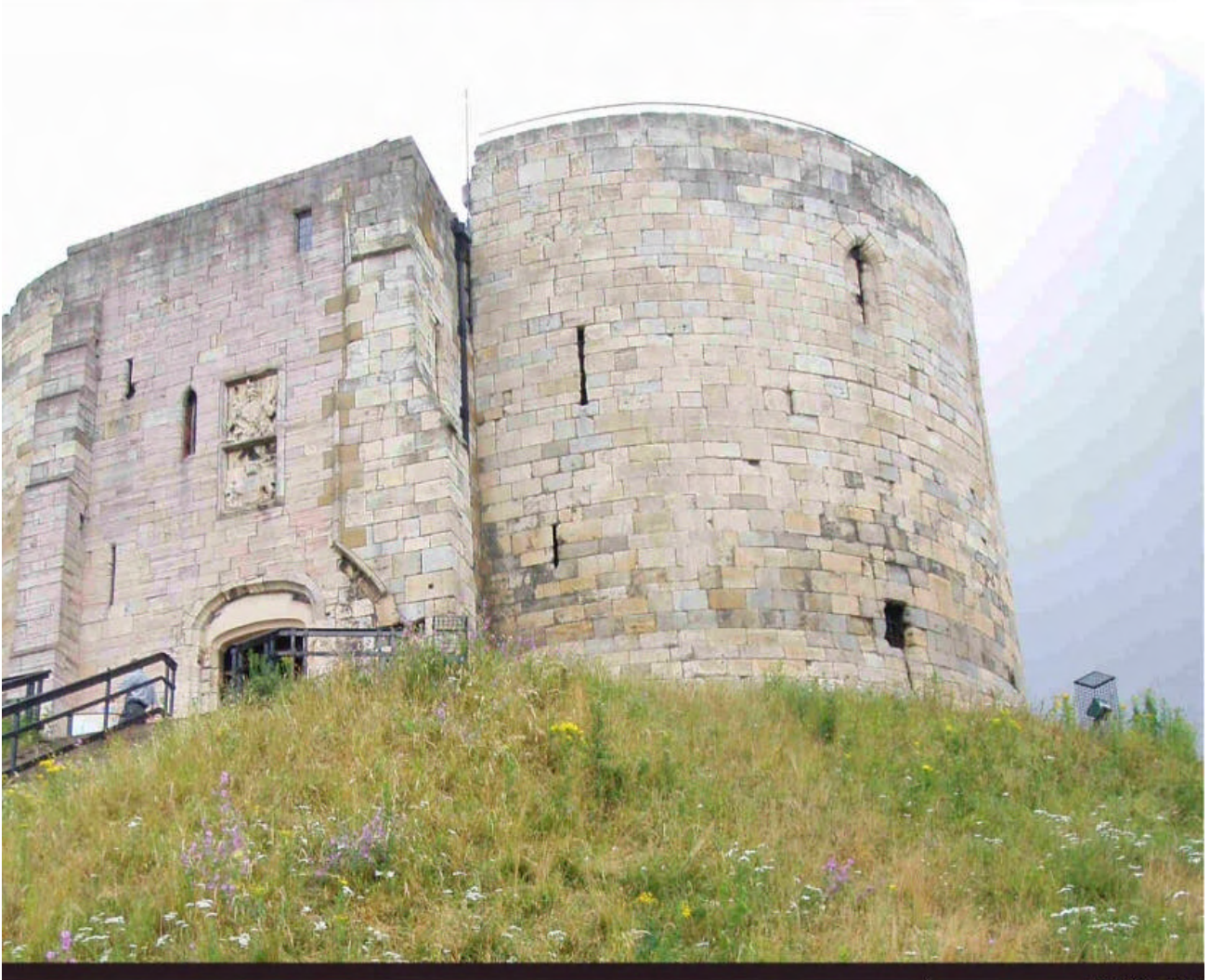


Castle Piccadilly Conservation Area Appraisal



Approved 23rd March 2006

CONTENTS

Preface

Conservation Areas and Conservation Area Appraisals

Introduction

The Castle Piccadilly Conservation Area Appraisal

1. Location

- 1.1 Location and land uses within the area
- 1.2 The area's location within the Central Historic Core Conservation Area

2. The Historical Development of the Area

- 2.1 The York Castle Area
- 2.2 The Walmgate Area
- 2.3 The River Foss
- 2.4 The Castlegate Area

3. The Special Architectural and Historic Characteristics of the Area

- 3.1 The York Castle Area
- 3.2 The Walmgate Area
- 3.3 The Castlegate Area

4. The Quality of Open Spaces and Natural Spaces within the Area

- 4.1 The River Foss
- 4.2 The York Castle Area
- 4.3 Tower Gardens
- 4.4 Other Areas

5. The Archaeological Significance of the Area

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Evidence from Archaeological Investigations

6. Relationships between different areas covered within the Appraisal

- 6.1 Views from within the area covered by the Appraisal
- 6.2 Views into the area covered by the Appraisal
- 6.3 The relative importance of the different parts of the area covered by this appraisal

Conclusion

Appendix 1. Listed Buildings within the Appraisal area

PREFACE

CONSERVATION AREAS AND CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS

The legal definition of conservation areas as stated in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is:

‘... areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’

In simple terms, a conservation area is an area that is predominately historic in character and is special or attractive enough to warrant protection. The historic centre of York is an obvious example as are many village centres around the city with a large number of 18th and 19th Century buildings, greens, mature trees and hedgerows.

City of York Council, as the local planning authority, has a statutory duty to preserve and enhance the special character of a conservation area. It seeks to achieve this through considering the effect development has on the character of a conservation area and its setting. Also, where resources allow, the Council may fund enhancement projects either in part or whole.

A conservation area appraisal is a document that states what it is about a place that merits it being a conservation area. It does so by exploring the development of an area and how that is reflected in the present; in its buildings, street layouts, natural areas and archaeology. It works on the principle that once the special character of an area is understood then it is easier to assess and formulate development proposals and to ensure that they are sympathetic and contribute to the character of the area. Its target audience is anyone with an interest in a conservation area, be it as a resident, property owner, developer, planner or local historian.

INTRODUCTION

THE CASTLE PICCADILLY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

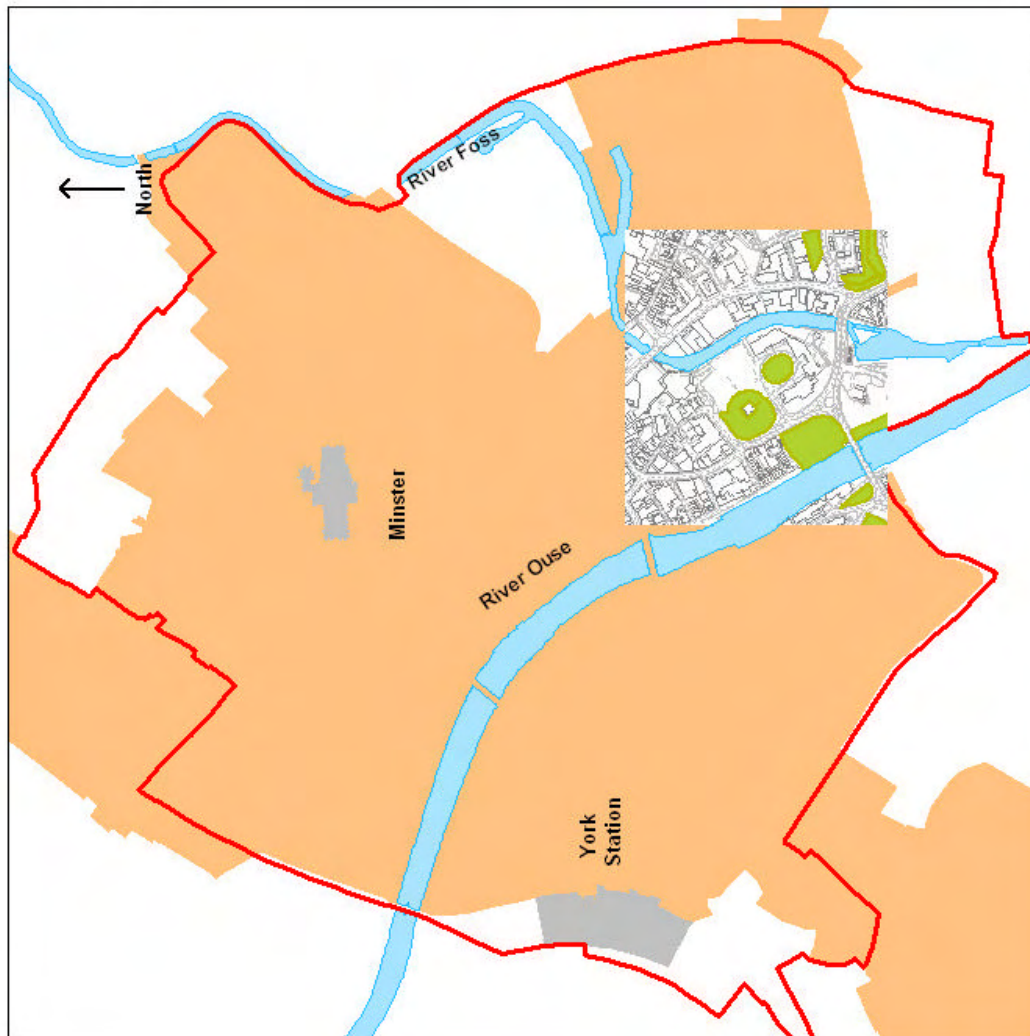
This appraisal was approved by the City of York Council Planning Committee on 23rd March 2006 as an accompanying technical document to the Castle Piccadilly Development Brief 2006, which is also produced by the City of York Council. This makes it a slightly unusual appraisal in that it focuses on a specific development site and only one part of a much larger conservation area. It is intended that this document form the basis for a sound understanding of the special architectural and historical qualities of the proposed development area and its immediate surroundings. This in turn will help all those involved with the development of the site to relate any detailed proposal to its historic surroundings. The appraisal does not discuss the way in which the area should be developed; this is covered within the development brief. The appraisal is based upon the model advocated by English Heritage in ‘Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals’ 2005.



