

H/C/I CITY CENTRE  
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SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL CONSERVATION AREA  
STATEMENT OF  
SPECIAL INTEREST



*The Prudential Assurance building, Pinstone Street.*

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING OFFICER  
DIRECTORATE OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

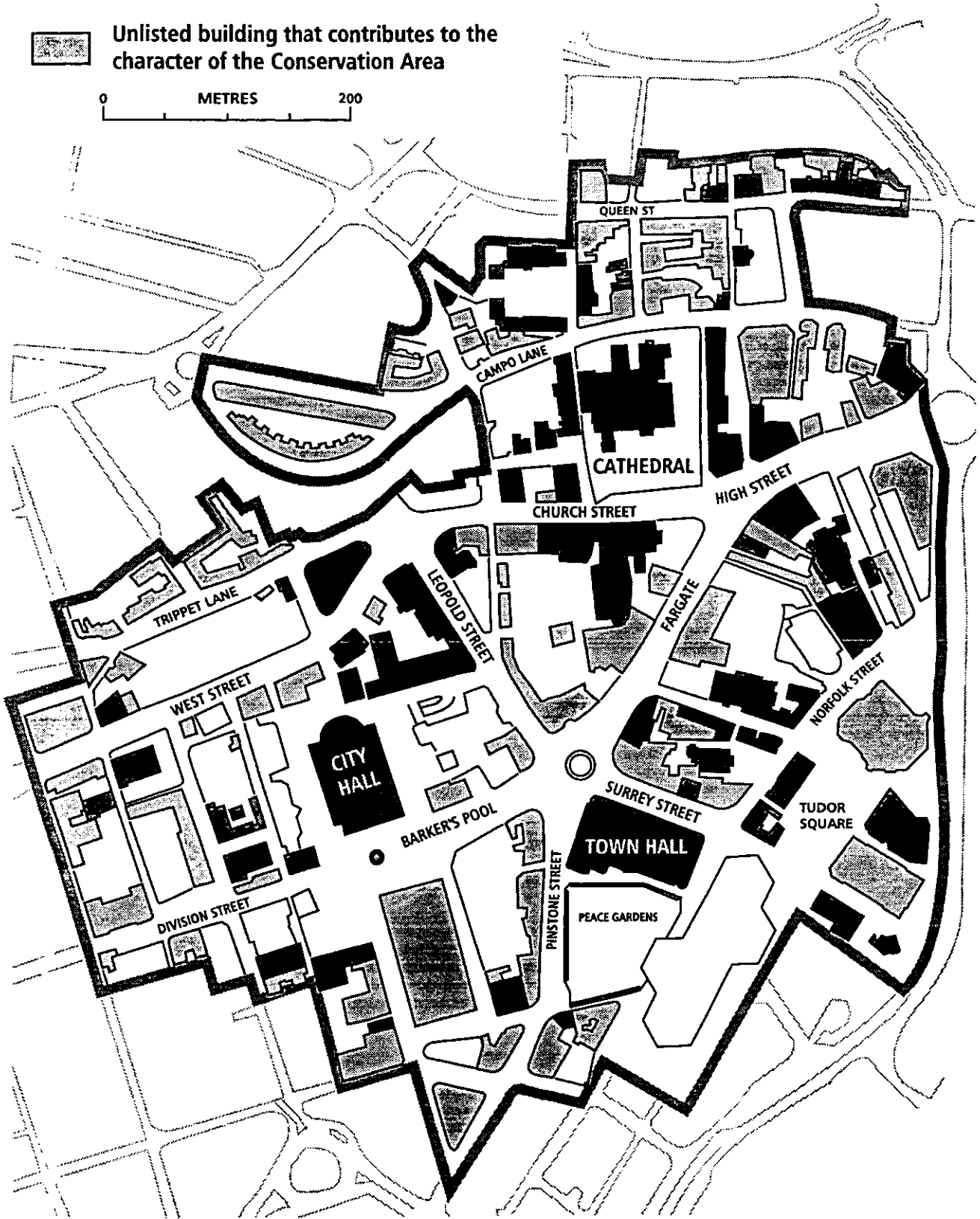


# Sheffield City Centre Conservation Area

 Listed Building

 Unlisted building that contributes to the character of the Conservation Area

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SHEFFIELD CITY CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

# STATEMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

## Introduction

This Statement of Special Interest was written using guidance contained within PPG15 and English Heritage's guidance on Conservation Area Practice. It is intended to confirm the special interest of the City Centre Conservation Area and define and record the architectural or historic interest of the Area. It should be used in conjunction with the approved plan of the Conservation Area. The revised, extended Conservation Area boundary was approved by the City Centre and West Planning Sub-Committee on 19th August 1996. The new area encompasses the former Town Hall and Cathedral Conservation Areas.

## History and Topography

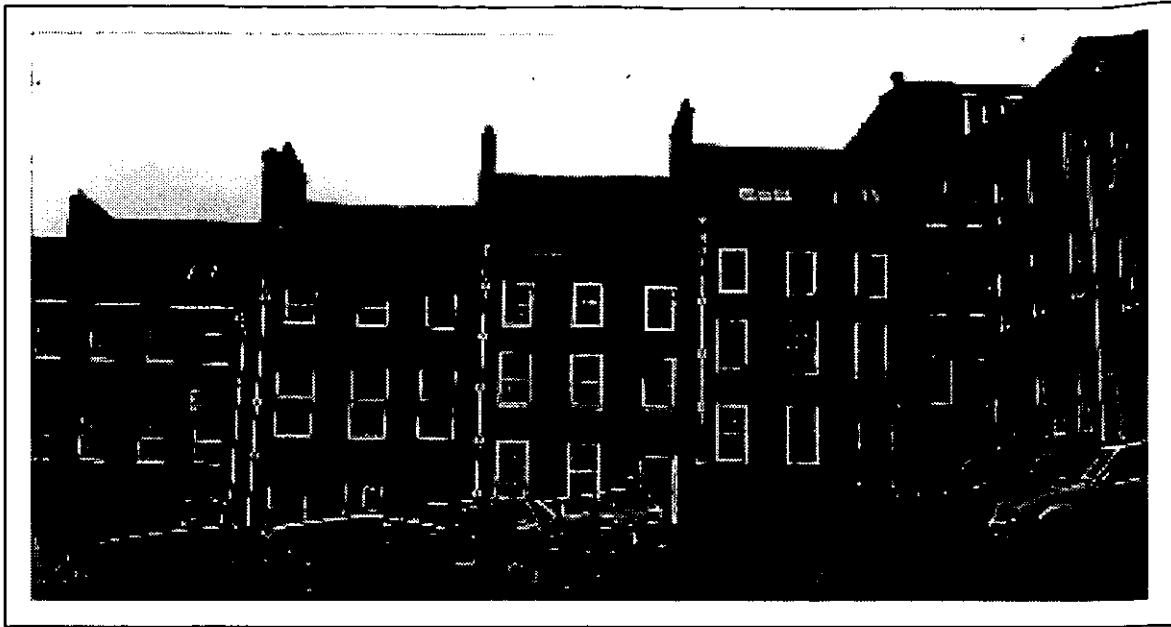
### ORIGINS

Sheffield takes its name from the River Sheaf, a tributary of the Don. Early documentary sources refer to the town as Escafeld, meaning an area of open or cleared woodland on the Sheaf. The early town of Sheffield extended from the area around the 12th century castle at the confluence of the Rivers Don and Sheaf, up the hill via Waingate, Market Place and High Street to the parish church. The town's first market charter was granted in 1296, for a market outside the castle walls. Whilst there are no surviving medieval buildings apart from parts of the cathedral and fragments of the castle, the

medieval street pattern is surprisingly intact. The pattern of land ownership, although partly eroded by the last hundred years of development, is still discernible. Burgage plots ran back from the main streets through to narrower back streets and lanes. The courts or walks, such as High Court, are relics of the property boundaries from this early town. Some of the street names, such as Fargate, are medieval in origin. The area of the City Centre between Lady's Bridge and Market Place, which was part of the medieval town, has not been included in this Conservation Area because the scale of later development has detracted from its architectural or historic interest.

### ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeological interest of the City Centre is focused on the medieval and early post-medieval periods. In many parts of the City Centre, post-medieval and industrial period cellars and building construction have destroyed archaeological evidence. However, the archaeology of several important sites has been recorded, including the cathedral and the moated castle site, where several excavations have taken place, since the 1920s. There will be opportunities for archaeological investigation in the future, particularly on uncellared sites, as they are redeveloped.