Figure 1 Clifford's Tower and Tower Street

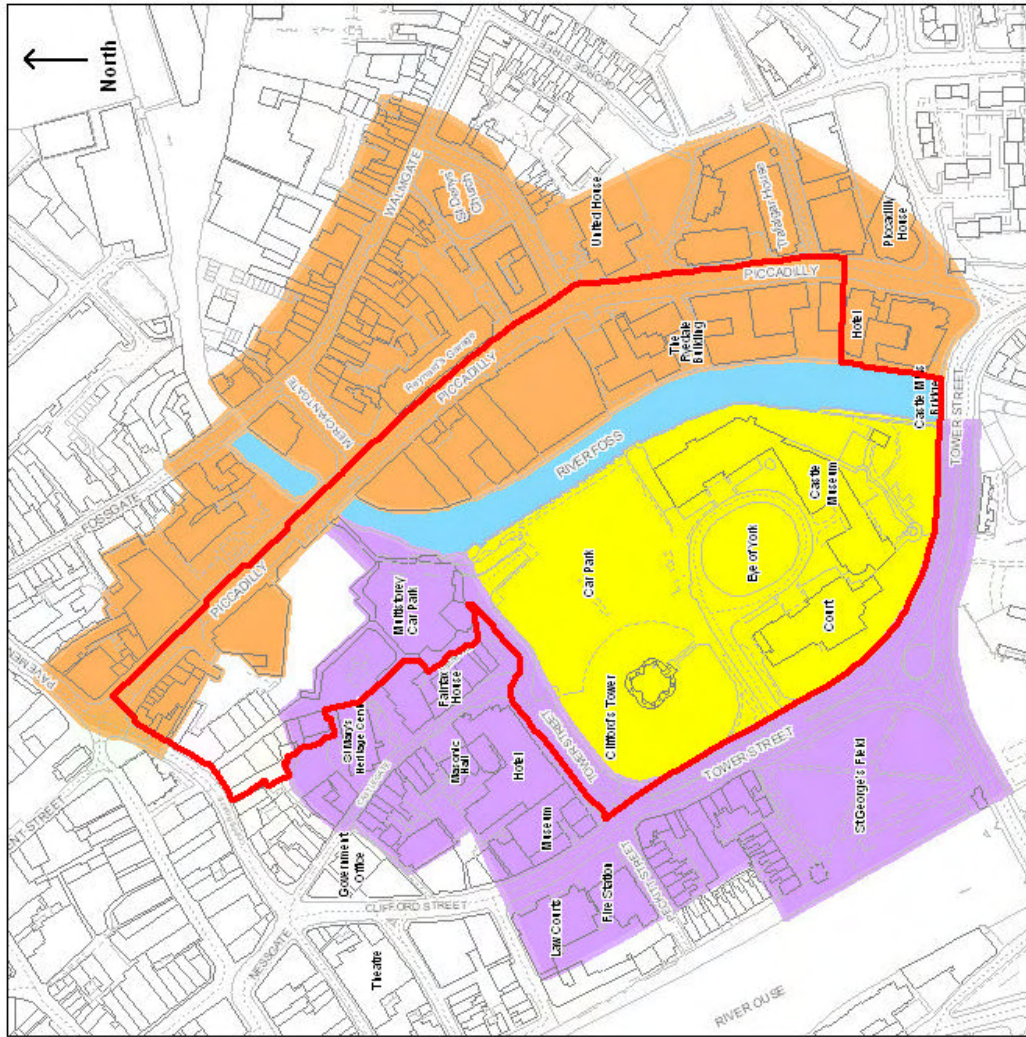
Map 1: Central Historic Core Conservation Area

-  Conservation Area
-  City Centre Boundary (Development Control Local Plan)
-  Area covered by Appraisal. See Map 2.



Map 2: Area Covered by Conservation Area Appraisal showing Sub Areas

- Area covered by the Planning Brief
- Walmgate Area
- Castlegate Area
- River Foss
- York Castle Area



Scale: 1cm = 30 Metres

1. LOCATION

1.1 Location and land uses within the area (Maps 1 & 2)

The area covered by this appraisal is within the unitary district of the City of York, North Yorkshire. It is located at the southern extent of the city centre, as defined by the medieval city defences. It is within the southern part of the City of York Central Historic Core Conservation Area (designated 1968, extended 1975) and at the southern extent of the city Central Shopping Area as defined within the City of York Local Plan Deposit Draft (May 1998). The area is defined by that covered in the Castle Piccadilly Development Brief as well as its immediate surroundings. Focussed on the York Castle area it extends north to Castlegate and the Coppergate Centre, west and south to Tower Street and Tower Gardens, east to Merchantgate, Piccadilly and the northern section of Walmgate.

The area is adjacent to the main retail sector of the city centre and forms a transitional area between the centre and adjoining suburbs. Consequently land use and building density is noticeably mixed. Densely packed retail areas define the northern and eastern extent of the area whilst the southern and western extent are less densely built and defined by mixed retail, office and residential uses. The York Castle area, which stands apart from this brief description, is used primarily as an area for tourism and civic focus as well as housing the Crown Court and a large car park.

1.2 The area's location within the wider conservation area (Map 1)

The City of York Central Historic Core Conservation Area encompasses the extent of the former Roman, Viking and Medieval cities of York, which for the most part are contained within the City Walls. The conservation area was extended in 1975 to include the Bars and Walls themselves and the major approaches into the City, such as Bootham, Blossom Street and The Mount.

The conservation area boundary encompasses an archaeological and historic resource of immense quality and importance both in national and international terms. It is an area that has made York famous for its heritage throughout the world. A complex and large conservation area, its character is difficult to summarise except in general terms. It covers a densely packed urban area that has developed through nearly two thousand years, a complex environment of contrasting buildings and spaces which are brought together by their proximity and broad similarities in building materials, uses, heights, styles and dates. The area represents York's strength through the variety of its archaeological remains, historic buildings, open spaces and natural features to illustrate the depth and breadth of British history over two millennia. The conservation area is not dominated by one single theme, such as the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge or period of time such as industrial cities like Leeds and Manchester. Instead there is a character of survival, evolution and change, which illustrates most facets of every day life in the past. That is not to say that the historic centre of York is without its own identity and strong history, this too is represented in the use of local building materials and styles, in the layout of the city and in its individual buildings and archaeological deposits.

Within the conservation area there are certain places, which because of their strong visual and historic character are readily noticeable and act as focal points within the city. The Minster and its environs is one example as is St Mary's Abbey, the Guildhall as seen from the Ouse is another. To this list we may add part of the area covered by the appraisal, namely the York Castle area, with the imposing medieval Clifford's Tower on its 11th Century mound and the strong classical formality of the present day Crown Court and Castle Museum buildings grouped around the Eye of York.

Around the Castle area, the conservation area reflects the diversity that characterises the whole. For example, the tightly packed building line of Walmgate is comparable to that of Castlegate, yet

there is a marked difference in the style and status of the buildings within each street. Castlegate is different again to Tower Street, which is laid out in a more planned, unified manner. In order to describe this variety of character it is necessary to look at a number of distinct sub-areas (See Map 2). These areas are:

- York Castle Area: Defined by Clifford's Tower and the Eye of York and bounded by the River Foss, Castlegate and Tower Street.
- Walmgate Area: The section of Walmgate north of St Deny's Church, Merchantgate and Piccadilly.
- Castlegate Area: Castlegate, Coppergate Shopping Centre, Tower Street, Tower Place and Tower Gardens
- The River Foss: From Foss Bridge to Castle Mills Bridge



Figure 2 Walmgate looking southeast from Foss Bridge

2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

2.1 The York Castle Area

Medieval Period: 1068 to the 16th Century

Throughout the medieval period York Castle was in the control of the Crown and as such was the centre of the everyday relationship between the monarchy and the City. It was the base of the Sheriff of York and place from which royal revenue was collected, royal justice administered and if need be, defence organised. The foundation and early evolution of York Castle reflects a close relationship between the Monarchy and the City.

The history of the Castle starts with the Norman Conquest of 1066 and the subsequent years of struggle to impose order on northern England. The first castle in York was built by William the Conqueror in 1068 but destroyed the following year by the revolt of the northern Danes. The subsequent suppression of this revolt, the 'Harrying of the North', led to the rebuilding of the castle later in the same year. In the subsequent years, York was at the limits of Norman control acting as base for the creation of further power bases such as Durham.

The most obvious survival from this period is the motte or mound on which Clifford's Tower sits (Figure 3). This was one of two, the other being Baile Hill across the River Ouse in Bishophill. A less obvious survival is the boundary of the Castle area, which can be divided into two parts; the motte (presently Clifford's Tower and its mound) and the inner bailey delineated by the southern course of Tower Street, the River Foss and the later Curtain Wall. The two parts were separated from their surroundings and each other by a moat, formed by damming the River Foss at Castle Mills Bridge. The damming of the Foss also created the King's Fishpond an artificial lake which provided a natural defence for the east of the City. Access to the Castle was through north and south gates. The

foundations of the 13th Century south gate may still be seen from the southern section of Tower Street just before Castle Mills Bridge. The north gate, which was accessed from Castlegate, was demolished to make way for the Felons Prison of 1825. 13th century sources state that the inner bailey contained halls, stables, a kitchen and gaols, including one for Irish prisoners and one for women.



Figure 3 Clifford's Tower

The Castle was fully or at least substantially destroyed by fire in a week long siege in 1190. This was the result not of war but civil strife in the form of an anti-Jewish riot. The Jewish community of York took refuge in the castle and the majority of the besieged committed suicide rather than be murdered by the rioters. This is the most infamous episode in the Castle's history and to this day Clifford's Tower has particular significance to the Jewish community.

Between 1244 and 1264 Henry III rebuilt the castle in stone at a cost of £2,450. Henry De Reyns was the chief mason and Master Simon, the chief carpenter. Clifford's Tower and part of the Curtain Wall date from this period. The former with its distinctive quatrefoil (four leaved) shape was probably designed by Henry De Reyns and is similar in plan to keeps in Ambleny (Aisne) and Etampes (Essonne) in France. It is now the only quatrefoil medieval keep in England. The first mention of the tower being called 'Clifford's Tower' is from 1596, possibly deriving from the

claim of the Clifford family to be hereditary constables of the castle.



Figure 4 Curtain wall and remnants of the south gate

In 1298 Edward I used York as a base from which to wage war on Scotland. In doing so he moved the government to the City. Whilst the King, government and troops were billeted throughout the City, the exchequer, treasury and part of the royal household were established within the Castle. York's role as the centre of government and a military base continued periodically throughout the war with Scotland, through the reigns of Edward II and Edward III. Between 1298 and 1335 fifteen parliaments were summoned to York. The Castle would have been a central location in this temporary elevation of York's status. It is the only castle in England, other than the Tower of London to have housed the Royal Treasury.