*18th Century Merchants' Houses, Paradise Square*

#### POST MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

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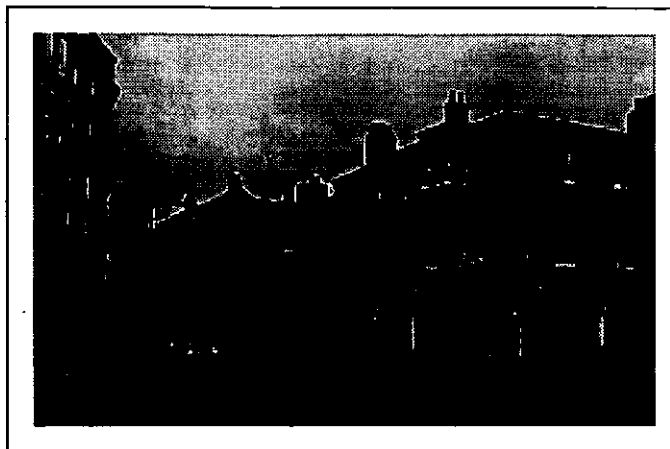
Sheffield was established as a centre of metal-working and cutlery by the late 16th century. At first this was a water-powered industry, based upstream of the town, in the valleys of the Sheaf, the Rivelin, the Porter and the Loxley rivers. Cutlery-making spread to the town centre and the status of this industry was recognised by the formation of the Company of Cutlers in 1624. The industry grew rapidly during the 18th century, developed further by the invention of crucible steel in the 1740s by Benjamin Huntsman. Cutlery brought increasing prosperity to the town, and a growing population. Early 18th century town planning on the edge of the town centre resulted in Paradise Square, built up with merchants' houses, and a rough grid plan of streets on this hillside between the parish church and West Bar. At the end of the 18th century, land owned by the Duke of Norfolk, the town's most prominent landowner, was developed in a grid pattern, to the south and east of Norfolk Street. These streets were built up with cutlery workshops, often incorporating the houses of their owners.

#### 19TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

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From the beginning of the 19th century the town spread westwards along the ridge from Barkers Pool. West Street did not exist until about 1800 and later became an important street with the construction of the Sheffield to Glossop turnpike in 1821. The grid pattern of streets on the south side of West Street and west of Cambridge Street was the result of speculative development in the early decades of the 19th century. Until the mid 19th century, Cambridge Street was called Coal Pit Lane, an indication of the former industrial use of land in the area. medieval buildings in the town centre were gradually cleared and replaced with more imposing buildings, reflecting the commercial importance of the town. Residential use of sites gave way to commercial or industrial. The Cutlers Hall and the banks along the south side of Church Street date from this period. The increasingly congested nature of the old town centre was addressed by the Town Council in the 1870s when Fargate was widened to 60 feet. Leopold Street and Pinstone Street were developed in the 1870s. Church Street and High Street were also

widened in the late 1890s, partly to accommodate tramways. All these schemes involved the demolition of earlier buildings and a complete rebuilding programme. Fargate and High Street became, as they still are, two of the town's major retail streets. By the end of the century, the Town Council had grown out of the old Town Hall on Waingate and the new Town Hall, opened in 1897, was built on a cleared site at the top of Fargate. Sheffield's importance was formally recognised by the granting of city status in 1893.



*Sandstone and brick buildings, Norfolk Street*

Moorhead and to Commercial Street at Castle Square.

### **Townscape**

The visual cohesion of the townscape of the Conservation Area depends on a combination of characteristics, particularly the density of the streets and buildings, the fairly consistent height of buildings and the use of local sandstone or red brick as building materials. The City Centre of

Sheffield has a dense urban fabric. There are few open spaces: consequently these are particularly precious. The streets have been densely developed and despite the Victorian

### **20TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT**

The 20th century has brought the redevelopment of individual City Centre sites, an incomplete scheme of civic planning and post-war road schemes, the latter on the edge of the Conservation Area. An unrealised pre-war civic plan by Patrick Abercrombie resulted in the building of the City Hall, opened in 1932. The Central Library on Surrey Street was also a fragment of this plan. The 1939-45 war caused some bomb damage to City Centre properties and their subsequent redevelopment. Post-war attempts to provide for 20th century traffic resulted in a partially completed 'civic circle' highways scheme. This caused extensive demolition east of Norfolk Street, and the loss of part of the street pattern, but the historic core of the city was left largely intact. Arundel Gate was constructed in the mid 1960s and linked to Charter Row at

*The 1906 Victoria Hall tower, Norfolk Street*



widening schemes mentioned above, are relatively narrow for a city of Sheffield's size. The buildings are higher than the streets are wide. This gives a very closely grained appearance to the townscape. Buildings are built up to the back of the pavement line in all but a few cases. The resulting enclosure of the streets or the few open spaces is a particular feature of the City Centre.