At the end of the Scottish wars York's role as a centre for national government ended and the Castle was never to see such a direct relationship with the Monarchy again. The following centuries mark what appears to be a slow decline in the Castle's importance as the focus of national events moves elsewhere and the city obtains more independence from the Monarchy. Whilst a mint was established within the Castle in 1353 and lasted to 1546, documentary sources tell of repairs to buildings and structures, rather than major rebuilding projects which one would expect if the

Castle played a strategic role at a national or regional level. The only resurgence in the Castle's fortunes came in 1484 when Richard III partially dismantled parts of the Castle in order to rebuild; yet this project was curtailed by the King's death at the Battle of Bosworth a year later.

16th Century to the 20th Century

This period sees the gradual decline of the Castle as a defensive structure and an increased emphasis on administering countywide justice and politics. It is at this time that the Castle largely takes its present form and the first moves for its conservation are made.

In the same manner as preceding centuries, documentary sources from the 16th and 17th Centuries comprise of references to repairs and minor alterations, often implying a general neglect of the Castle, especially as a functioning defensive structure. One particular incident of note is in 1596 when the gaoler of the Castle Prison, Robert Redhead demolished a flanking wall, the bridge to the motte and part of Clifford's Tower. The City Corporation, who petitioned the Lord Treasurer and Chancellor of the Exchequer, stopped him. Their reasoning was not to retain the defensive capacity of the Castle but rather to preserve what they stated was 'an especial ornament in the beautifying of the city'. This must be one of the first attempts to preserve a monument within the history of York and the Country.

In the 1640's, during the English Civil War, the Castle was garrisoned by Royalist troops under the command of the Duke of Cumberland. Though the city was besieged the Castle did not come under any direct assault. It must, however, have remained one of the main centres in the organisation of the City's defence. Though garrisoned until 1699 the Castle was gradually denuded of both men and weapons throughout the last quarter of the 17th Century. In 1684 a cannon salute caused a fire to break out in Clifford's Tower leaving it roofless. After the withdrawal of the garrison the tower passed into private ownership becoming a ready-made folly within the grounds of a newly constructed town house.



Figure 5 The Debtors Prison

From the 1660's a period of rebuilding starts within the inner bailey. The collection of medieval buildings such as the halls and gaols were replaced in favour of a more formal arrangement of court and prison buildings. In 1668 the Grand Jury House was constructed on the south side of the bailey, followed by the Sessions House of 1675 to the northeast. Contemporary illustrations show that these were medium size buildings similar in scale to their medieval predecessors.

During the 18th century these buildings was replaced by considerably larger and grander buildings. The first of these was the Debtors Prison (Figure 5) on the east side of the bailey. The Debtors Prison (now part of the Castle Museum) was built between 1701 and 1705 most probably by William Wakefield (architect of Duncombe Park, Helmsley, North Yorkshire). A grade I listed building, it is an important example of English Baroque architecture. Originally the County Gaol, it housed prisoners from throughout Yorkshire. Dick Turpin was imprisoned here in 1739 prior to his execution at Tyburn on the Knavesmire. Also in 1813, the prison held members of the Luddite movement including seventeen men who were executed. Upon the construction of the Felons Prison (1826-1835, see below) the building was converted to house prison warders.

The Debtors Prison was followed by the Assize Courts (now the Crown Court, Figure 6). It was

built between 1773 and 1777 by John Carr, a leading architect of the period and an important figure within the history of York. The building replaced the Grand Jury House of 1668 and signifies an innovative departure for Carr, in which he moves away from the Palladian style seen in his previous works (e.g. Harewood House, West Yorkshire 1760, Basildon Park, Berkshire) to a neo-classical approach, which he continued into one of his most famous group of buildings, the Royal Crescent, Buxton, Derbyshire. The Crown Court building comprises two courts arranged either side of an entrance hall with offices ranged alongside the west side. Interior decoration is lavish but ordered reflecting the classical fashions of the day. The offices on the west end were extensively re-modelled in 1818 and 1821 by Peter Atkinson junior and Matthew Phillips.



Figure 6 The Assizes Court

Shortly after the completion of the Assizes Court construction began on the Female Prison, now part of the Castle Museum (Figure 7). This second prison was built between 1780 and 1783 to a design by Thomas Wilkinson & John Price and replaced the Sessions House. It was constructed under the supervision of John Carr, which possibly explains the near similarity of the main elevation to the Assizes Court. Wings were added in 1802 by Peter Atkinson Senior, again mirroring the Assizes Court. The City of York Corporation bought the building in 1934 and the interior drastically altered to house the Kirk Collections of bygoners. This entailed the creation of two historic

street facades within the former exercise yard, Kirkgate and Aldermans Walk.



Figure 7 The Female Prison

Collectively this group of three civic buildings transformed the area from a medieval castle into a central focus of County life. The formality and grandeur of the buildings reflects York's role in 18th and early 19th Century as a regional centre of importance. The space between the buildings was grassed and paved by 1777 and from at least 1790 it has had a round or oval lawn called originally 'The Eye of the Ridings' or 'The Eye of Yorkshire' now shortened to 'The Eye of York'. It was here that elections for all three Yorkshire Ridings were held until 1831 and elections for the North Riding until 1882. The area was also used for proclamations such as the outbreak of war, the accession of a monarch and the viewing of public executions.

The role of the Castle area in administrating justice within the county was significantly extended with construction of the Felons Prison between 1826 and 1835. This now demolished prison designed by Robinson and Andrews was a formidable and imposing structure. Constructed of millstone grit within a Tudor Gothic style it comprised four cellblocks radiating out in a semi-circle from a central tower, used as the governor's house.

In addition to imprisonment, hangings took place within the Castle starting in 1802 when these

popular public events were moved from the Knavesmire. At first hangings took place in between the Assizes Court and the Curtain Wall, moving inside the prison walls within the north end of the Female Prison when public hangings were abolished in 1868. A number of skeletons, presumably of executed prisoners, were uncovered just outside the female prison during archaeological excavation work in 1998 by the York Archaeological Trust. Some of these skeletons showed evidence of undergoing an autopsy. Such practices, undertaken in the name of science, were common practice in the 19th Century and often open to public viewing.

The perimeter of the Castle area was also transformed in the 18th and 19th centuries. The River Foss was canalised in 1792, which presumably removed the remaining traces of the moat defences and the Kings Fishpond. Areas of curtain wall were demolished or absorbed into buildings such as the Female Prison and Debtors Prison. The southern gate was blocked by 1682; the northern gate was demolished to make way for the Felons Prison. This loss of enclosure has done much to change the appearance of the Castle as a fortification, so much so that Clifford's Tower is often considered in the public imagination to be the Castle rather than just part of it.

The 20th Century to the Present

The 20th Century saw another transformation in the life of the Castle. This change has been mixed. On one hand the role of administering justice and politics has greatly declined, leaving just the Crown Court to continue a 900-year-old tradition. On the other hand, there has been a growing appreciation of the special historical, architectural and archaeological interest of the area, with the Castle playing a major role in interpreting York's rich past to resident and tourist alike.

From 1900 until 1929 the Felons Prison was used as a military prison. In 1934 it was sold to the City of York Corporation and demolished. In 1938 the Female Prison was opened as the Castle Museum, to house the bequest of Dr John Kirk. The Castle Museum swiftly extended into the Debtors Prison

and has become one of the principal social history museums within the Country. In 1915 Clifford's Tower was gifted to the nation and placed under the guardianship of the Commissioners of HM Works. It is now under the care of English Heritage. A failed move to establish another political and administrative role on the site was begun in 1939 when work started on the Municipal Corporation Offices. However this was halted due to the outbreak of the Second World War, with only the basement constructed. After the War the basement was filled in and the present car park created.

Developments in conservation legislation brought official recognition and protection to what were already treasured buildings. Clifford's Tower was made a scheduled ancient monument in 1914. In 1934 this protection was extended to the former extent of the whole Castle. In 1954 the Assizes Court, Female Prison, Debtors Prison, Clifford's Tower and the remaining parts of the 13th Century Curtain Wall were included in the list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest, all at Grade I, denoting high national importance. In 1968 the area was included within the first conservation area within York, the Central Historic Core Conservation Area.

Presently the area encompasses a mix of uses; a collection of monuments, museums, and open spaces, a courthouse and car park. This lack of functional unity reflects the rather disjointed appearance to the Castle area, an appearance that arises more by accident than design. From the 1990's to the present, moves have been made to develop part of the site around the car park, causing considerable controversy. Such ongoing plans reflect the continued importance of the Castle area within the life of the City.

2.2 The Walmgate area

Archaeological excavation over the last few decades has transformed our understanding of this area of the city. Archaeological remains from the Roman period have been found including wharves and burials and there is a distinct possibility that the street itself follows the course of a Roman road. Later archaeological and documentary evidence strongly suggests that Anglo-Scandinavians extensively settled in the area in the 10th Century. The width of many properties along Walmgate still corresponds to the Anglo-Scandinavian measurement of the 'perch' (c.16ft) which was used when originally laying out the street. The name 'Walmgate' also derives from this period, probably meaning 'Walba's street'. Walba is a personal name of whom unfortunately nothing is known.



Figure 8 Walmgate

The Walmgate area, having been protected by the marshy course of the Foss was not enclosed within the city defences until the later 14th century. There were six recorded churches in the area by 1200 denoting an extensive medieval settlement. In the mid 19th Century Irish immigrants to York concentrated in Walmgate and the area's population swelled till it housed over a quarter of the city's population. Consequently it became renowned as a crowded slum with significant crime and health problems.

The Walmgate area was transformed during the 20th Century through the creation of new roads and slum clearances. In 1912 Piccadilly was extended from St Deny's Road north to Pavement. Merchantgate was then formed to link the new road to Walmgate and Foss Bridge. Both cut through the former medieval burghage plots of Walmgate and Pavement, previously used for handcraft and light industrial related uses. Piccadilly created a new link from the city to its southern approaches and the northern section was transformed by various mid 20th Century developments, including car show rooms, tram depots and a small airplane workshop. The southern section of Piccadilly developed in a more gradual and sporadic manner. At the beginning of the 20th Century the area was dominated by timber, builders' and coal merchants, subsequently replaced in the later half of the century by office blocks, hotels and flats.

2.3 The River Foss



Figure 9 River Foss

The Foss is York's second river. The natural defensive line formed by its confluence with the River Ouse is thought to be the defining reason for the foundation of the Roman city in c. 71AD. The defensive advantage of the two rivers also explains the siting of York Castle near to their confluence. Throughout the City's life the Foss has been an important focus for human activity. In the Anglo Scandinavian period the river would have defined the shape of Walmgate and been central to its economy. In the medieval period, the river was dammed to create the King's Fishpool, a lake that provided the southeastern defences to the Castle and City. After the need for defences disappeared the Foss was canalised in 1792 and exploited extensively by a number of large and small industries. Presently the use of the Foss has significantly declined allowing it to become an important natural habitat in the heart of the City.

2.4 The Castlegate Area

Castlegate led from the city to the Castle bailey, via its northeast gatehouse. Though not mentioned until the 14th Century it is likely that the street was settled shortly after the creation of the Castle in the 11th Century. The Church of St Mary has pre-conquest origins and thus predates the Castle and Castlegate. In its present form, the Grade I listed church is largely of a 15th Century external appearance and most notable for its elegant spire (Figure 10).

Until 1538 a Franciscan friary occupied much of the south side of the street. Following the closure of the friary, the southern side of Castlegate does not seem to have been intensively re-developed. Within this relatively scarce area of open ground a number of fine town houses with extensive gardens were constructed. Fairfax House (c. 1744) and Castlegate House (1762-63) are both Grade I listed and connected to John Carr who remodelled the former (1760-62) and designed the latter. Other town houses, albeit of a slightly lesser scale, occur along the whole of Castlegate, presumably outside the area of the friary, suggesting that it was not only the availability of land that was important but also a situation near to the Castle.



Figure 10 Castlegate from the Castle car park

The creation of the Felons Prison in 1826 enclosed most of the southern part of the street, later to become the entrance to the present car park. The 1980's saw two major developments adjoining Castlegate; the Coppergate Shopping Centre to its

east and the Hilton Hotel at the corner of Castlegate and Tower Street.



Figure 11 Tower Street

Tower Street previously known as Castle Lane and Castlegate Postern Lane once led from Castlegate around the moat of Clifford's Tower to the now demolished Castle Postern and then to St George's Field, Castle Mills and Fishergate. On the construction of the Felons Prison, Tower Street was bounded on the east side by high prison walls whilst on its western extent large town houses were constructed from the early to mid 19th Century. With the construction of Skeldergate Bridge and Clifford Street in 1881, Tower Street became part of one of the main routes south from the city.



Figure 12 Tower Place

Tower Place and Tower Gardens were also formed in the 19th Century (Figures 12 & 13). The former is a terrace of early 19th Century town houses built behind and at times upon the surviving boundary walls of the former Franciscan Friary. The latter is a small formal park next to the River Ouse. It was created on part of St George's Field in 1881 following the construction of Skeldergate Bridge and was the first public park within the City.

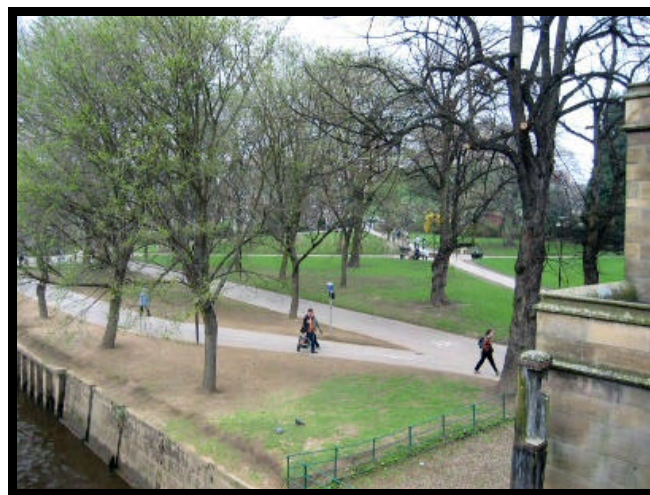


Figure 13 Tower Gardens

3. THE SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

The varying ways in which different parts of the appraisal area have developed is reflected within the buildings and spaces present today. It is desirable to continue the approach of the previous chapter and to look at each distinct area in turn drawing out the particular qualities, which define them from their neighbours.

3.1 The York Castle Area

The York Castle area has an immediate presence within the urban landscape of the City. The evolution and the importance of the site over 900 years has produced a collection of monuments that are of immediate presence and high national significance. Clifford's Tower, the remnants of Curtain Wall, Assize Courts (Crown Court), The Female Prison & The Debtors Prison (both now the Castle Museum) are all listed Grade I. Clifford's Tower, the motte on which it stands and the former extent of the Castle bailey are a scheduled ancient monument. The historic importance of each building is outlined within Section 2.1. It must be stressed that this section provides the briefest introduction of a site that is capable of extensive research and interpretation. Furthermore it is a site that can be important from many different perspectives; e.g. architectural, governmental, penal, military, social and Jewish histories.

At first glance the Castle area does not conform to the typical model of an English castle. Without most of its outer defences, gateways and moats it lacks the cohesion and completeness of a typical medieval castle. Its constituent parts appear disjointed; Clifford's Tower is stylistically and functionally separate from the three buildings around the Eye of York, which in turn shield the former Curtain Wall from within the site. The

service road around the Eye of York does little to unify the area being laid in tarmac with standard road markings. The car park is similarly incongruous and the attendant road markings and signage are confused and basic in character. Considering that the space taken up by the car park does much to form the setting of Clifford's Tower and the approach to the Eye of York this is very unfortunate. It is obvious that the site as a whole does not realise its potential and that enhancement works could bring significant benefits not only in terms of visual amenity but also to make sense of the historic importance of the area.



Figure 14 The Castle as seen from Castle Mills Bridge

Some sense of cohesion can be found looking into the site from the southern section of Tower Street and Castle Mills Bridge (Figure 14). Here the Curtain Wall physically combines with the blank rear elevations of the Female and Debtors Prison to present a stark cliff face of masonry and brick. This is seen in conjunction with the Foss and banks of self seeded native trees, scrub and lawn as well as a 19th Century sandstone stone mill. The result is remarkably rural and traditional, almost approaching that typical medieval image. This is all the more surprising considering its busy location by the inner ring road.

The architectural character of buildings within the Castle area directly reflects their historic importance. These are buildings of a strong civic purpose, built on a large scale and designed in a monumental or strongly formal manner; they represent the forefront of architectural design within their respective periods. They are constructed of dressed and sculpted stone in a landscape of brick. Each monument has its own presence and space compared to the cramped shared environments of Castlegate and Walmgate.

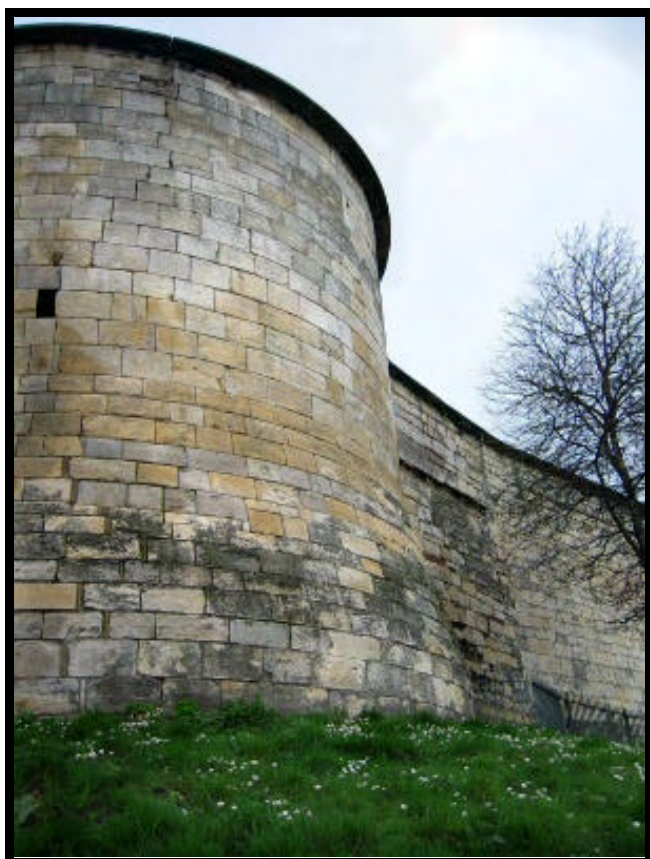


Figure 15 Detail of Curtain Wall

There is a strong distinction between the character of the medieval castle structures (Clifford's Tower and the Curtain Wall) and the former penal and current court buildings around the Eye of York (See figures 15 & 16). The former have a monumental and stark character; large expanses of magnesian limestone masonry occasionally punctuated by arrow slits and crenellation. Architectural embellishment is minimal or non-existent. Whilst the quatrefoil shape of Clifford's Tower and the undulating curves and rounded

towers of the Curtain Wall have some aesthetic value these are basically brutal buildings designed for defence, enclosure and dominance. This starkness is not unsightly however, like all ancient monuments the sheer difference of these structures to the present, in terms of age, style and purpose evokes feelings of awe and admiration.



Figure 16 Detail of the Female Prison

The court and former prison buildings in the same way as the medieval structures are designed to be imposing, yet the way in which this is achieved is markedly different. Whilst the large scale is maintained, status is expressed through each respective architect's understanding and interpretation of classical architecture and planning. Symmetry and proportion predominate and enhanced through detailing, symbolism and materials of the highest quality.

Though built in three separate periods none of the buildings have been conceived in isolation. Though there is a marked stylistic difference between the Baroque of William Wakefield's

Debtors Prison and Carr's Neo-Classical approach with the Assize Courts, Carr's design does not compete or dominate. Wilkinson and Prince's replication of the Assize Courts in the Female Prison further enhances the presence of the central building through introducing symmetry to the whole group. Unfortunately the recessed siting of the Female Prison and the way in which the Eye of York stretches out to fill the gap between the three buildings undermines this symmetry.

3.2 The Walmgate Area

The area of Walmgate covered within this appraisal is typical of many streets within the city centre. Houses with shops to the ground floor predominate in a closely-knit continuous line along the street. Properties are located directly onto the pavement. Breaks in the building line occur only occasionally where side streets and carriageways occur. Late 17th to 19th Century buildings predominate sometimes with earlier fabric behind the front façade. The majority of buildings within this area are listed Grade II.