Buildings are predominately no more than four storeys to eaves lines. Georgian and early 19th century buildings tend to be no more than three storeys. This homogeneity of scale has allowed functionally important buildings to stand out as landmarks. The spires of the cathedrals, the Church of St Matthew and the towers of the Town Hall and the Victoria Hall are all important landmarks which can be seen from a variety of spaces both within and beyond the Conservation Area. This historic pattern has been partly disrupted by a few recent high commercial developments, such as The Fountain Precinct offices off Barkers Pool. The city centre's lively skyline is enhanced by the hilly topography which allows good views of the roofscape. Gables, towers, turrets, chimneys and balustraded parapets all add to the interest of the townscape.

#### TOPOGRAPHY AND VIEWS

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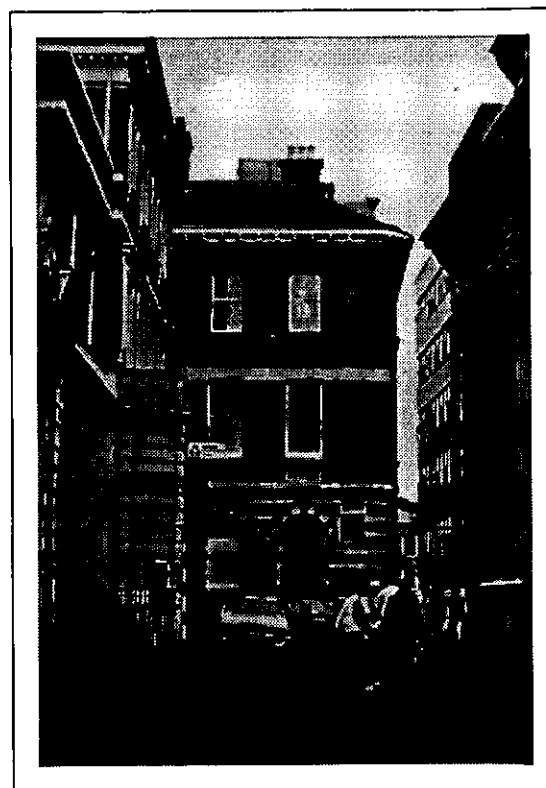
Sheffield's topography also adds to the interest and character of the Conservation Area by allowing for long views in and out of the area. The City Centre's site on the ridge between the River Don and the Sheaf has resulted in steep level changes and some attractive sloping streets. In the parts of the City Centre laid out with a grid plan, for example between Rockingham Street and Cambridge Street and between Church Street and Queen Street, the straight streets afford long, narrow views out of the area to

the north and south. Views up and down steep streets, particularly in the Paradise Square area, contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area. There are also dramatic views of the Conservation Area from the hillsides to the north and east, for example from Park Hill.

#### STREETS

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The hierarchy of streets within the Conservation Area is evident from the Ordnance Survey map of the area. The most important streets in the townscape are High Street, Fargate and Church Street, which are also the most historically significant. Early



*Narrow side street, George Street*

19th century West Street, late Victorian Pinstone Street and Leopold Street are also important in townscape terms. Secondary streets, such as Campo Lane, Queen Street, Surrey Street, Norfolk Street, Trippet Lane, Division Street and Carver Street are not

main routes in and out of the City Centre, but are all of historic interest. A network of narrow lanes or streets link the above streets; most are only for pedestrian use. Narrow streets that are particularly important in townscape terms include Norfolk Row, St. Paul's Parade, Cheney Row, Chapel Walk, St George's Street, York Street, East Parade, St. James' Row, Fig Tree Lane, Paradise Street, Orchard Lane and Rockingham Lane. The narrowness of these streets, together with the density and historic interest of buildings on both sides, contributes to the special interest of the Conservation Area. In addition, original Yorkstone paving or setts survive in some of these streets, which adds to their historic character.