The gradual evolution of the street over centuries has led to an organic character to development. Each building has its own individuality resulting from differences in height, through the number and arrangement of openings and variations in detailing. This variety is then balanced in several ways; through the proximity of each property to each other, the narrowness of the street and broad similarities in scale, width, purpose, design and materials. One important feature is the street's simple unassuming character, where no single building predominates unduly. This is perhaps representative of the separate often marginal aspect to Walmgate's history.

Materials are typical of urban York. Brick is used throughout, sometimes rendered or painted in off whites and creams. Slate alternates with pantile across the roofscape. Sash windows predominate, six over six panes and two over two panes being common arrangements. Many 19th Century shop-fronts remain and are generally the most decorative part of a property. Above the ground floor, design is kept simple with balanced and

proportioned facades. Detailing is equally subtle with gauged brick arches, timber eaves, cornices and stone cills being common features.



Figure 17 St Deny's Church

There are 18 listed buildings in the part of Walmgate covered by the appraisal (see Appendix 1). The majority are good examples of 18th and 19th century houses, shops and inns. To the southwest of 37 Walmgate is St Deny's Church (Grade I), a 14th and 15th Century building whose appearance is at once quirky and fascinating due to its long historic evolution and cramped, elevated churchyard (Figure 17). Around Merchantgate the dense development of Walmgate gives way to a more open space, within which buildings appear more individually. The Red Lion, Nos. 1 to 5 Walmgate (the former Stubbs buildings) and No. 2 Walmgate (Dorothy Wilson's Hospital and cottage) are all Grade II listed buildings. Their individual prominence is further emphasised by the differences between the buildings themselves. The Red Lion is a timber-framed building of 16th Century origins (Figure 18). No 2 Walmgate is a former almshouse and school built of brick with stone dressings, within the classically influenced design of the mid 18th Century. Foss Bridge, just north of Merchantgate, was constructed between 1811 to 1812 by Peter Atkinson Junior. This is a small elegant stone bridge that affords views across to Piccadilly and the development brief site. It is a grade II* listed structure.



Figure 18. The Red Lion Public House

Piccadilly is a street of three parts. The northern part where it links with Pavement and Coppergate is largely a mix of early and late 20th Century commercial and office buildings. The White Swan on the corner of Coppergate was originally a commercial and hotel development built on the site of an inn of the same name. It is designed within a 'mock Tudor' or Elizabethan revival style, an unusual if not unique architectural style within the city centre. Whilst the building has some local historic interest and the overall design some architectural merit, it lacks the quality expressed in other buildings of this date and style within the city centre. This impression is made significantly worse by its current unoccupied state.

Opposite the White Swan, Nos. 1 to 5, 7 & 9 and 11 to 15 Piccadilly are more typical of the quality of early 20th Century architecture within the city centre. All were designed with shops to the ground floor with offices above. Nos. 1 to 5 Piccadilly is a grade II listed bank and office development constructed between 1915 & 1921 by Brierley & Rutherford. Built within an 18th Century domestic classical style it follows on from the neighbouring 18th and 19th Century properties of 6 & 8 Pavement. Nos. 7 & 9 has a retrained 'arts and craft' influence to its upper storeys whilst well crafted Egyptian style detailing can be found on the remnants of the shop front and office entrance. 11 to 15 Piccadilly comprise a nine bay central block with pilasters in an Egyptian style, flanked by two blocks of three bays in an 18th Century

style similar to nos. 1 to 5 Piccadilly. Whilst the loss of the original shop fronts and poor signage detracts from the quality of these buildings, as a group they represent good examples of the eclectic, varied nature of early 20th Century architecture.

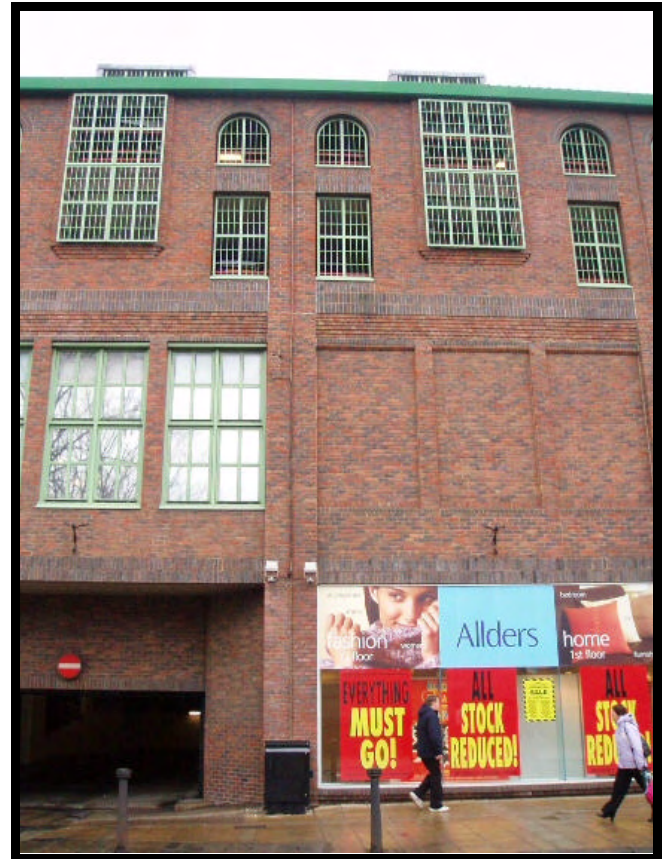


Figure 19 Coppergate Centre, Piccadilly

Continuing south, the east and west sides of the street could not be more different. On the east side, the Merchant Adventurers Hall (Grade I listed) is one of York's most important and interesting historic buildings. Constructed in the mid 14th Century and significantly added to over the following four centuries it is the best surviving example of a two-storey guildhall in Europe. The construction of Piccadilly raised the surrounding road above the Hall so it now appears considerably lower than the pavement. Initially its sunken position means the building appears as something of a surprise but once encountered it is easily the most attractive and prominent building within the street scene.

The western side is dominated by the Coppergate centre (Figure 19). The centre presents a rear elevation of brick en mass, punctuated on the ground floor by some shop fronts and service entrances and on the upper storeys by gridded windows to a multi-storey car park and often obscured glazing to shop or storage areas. This result is similar to the centre's southern elevation, a blank dominating mass of brickwork, where architectural detailing and rhythm is either lost or over-shadowed.



Figure 20 Piccadilly looking south from Merchantgate

The middle section, south from Piccadilly Bridge, is more utilitarian in character (Figure 20). This is partially due to the type of buildings, warehouses, former light industrial units and showrooms. It is also due to neglect and the poor weathering qualities of the buildings. The majority of these structures date from the first half of the 20th Century, especially the interwar period. Such a grouping is unusual within the city centre and they tell us something of this period within York's history. Architecturally there is a mix of styles and building types with the only real sense of unity coming from a tight building line and the maintenance of similar heights. Stylistically the buildings are utilitarian in character with minimal detailing and lacking a strong aesthetic quality. There are a few embellishments such as the entrance to the Banana Warehouse and vaulted roof of the NCP car park but on the whole the architectural merit of these structures is not

commensurate with the majority of the conservation area.



Figure 21 Piccadilly, south of Dennis Street

Moving south from the junction with St Deny's Road any pretence of a streetscape breaks down in favour of large office, hotel and residential developments dating from the last third of the 20th Century to the present (Figure 21). Each development appears independently with scant regard paid to context or forming a sense of place, apart from perhaps the Travelodge Hotel, which picks up the materials and curves of the Curtain Wall and City Walls. Architecturally this part of Piccadilly is very mixed. The uncompromising post war style of the Ryedale Building is completely at odds with the scale and form of the conservation area. This is particularly unfortunate due to its dominance on the skyline especially when viewed from the River Foss and from views into and from within the Castle Area (See section 6.1). Similarly United House is uncompromising in its scale and form, paying no regard whatsoever to the adjoining development on St Deny's Road. The scale of the buildings and the absence of any real building line combine to form an almost 'canyon' like appearance redolent of a large city. This results in an alienating feel, which partially compounds the run-down appearance of the middle section of Piccadilly.

3.3 The Castlegate Area

Like Walmgate, Castlegate has evolved over

centuries resulting in a varied close-knit character. The individuality of each building is brought together through the narrowness of the street and similarities in scale, position, use and materials. The many town houses found along its length provide a grandeur and exclusive quality that is lacking within other streets. The most notable examples of such development are Fairfax House, Castlegate House (Figure 22) and No.11 Castlegate (See Section 2.4).



Figure 22 Castlegate House

Buildings are constructed in brick with slate roofs. The high status of development is expressed through a greater width to buildings than is usual within the City centre, a stronger sense of proportion and pronounced use of architectural embellishment. St Mary's Church acts as a focal point within the street despite its sunken position and late 20th Century entrance platforms.

20th Century development within and adjoining the street has had a noticeable if not dominant effect on Castlegate. This effect is mixed, examples such

as 1920's terracotta cinema entrance (now part of Fairfax House) has become part of the historic character of the street whereas the Government Office's only saving graces are the use of brick and a position slightly recessed from the street frontage.

Both the Coppergate Centre and Hilton Hotel have a close visual relationship to Castlegate, dominating and framing the southern start of the street. These are large-scale developments are clothed in traditional materials, brick and pantiles. Detailing is loosely derived from the small scale York vernacular yet repeated over large expanses. Built in the early 1980's these developments can be seen as a logical response to the worst uncompromising examples of modernist architecture. With hindsight the success of such an approach is debatable. Whilst the use of traditional influences softens the impact of such a scale of development it is now widely accepted that successful design in historic locations goes beyond a basic understanding of materials and loose historic references and that a wider understanding of context is required.

In comparison to Castlegate and Walmgate, development along Tower Street and Tower Place almost exclusively dates from the early to mid 19th Century and consequently exhibits a more planned and coherent character. Differences of size and basic design do occur within buildings suggesting that the area was developed in a piecemeal fashion, albeit within decades. Accordingly the building line, architectural style and materials remain constant. The basic materials are pinkish brown brick laid in Flemish bond, and slate roofs. Vertical sash windows of sixteen panes, stone string courses, dentilled eaves courses and simple classical door surrounds are common features. In design a restrained well-proportioned approach is followed, very typical of development within York at this period.