#### SPACES

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Few of the open spaces in the Conservation Area were deliberately planned. One of the rare planned developments is Paradise

Square, the city's only Georgian square. This was distinctively laid out on a steep north-facing slope, as part of a development which began with town housing on its north side, built in 1736. This Square's strong historic character also relies on the survival of the original stone setts, Yorkstone paving and kerbs, although its townscape quality is somewhat eroded by its continued use as a car park. The earliest historic open space in the City Centre is Cathedral Square, including the area on the west side of East Parade. This space in the heart of the City was originally the burial ground of the church. The area occupied by this space has remained intact since the medieval period and is enclosed by some of the city's best quality historic buildings. Its design has undergone several remodellings, most recently in 1995. This well designed space is now laid with natural Yorkstone paving with areas of grass and mature trees and incorporates a Supertram stop. Trees and grass are scarce in the City Centre and

*East Parade and former burial ground at the Cathedral*



provide a valuable greening to the spaces where they exist. Mature trees in open spaces, particularly around the Cathedral, complement the historic buildings and add character to the townscape. The forecourt of the Upper Chapel on Norfolk Street is an example of a smaller, but valuable and popular open space which provides the setting for the 1840s front to the Chapel. This former burial ground is paved with grave stones, planted with trees and shrubs and enclosed on the Norfolk Street side by original iron railings.

Castle Square was created as part of the 1960s highway scheme, with the 'Hole in the Road' roundabout and subway. The latter was filled in and the resulting space redesigned in 1994, as a pedestrianised civic space incorporating Market Place, historically an important road junction. By the end of the medieval period, there was a market cross here and later, market buildings.

The Peace Gardens occupies the space created following the 1930s demolition of St. Paul's Church and provides the setting for the south elevation of the Town Hall. The boundary walls of the original churchyard survive on three sides, preserving the intimacy of Cheney Row and St. Paul's Parade. The current design dates from the 1970s construction of the Town Hall extension and is currently under review as part of proposals for the Millennium development. Town Hall Square, the space at the top of Fargate is a large road junction created during the late Victorian remodelling of the streets in this area. It provides the frontage to the Town Hall, and is an important focus in the City Centre. The Goodwin Fountain at the top of Fargate dates from 1961.

Barker's Pool is the western continuation of Fargate. It was widened to provide a setting

for the 1932 City Hall and First World War Memorial. The area was redesigned and largely pedestrianised in 1990. Barker's Pool takes its name from a reservoir of spring water that provided a water supply to the townspeople. In the 16th century, the pool had sluices that could be opened, releasing water to wash clean the streets below. The Fountain Garden, on the north side of Barker's Pool, was laid out as a small formal garden in the 1920s. Designed in the Arts and Crafts style, it originally contained pools, rills and a fountain. The water has now been replaced with planting beds, but the structure of the original design largely remains and this a popular oasis in the City Centre. Tudor Square is the open civic space created by the redesign of the block between the former Cadman Lane and Tudor Street, north of Surrey Street. Until 1991, this space had been a car park occupying a cleared site. The redesigned Square with its formal oval of grass, trees and block paving now provides an enhanced setting for the Lyceum and Crucible Theatres and is largely traffic-free. Orchard Square was created as part of a retail development in the late 1980s; the enclosure and scale of this development successfully complements the character of the Conservation Area.

#### VACANT SITES

The Conservation Area contains some cleared sites, awaiting redevelopment. Planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of most of these sites. At the top of Barkers Pool, the site on the corner of Cambridge Street is particularly prominent. Other key sites are to the rear of the 1980s National Union of Mineworker's former head office building and the adjacent site on the east side of Carver Street. These sites were previously occupied by mid 19th century cutlery and metal-working



workshops. On West Street, the site of the former Co-operative factory is vacant. Also awaiting redevelopment are vacant sites on the south side of Cadman Lane and south of the Town Hall extension. The sympathetic redevelopment of these sites will help to reinforce the grain and density of the townscape and to define and enclose the surrounding streets. There will be opportunities to create civic spaces with a new identity.