There is a marked difference in character between Tower Street and Tower Place. Tower Street comprises mainly three storey houses, often with shops inserted within the ground floor. The unity of the street is undermined by differences with the

design of the buildings themselves but also by the shop-fronts and occasional use of render. Tower Place is much more domestic and coherent, being a typical, yet extremely well designed terrace of two storey houses. Typically for the period each property has a front garden bounded by low walls and railings. The terrace is separated from Tower Gardens by the former medieval wall of the Franciscan Friary.

Tower Gardens are described in the following section on open and green spaces within the area covered by the appraisal. However it should be pointed out that in visual and historic terms they are closely related to Tower Street and Tower Place. All three elements combine to produce an attractive and coherent section of the conservation area, which links the Castle area with the River Ouse.

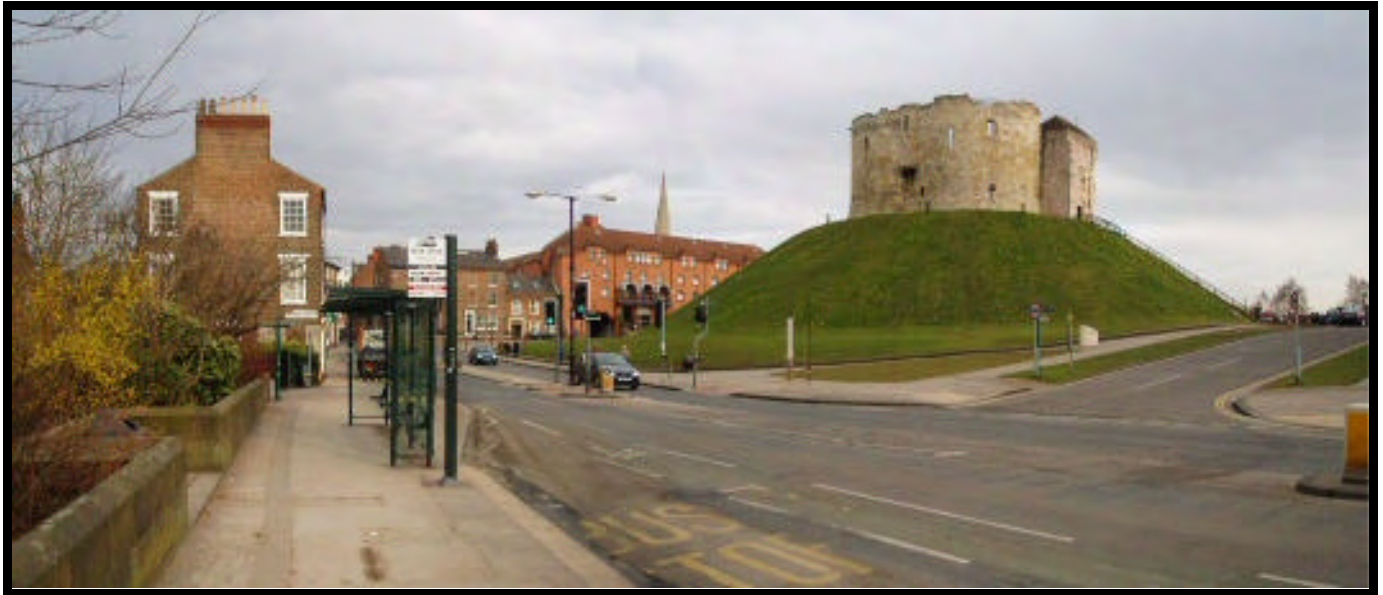


Figure 23 Tower Street and Clifford's Tower

4. THE QUALITY OF OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL SPACES WITHIN THE AREA

Though the area covered by this appraisal is predominately urban in character, open and natural spaces play more than an incidental role in forming its character. In planned and accidental ways natural spaces help to define the area, adding to its visual amenity and historic importance.

4.1 The River Foss

The appraisal contains that part of the River Foss that flows from Foss Bridge southwest beneath Piccadilly Bridge to Castle Mills Bridge. The Foss divides the Castle area from Piccadilly and Walmgate. Historically and presently this has resulted in distinctly different forms of development either side of the river. Whilst the Castle area has developed largely within its own boundaries, the eastern bank has been transformed through the reclamation of land, in order to extend rear plots of properties along Walmgate. This process started in the Middle Ages and continued through the centuries before the canalising of the Foss in 1792 established a firm boundary. This in turn allowed a more intensive use of these rear plots for handcraft and industrial related uses whilst bringing development right up to the banks of the river, such as at Piccadilly (Figure 24).

The industry that once used the river and built on its banks has disappeared. Consequently the River Foss often appears overshadowed and hidden from view. Paradoxically the industrial past that has resulted in the river's neglected state is also part of its historic interest in conservation terms. Also, such a strong natural feature as a river can be said to have an innate beauty and interest and as such have significant enhancement potential.

Planting along the riverbank is haphazard yet significant. The western back of the river alongside the Castle and car park forms a near continuous line of planting that enhances the

natural quality of the river itself. This is particularly noticeable to the south of the car park where the bank widens and naturally seeded native species of trees combine attractively with the high walls of the Female Prison and Curtain Wall. This aspect, best viewed from Castle Mills Bridge, is remarkably rural and distinct especially when compared to the large developments of Piccadilly opposite and the busy inner ring road running past it (Figure 30).



Figure 24 The River Foss and west side of Piccadilly

Detailed discussion of the ecology of the river is beyond the scope of this appraisal yet it is worth mentioning that, despite its degraded character, it does make an important contribution as part of the natural habitat network through the city centre. This is reflected in the species known to use the river and its links with the River Ouse.

4.2 The Castle Area

The open spaces within the Castle area help provide a formal setting to the Castle buildings. With the exception of the car park these spaces are articulated through being grassed over with little or no tree cover. This simple treatment contrasts favourably with the detailed stone facades of the 18th and 19th Century buildings and the monumentality of Clifford's Tower. It is unfortunate that the car park and the road into the site from Tower Street interrupt these areas of open space, when more cohesion could be

achieved with a more considered and holistic approach.

The motte or mound on which Clifford's Tower stands is an integral part of the tower and of great historical importance, in that it is the most recognisable remnant of the first Norman phase of the Castle (Figure 25). Of a more modern origin is the yearly display of daffodils on its slopes every spring that has become, with similar displays along the City Walls, a seasonal highlight within the City.



Figure 25 Clifford's Tower

The Eye of York is integral to forming the setting of the three buildings around it. Though it helps to unify the whole space by providing a common foreground it also emphasises the offset placing of the Female Prison, which in turn underlines the imperfect grouping of the buildings. Within the lawn an oak tree was planted by the former MP Alex Lyon, to commemorate his representation in the House of Commons for the York constituency from 1966 to 1983. As a landscape feature it

seems isolated and incongruous within its setting.

Whilst the area covered by the car park is essential in forming the setting of Clifford's Tower it significantly detracts from the character and legibility of the Castle area as a whole (See Section 3.1).

4.3 Tower Gardens

Tower Gardens is a small park next to the River Ouse. It was created on part of St George's field in 1881 following the construction on Skeldergate Bridge and was the first public park within the City. It is a pleasant mix of mature planting and lawn crossed by a network of paths. These paths form links between the River Ouse, Tower Street and New Walk. The gardens were recently improved as part of the Millennium bridge riverside walkway.

4.4 Other areas

Away from the Castle and Foss small open spaces are found sporadically throughout the area as small yards and gardens. These places have developed gradually according to changes in property ownership, building and land use. Such areas occur somewhat incidentally within the street scene and at times can combine attractively with the historic buildings to which they belong e.g. front gardens to Tower Place or St Deny's Church Yard (Figure 26). The garden to the Merchant Adventurers Hall is of particular note. This is a subtly arranged garden next to the River Foss that is based on historic planting schemes. It provides an oasis of calm just off the main shopping areas of the City.

5. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA

5.1 Introduction

The site, which is the subject of this Conservation Area Appraisal, preserves a sequence of archaeological deposits that have accumulated over the last 10,000 years. These deposits, together with the relict geological features define the present topography of the site.

York Castle occupies an elevated promontory defined by the valley of the River Ouse to the west and the River Foss to the east. This landscape probably changed relatively little between the immediate post-glacial period and the advent of agricultural activity in the area during the Neolithic (c 4000BC). However, there is relatively little archaeological evidence for the associated tree-clearances and “domestication” of the landscape. In the period immediately prior to the arrival of the Romans in 71AD, the landscape would have been a sparsely wooded, rural area of relatively flat, high ground falling steeply away into the two river valleys to the east and west and to the confluence of the rivers to the south. The next two thousand years is the story of developing settlement which led to the accumulation of archaeological deposits within the river valleys and on the high ground to produce the topography and townscape that is visible today.

The archaeological features and deposits in this area are covered by two statutory designations. The site lies within the Central Area of Archaeological Importance (designated under Part 2 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act). The Castle area has produced Roman, Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval deposits of national importance. Part of the site of York Castle is included within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of York Castle (Monument No. 13275 York Castle: motte and bailey castle, tower keep castle, (including Clifford’s Tower) and site of part of Roman-British fort-vicus and Anglian

cemetery.

5.2 Evidence from Archaeological Investigations

A series of archaeological interventions have produced a detailed picture of the date, character and state of preservation of the deposits on the site. These deposits can be briefly characterised as being

- a) Deep, waterlogged, and organically rich. These are located primarily in the two river valleys. Along Piccadilly, a deep, waterlogged, anoxically preserved archaeological sequence which dates from the Roman period through to the 16th Century survives in this area. This sequence includes well-preserved organic deposits and timber structures. Part of this sequence appears to be part of an Anglo-Scandinavian (Viking) riverside structure. These deposits are preserved at and below 6.5m AOD. A detailed programme of monitoring of archaeological deposits to cover water levels, water quality, and gas production will be required in this area. However, the deep ditches cut to provide the defences of York Castle in 1067-68 also preserve this type of deposit.
- b) Dry, little organic preservation. These deposits occupy much of the Castle car park area. In this area they are from the much disturbed Roman, Anglo-Scandinavian, and medieval stratigraphy. The 1826 prison and the 1939 basement have caused massive destruction and disturbance of the medieval and earlier sequences on the site. There is no evidence for the key medieval elements of the castle in this area: the northern gateway and the stone Curtain Wall and associated towers. Pre-19th Century deposits survive only in those areas which lie outside the footprint of the prison and the basement structures. They also overlie the deep waterlogged organically rich deposits along Piccadilly.

c) Inhumations. There are a series of human burials preserved across the site. These relate to a Roman cemetery of unknown extent; an Anglo-Scandinavian cemetery localised in the area immediately adjacent to the Female Prison; and a 19th Century prison cemetery superimposed on the Anglo-Scandinavian cemetery.

d) Dry material re-deposited to create the motte which supports the 13th Century structure of Clifford's Tower.