#### PUBLIC ART

The Conservation Area includes some good examples of public art, both historic and contemporary. Victorian ironwork railings and balconies contribute to townscape

*Public Art - Jonathan Fox's 'Fighting Rams', Castle Square*



interest. Historic street furniture such as the Duke of Norfolk bollards in Cathedral Square and Victorian lighting columns on Cheney Row and East Parade are also of interest.

#### **Buildings which contribute to the Special Interest of the City Centre Conservation Area**

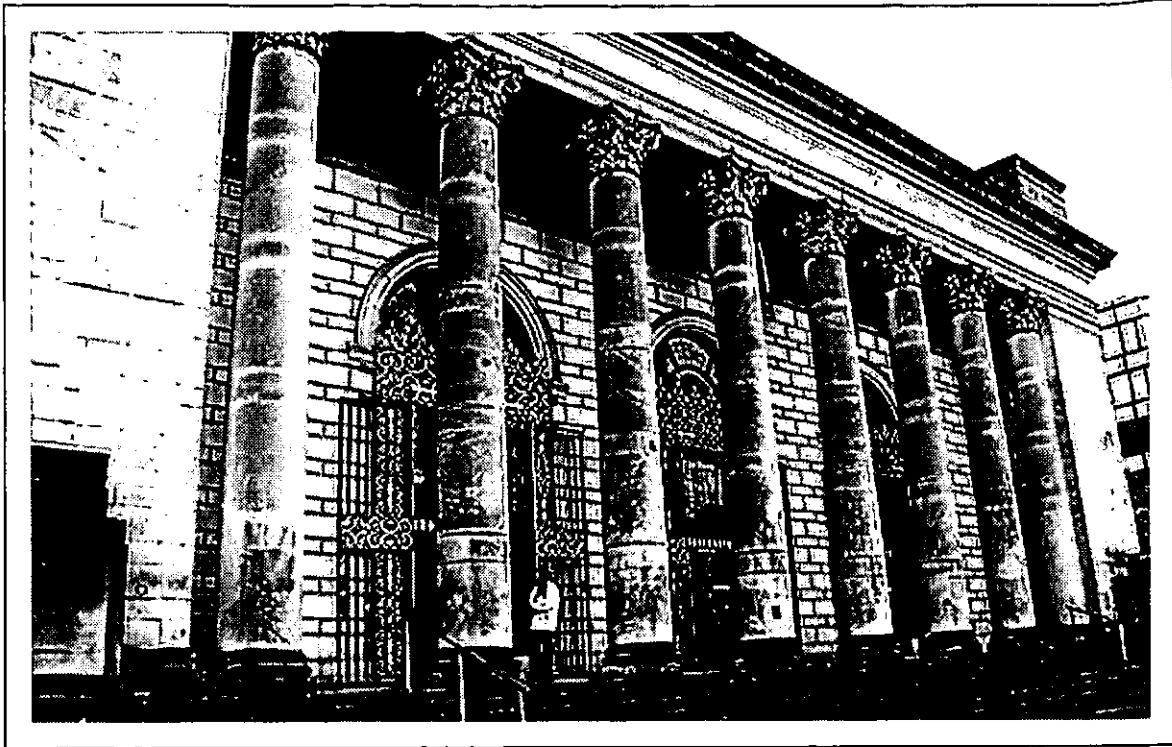
The attached plan shows all the listed buildings within the City Centre Conservation Area. In addition, unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the architectural or historic interest of the area are marked on the plan. Unlisted buildings have been assessed and

selected using the criteria in the English Heritage guidance, 'Conservation Area Practice'. The following paragraphs refer to some examples of buildings in the area, but not all are mentioned individually. The variety of architectural styles in the City adds to the interest of the Conservation Area. The range includes industrial vernacular, Georgian domestic, Greek Revival, Victorian gothic and Modernist. The range of buildings reflects the administrative, cultural and commercial importance of Sheffield. The fabric of the Conservation Area is dominated by buildings of the 19th century, built at the height of the City's prosperity. The small number of 18th century buildings are valuable survivals. Buildings erected this century also make an important contribution to the character and diversity of the City Centre's architecture.