The buried archaeological deposits define the topography of this site. The waterlogged anoxic deposits outside the scheduled area can be regarded as unscheduled deposits of national importance. The dry deposits outside the scheduled area are not of national importance but are of great significance to understanding the regional and local importance of this site.



*Figure 26. 19th Century skeleton found near the Female Prison
Ó York Archaeological Trust*

6. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DIFFERENT AREAS COVERED WITHIN THE APPRAISAL

The purpose of this section is to draw together all the distinct areas covered in the previous chapters and to look at the relationships between them. First the visual and physical connections will be considered. Second, the relative importance of each area in terms of their contribution to the conservation area is summarised.

It is held that no single part of this area should be considered in isolation and that all parts are representative of the York Historic Core Conservation Area as a whole.

6.1 Views from within the area covered by the Appraisal (Map 3)

The River Foss and the Castle area have evolved within their own natural or original boundaries. This in turn has shaped the evolution of all adjoining development and influenced movement and views throughout the area covered by the appraisal.

The River Foss has dictated the western extent of Walmgate and Piccadilly and the eastern extent of the Castle area. The latter has influenced the course of the Foss and the course and extent of Castlegate and Tower Street. The influence of this layout is twofold. Firstly, the Castle area and to a lesser extent, the Foss, are focal points as they largely define the area in question. Secondly both the Castle area and the Foss obstruct connectivity, pushing development and movement away from themselves. This is most obvious with the River Foss, which naturally divides Walmgate and Piccadilly from the Castle area, Castlegate and Tower Street.

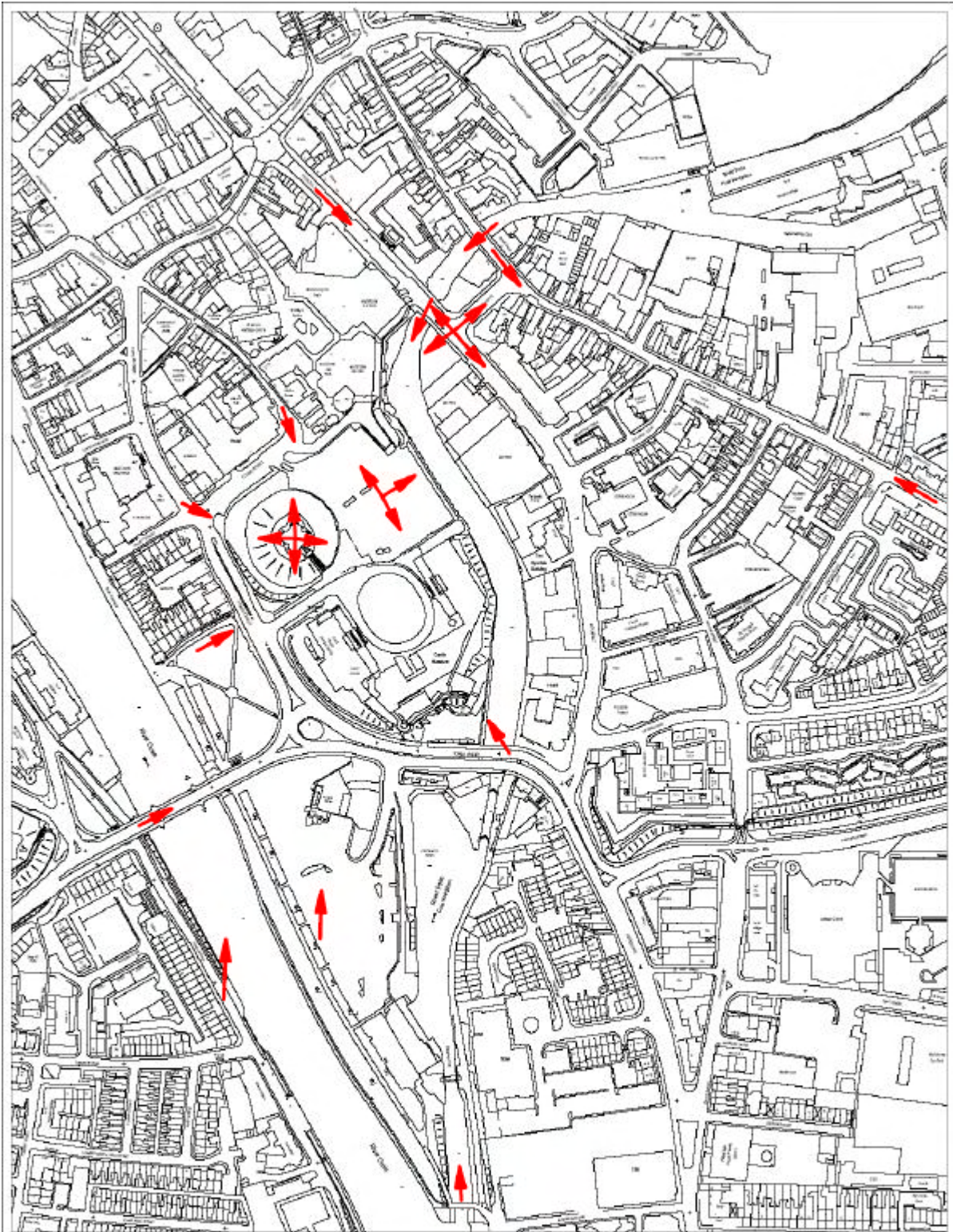
Walmgate is largely inward facing. Its densely developed narrow building lines hinder both movement and views out to surrounding areas. This presents a self contained historic character that is of significant quality and charm.

On the street's south side occasional glimpses of Piccadilly and Clifford's Tower are found through carriageways and side streets such as Dennis Street. Merchantgate acts as a main meeting point between Piccadilly and Walmgate, opening out views between both streets and also to Fossgate and the Castle area. Just to the north, Foss Bridge offers attractive views along the river to Piccadilly Bridge and Clifford's Tower, a view undermined by the bulk of the Coppergate centre multi-storey car park (Figure 27). The view from Piccadilly Bridge is perhaps the best vantage point in this area to view the Castle area, allowing the River Foss, Clifford's Tower and the Eye of York to be seen together.



Figure 27 View from Foss Bridge to Clifford's Tower

Like Walmgate, Piccadilly is largely inward facing, with views west across to the Foss and Castle area being found occasionally, through breaks in the building line (Figure 28). However, the scale of buildings at the street's southern extent dominates the skyline and on the western side they have a close visual relationship with the River Foss and the Castle area. This is most closely experienced from the Foss itself and from views east across the Castle area. The most notable example of this is with the Ryedale Building whose poor physical presence markedly intrudes upon the Castle area, especially the Female Prison. This instance is significantly detrimental to the setting of the Castle area.



9, St. Leonards Place, York, YO1 2ET
Telephone: 01904 613161

MAP 3 IMPORTANT VIEWS

SCALE 1:3500
Engineering Group

DRAWN BY PSL
Project

DATE 19/2/05
Attingham

CASTLES



Derived from the 1992 Ordnance Survey 1:25000 mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
© Crown Copyright. Reproduced by permission. All Rights Reserved. York City Council LA 1998.

York City Council LA 1998.

Glimpses of the Foss and both sides of its banks can be observed from both Castle Mills Bridge and Piccadilly Bridge. The views to the Castle area side are always the more rewarding, especially from Castle Mills Bridge where the high walls, banks and mature planting combine. These vantage points are particularly important in showing the narrowness of the Foss and the close proximity of its banks.



Figure 28 View to the Castle from Piccadilly

Castlegate is narrow, the buildings tall, giving the sense of enclosure typical of the city centre. This provides a self-enclosed aspect yet at its southern extent the street opens up to provide an impressive view of the Castle area complex and Tower Street. This view is made more impressive due to the quality of the historic buildings within Castlegate, meaning that the view of the Castle area is juxtaposed with the proximity of buildings such as St Mary's Church, Fairfax House and Castlegate House. This strong combination is representative of Castlegate's historic role as the principal link between the City and Castle area.

A similar view across the Castle area is encountered at the southern extent of the Coppergate Centre where it meets the car park. The scale and mass of the Centre can be said to detract from some views, principally that from the Castle area to Castlegate where its scale combined with that of the Hilton Hotel dominate and overshadow the historic buildings of Castlegate.

Tower Street is defined by the western boundary of the Castle area and this results in uninterrupted views across the Castle complex. The monumentality of Clifford's Tower is clearly experienced here as is the sense of enclosure provided by the Curtain Wall at the southern extent of the street. The junction of Clifford Street, Tower Street and Peckitt Street provides one of the best views of Clifford's Tower, where its dominating form and scale is most clearly felt. Tower Street and Castle Mills Bridge is perhaps the best location from which to gain an impression of the Castle area as a castle, in the sense of a fortification, medieval in origin. Tower Gardens physically links two of the City's principal landmarks, the River Ouse and the Castle area.



Figure 29 Castle car park

The York Castle area is largely open in aspect inviting views from and providing views to Tower Street, Castlegate, Clifford Street, The Foss, Piccadilly and occasionally, Walmgate. The importance of Clifford's Tower cannot be understated either as a vantage point from which to survey the City and the surrounding countryside or as one of the most famous landmarks on the City's skyline. Views from the Eye of York are also important yet more enclosed, dominated by the three court and museum buildings and overshadowed by Clifford's Tower. The Castle car park strongly detracts from views across and into the Castle area (Figure 29). The view from the car park is however important. Whilst not the most attractive vantage point it is the only place other

than Clifford's Tower where each distinct character area discussed in this appraisal can be seen together and where the relationship between the Castle area, River Foss and Piccadilly can be readily comprehended.

6.2 Views into the area covered by the Appraisal (Map 3)

Approaching from the City centre there is a sense of continuity as the dense varied form of development continues along Walmgate, Castlegate, Clifford Street, and Coppergate Centre and to a lesser extent Piccadilly. The build density and flat topography of the City means that views are generally restricted; the eye is drawn along streets and kept to relatively small areas. Views across parts of the city are only found occasionally and sporadically through breaks in building lines or slight rises in ground level. Fossgate and Walmgate are strongly connected visually as are Clifford Street and Tower Street where the highly styled deep red brick municipal buildings of the former contrast with the simpler softer coloured mainly domestic buildings of the latter. The Castle area breaks up this pattern and in doing so becomes one of the focal points of the Central Historic Core conservation area. This contrasts with the canalised River Foss that is largely overshadowed by buildings along its banks.

Views from the southeast and along Fishergate are fairly enclosed and directed towards the inner ring road or the southern section of Piccadilly or both. The stretch of city wall around Fishergate postern provides some glimpses across to the Castle area, especially the Curtain Wall.

South and west of the Castle area views are more open. Both banks of the Ouse afford some of the best views of the Castle area around the Clementhorpe and St Georges Field sections. These views combine with such strong features as the Ouse itself, the mature planting of New Walk and Skeldergate Bridge. Skeldergate Bridge and parts of Bishophill allow similar views combined with the buildings along the banks of the Ouse, many of which are listed. Further afield both the

Castle area and the southern section of Piccadilly can be seen from the Millennium Bridge.

6.3 The relative importance of the different parts of the area covered by this appraisal

It is natural that in such a complex area as that described in this appraisal, different parts will vary in the contribution they make to the special architectural and historic interest to the area as a whole. Focal points are of immense importance. The international historic and architectural significance of the Castle area has been strongly made in this appraisal. Similarly the River Foss whilst almost being hidden by surrounding development is of great significance not only through how it has defined the area but also as a strong natural feature within a predominately urban environment.

Of the streets described within this appraisal it is the older more established ones that contribute the most to the character of the conservation area. Castlegate and the northern section of Walmgate, though different in character, present a strong sense of the historic and aesthetic evolution of the city. In this respect they are comparable to other streets such as Low and High Petergate and Stonegate. Such streets are the basic defining units of the city providing the depth of historic and architectural interest that makes York famous for its heritage. Tower Street, Tower Place and Tower Gardens have less historical depth yet remain of interest. This area is a good example of domestic expansion within the first half of the early 19th Century. Architecturally the restrained design of the buildings is directly related to the late Georgian and Regency building traditions of the city and the visual impression has significant townscape quality. The quality of all the above streets is reflected in the number of listed buildings within them and the amount of traditional unlisted buildings that retain their historic character.

Moving to the 20th Century, Merchantgate is of importance because of the link it forms between Fossgate, Walmgate and Piccadilly. The width of the street allows a number of significant and visually distinct listed buildings to be seen at once, most notably the Merchant Adventurers Hall, The Red Lion and 1 to 5 Walmgate (the former Stubbs ironmongery). Piccadilly is a very mixed street in terms of its character and importance. The eastern side from Pavement to Merchantgate contributes significantly to the character of the conservation area whilst the western side has a more neutral to negative effect because of the dominance of the Coppergate Centre. The value of the middle section, from Foss Bridge to St Deny's Street, is debatable. The concentration of mid 20th Century architecture is unusual and encapsulates some historic interest in terms of previous uses and building types. However the architectural qualities of these buildings and the aesthetic contribution they make to the area is limited. Whilst this is partly down to the degraded state of the buildings, the intrinsic architectural merit of these buildings in national and local terms is questionable. The remaining southern section is almost exclusively modern in date, style and layout without relating to the form and character of the conservation area that surrounds it. The area is so distinct that it can almost be described as separate yet the scale and poor design of many of its buildings, in particular the Ryedale Building and United House, is such as to draw attention from outside into the area, bringing in incongruous and often poorly designed buildings into the wider cityscape. In this respect the southern section can be said to detract from the character of the conservation area.

CONCLUSION

The generally accepted definition of conservation is that it is a way of managing change in a sustainable way. It involves a process of understanding what makes a place special and important and how this quality may be continued and made relevant to the needs of today's society. It is hoped that this appraisal will aid this process of understanding for all parties and perspectives.

The area covered by this appraisal is focused on the immediate environment of one particular development site, the Castle Piccadilly area. Past applications on the site have caused considerable controversy because of the impact on the Castle Area, in particular Clifford's Tower. It is not the purpose of the appraisal to comment on or suggest particular proposals but rather to explain why the area can be seen as sensitive, why it is appreciated.

It is also important to realise that neither the Castle or Piccadilly can be viewed in isolation; they are part of a complex historic and natural environment. The connections within this area are

complicated meaning that development along Piccadilly or the Castle car park will not only impact on the Castle area but also sections of the Foss, Walmgate, Castlegate, Tower Street and beyond. The character and quality of this environment is also very complex. Moving through the area involves encountering differing types of development, different combinations of historic and modern architecture, and natural and built spaces all within a short space of time.

The special architectural and historic character of the area covered within the appraisal is considerable. It is consistent with and an integral part of the wider York Central Historic Core Conservation Area. Any development within the area must seek to respond to this quality. Whilst this may seem a complicated task a thorough process of understanding existing character will hopefully lead not only to an understanding of what is important, what should be saved but also what can be worked with, changed and in turn contribute to the evolution of the area.



Figure 30. The View from Castle Mills Bridge

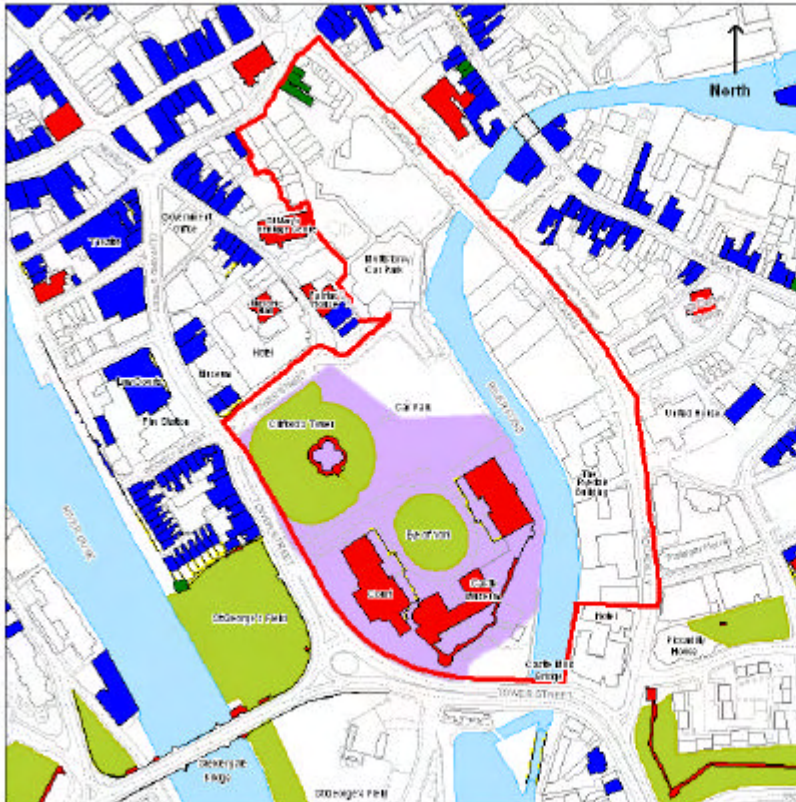
APPENDIX 1

LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE APPRAISAL AREA

Building / Structure	Grade	Date of Listing
Castle Area		
Castle Museum / The Debtors Prison	I	14/06/54
Castle Museum / The Female Prison	I	14/06/54
Crown Court & railings attached to front / The Assize Court	I	14/06/54
Clifford's Tower	I	14/06/54
Curtain Wall	I	14/06/54
Walmgate – Merchantgate to St Deny's Road		
Nos. 1 & 3 Foss Bridge House	II	#24/06/83
No. 2 Dorothy Wilson's Hospital and attached cottages	II	14/06/54
No. 5	II	19/08/71
No. 7 The Red Lion Public House	II	14/06/54
Nos. 8 & 8a	II	14/06/54
No. 9	II	19/08/71
Nos. 11 & 11a	II	24/06/83
No. 13	II	24/06/83
No. 15	II	#24/06/83
No. 17	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 19, 21 & 23	II	#24/06/83
No. 24 The Five Lions Public House and attached outbuildings	II	14/06/54
No. 25	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 26 & 28	II	08/01/82
No. 32	II	#24/06/83
No. 34	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 35 & 37	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 50 to 58	II	#24/06/83
Church of St Deny's	I	14/06/54
Fossgate (Selected buildings only)		
Merchant Adventurers Hall	I	14/06/54
Nos. 39, 40 & 41 Gatehouse to Merchant Adventurers Hall	II*	14/06/54
Foss Bridge	II*	14/06/54
Piccadilly		
Nos 1, 3 & 5 Piccadilly Chambers listed under Nos. 2	II	#24/06/83

Building / Structure	Grade	Date of Listing
Castlegate		
Nos. 1, 3 & 3A	II	14/06/54
No. 5 The Little John Public House	II	19/08/71
No.7	II	01/07/68
Nos. 9 & 11	II	19/08/71
Nos. 12, 14 & 16 Friargate House	II	14/06/54
No. 18	II	19/0871
No. 20 and wall attached to south-west corner	II	14/06/54
Nos. 25 & 27 Fairfax House	I	14/06/54
No. 26 Castlegate House and attached railings	I	14/06/54
Railings and gate piers approx 10m north-east of No. 26 Castlegate House	II*	24/06/83
No. 29	II	24/06/83
No. 31	II	24/06/83
The York Story / Church of St Mary	I	14/06/54
Tower Street		
Nos. 3 & 4 and gates to attached railings to front	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 6 & 7	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 8, 9, 10, 10A & B	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 11 & 12	II	#24/06/83
Nos. 13 & 14	II	#24/06/83
Tower Place		
No. 1 Postern House	II	24/06/83
Nos. 2 to 8 and attached garden railings, gates and gate piers	II	14/06/54
No. 9 Davy Tower	II*	14/06/54
Wall to south of footpath running from No. 9 Tower Street (Listed under City Walls, City wall attached to Tower Place)	I	14/06/54

Approximate



Map 4:
Historic Context
Listed Buildings

- Area covered by the Planning Brief
- Grade I Listed Buildings
- Grade II* Listed Buildings
- Grade II Listed Buildings
- Areas of Open Space
- Extent of Scheduled Ancient Monument

Scale: 1 cm = 30 Metres