The Anglican Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul is the earliest building in the area and part dates from the 15th Century. It is listed Grade I. There are no post-medieval buildings earlier than the 1730s townhouses on Paradise Square. The later Georgian period is represented by buildings on St. James Row, East Parade, Bank Street and

*Late Georgian terrace, Norfolk Row*





*The City Hall, Barker's Pool*

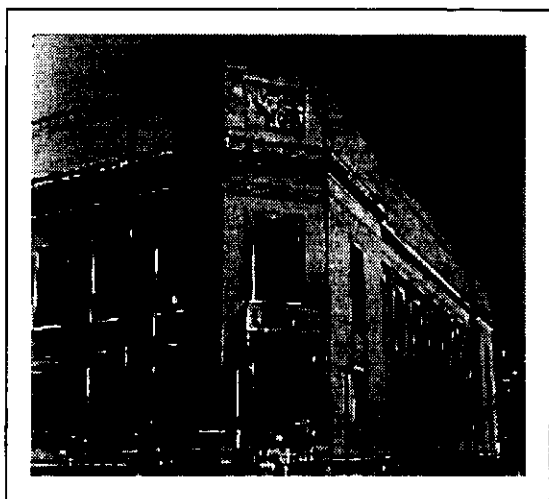
Norfolk Row. These are now mostly in office use, but were built as town houses. These are generally built of red brick with sandstone or timber details and stone or Welsh slate roofs and have 3 storeys. Dating from the same period and also in brick are chapels on Cambridge Street and Carver Street. Most of the buildings within the Conservation Area are now in commercial use, whether retail, financial sector or office use. Many commercial buildings were purpose built during the 19th century, including the early 19th century banks on Church Street and later 19th century shops and offices on Fargate, High Street, Leopold Street and Pinstone Street. These buildings are predominately stone-built with Welsh slate roofs and are of four storeys. Original shop fronts are rare in the area and are particularly valuable where they survive, for example, on Chapel Walk.

Some of the city centre's most prominent buildings are those built for civic, ceremonial or religious functions, including the Town Hall - listed Grade 1, the City Hall, the

Cutlers' Hall, the 1930s Central Library and Graves Art Gallery, the two Cathedrals, the Upper Chapel, St Matthews Church and the Victoria Hall. With a few exceptions, gritstone or sandstone has generally been used as the building material for these prestigious buildings. The stone-built Education Offices on Leopold Street have a strong townscape presence and are historically interesting. Built as the offices of the Sheffield School Board the Central School and Firth College in the 1870s and 1890s, these buildings tightly enclose a series of courtyards. Entertainment buildings which contribute to the special interest of the area include the 1970s Crucible Theatre and the restored Lyceum Theatre, and Victorian public houses such as the Grapes and the Dog and Partridge on Trippett Lane.

The City Centre currently contains very little housing. Of particular historic interest is the brick-built early corporation housing on Hawley Street, built in 1905. The distinctive layout of this site, enclosing a semi-circular courtyard contributes to the

townscape of the Conservation Area. Adjacent to this site are the flats in the Crofts Buildings, also an early example of public housing in the City Centre, added to in the mid 20th century. Still in residential use, there are flats above shops in a block of late 19th century buildings on Pinstone Street and Cross Burgess Street.



*The 1930s Central Library and Graves Art Gallery, Surrey Street*

#### 20TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE

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Prominent Modernist 20th century shops which have architectural interest include the 1965 Cole Brothers store enclosing the south side of Barkers Pool, Marks and Spencer on Fargate and the late 1950s House of Fraser fronting Castle Square. Other 20th century buildings which contribute to the special interest of the area include the offices and printing works of the Sheffield Newspapers on York Street, The Central Library and Graves Art Gallery and Steel City House, the latter built in Portland limestone.

#### INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

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Of particular importance to the historic interest of the Conservation Area are metal-working and cutlery workshops, some still

in use. The best examples of these buildings are listed, but all are significant to the historical development of the City and the cutlery and steel industries. Industrial workshops, some vacant or in new uses are concentrated in the streets west of Cambridge Street and Holly Street. These mainly date from the mid 19th century, are built of red brick with stone or Welsh slate roofs and are of a modest construction. Generally of 2 or 3 storeys, these workshops often enclose small, setted courtyards and this creates a distinctive townscape of relatively small scale. This is in contrast to the larger scale and finer architecture of the city centre's later 19th century commercial buildings.

For further advice or information please contact the Conservation Officers.  
Telephone 0114.2734223

19th August 1996

*Cutlers' workshops - Leah's Yard, Cambridge Street.*

