



## 1. Northern City

### Significance

- Concentration of historic buildings
- Presence of features from historical period(s)
- Townscape / Landscape quality:
- Quality of details:
- Concentration of negative features:

### Score

### SIGNIFICANT

- SIGNIFICANT (2)
- SIGNIFICANT (2)
- SIGNIFICANT (2)
- HIGH (3)
- FEW (3)
- 12**

### Character Area Overview

#### Summary

This area is generally characterised by streets of C19 houses, mostly running roughly east-west and bisected by St Augustine's Street in the west and Magdalen Street in the east. These routes are historic lanes out of the City and therefore contain a number of older buildings including a medieval church and housing courts. The streets east of Magdalen Street contain several groups of 1930s-50s apartment blocks; those west of St Augustine's Street have various styles of houses and flats from the second half of the C20.

#### Topography & Landscape Framework

The area stands on comparatively flat land compared to the rest of the Conservation

Area, on the north side of the valley and the river. Apart from Gildencroft, the area does not have extensive landscape features.

#### Town Morphology, History & Archaeology

Magdalen Street, an ancient road, was one of the earliest routes in the area, whilst St. Augustine's Street was established in Saxon times; both of these streets have been major roads since, leading to the City centre. Cowgate was another ancient road in Saxon times, known as Cowholme because cattle was kept here. The City Walls, a defining characteristic of the area, were built in the C13, with gates at St. Augustine's and Magdalen Streets; parts of the walls survive today.

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Extract from 1886 OS map

The C19 witnessed the building of extensive housing in the area due to the increasing population of the city. This involved building on previously open spaces. Gildencroft during medieval times was an extensive 12 acre open field which included a 'justing acre' where jousting took place. In 1821-4 Gildencroft was developed on, with streets such as Sussex Street being built, as part of a planned development, leaving only the small green space that exists today by St. Augustine's Church.

St Augustine's Street, Oak Street and especially Barrack Street (which had some very old pre-C18 buildings) were at this time considered to be some of the poorest parts of the City, but were also known for their sense of community. The roads along the City Walls, Magpie Road and Baker's Road, were lined with terraces by the mid C19, but the area between St. Augustine's and Magdalen Streets remained undeveloped.

Thomas Tawell opened a school for the blind in 1805, the site of the current home for the blind. The development of terraces did not take place until the C19. The line of Bull Close Road / Baker's Road marks a very clear transition between the older grain of the City centre and the uniform grids of the late Victorian terraces to the north.

A few 1930s courtyards namely Bargate Court off Barrack Street, and Magdalen Court, were built as part of the programme of slum clearances of the 1920s and 1930s, replacing previously dense early C19 terraces.

## Landmarks & Views

On the whole, the 1970s office developments around Anglia Square prevent views back towards the major landmarks of the historic City. Redevelopment of this area could open up views and visually reconnect the northern City to the area

south of the river. The Castle however is visible from Chatham Street and from Magdalen Street whilst a good view of the Cathedral (foreground excepted) can be seen from Charlton Road. The Roman Catholic Cathedral is partially visible from the streets to the east and can be seen from Gildencroft, Edward Street and across the garage block off Magpie Road. A surprising view of St Peter Mancroft can be gained down the line of the slip road onto Charlton Road from the St Crispin's roundabout.

## Key Building Groups

Although the area contains no particularly outstanding buildings, it does provide examples of several typical Norwich building types. These include parts of the City Walls, Two medieval churches, elements of courtyard houses, several timber framed properties (many refaced) and terraces of the earlier and later C19.

## Current Uses

The area is predominantly a residential area though both Magdalen Street and the northern part of St Augustine's Street are retail streets. Magdalen Street and St Augustine's Street are well-used vehicular routes and are therefore very busy at peak times.

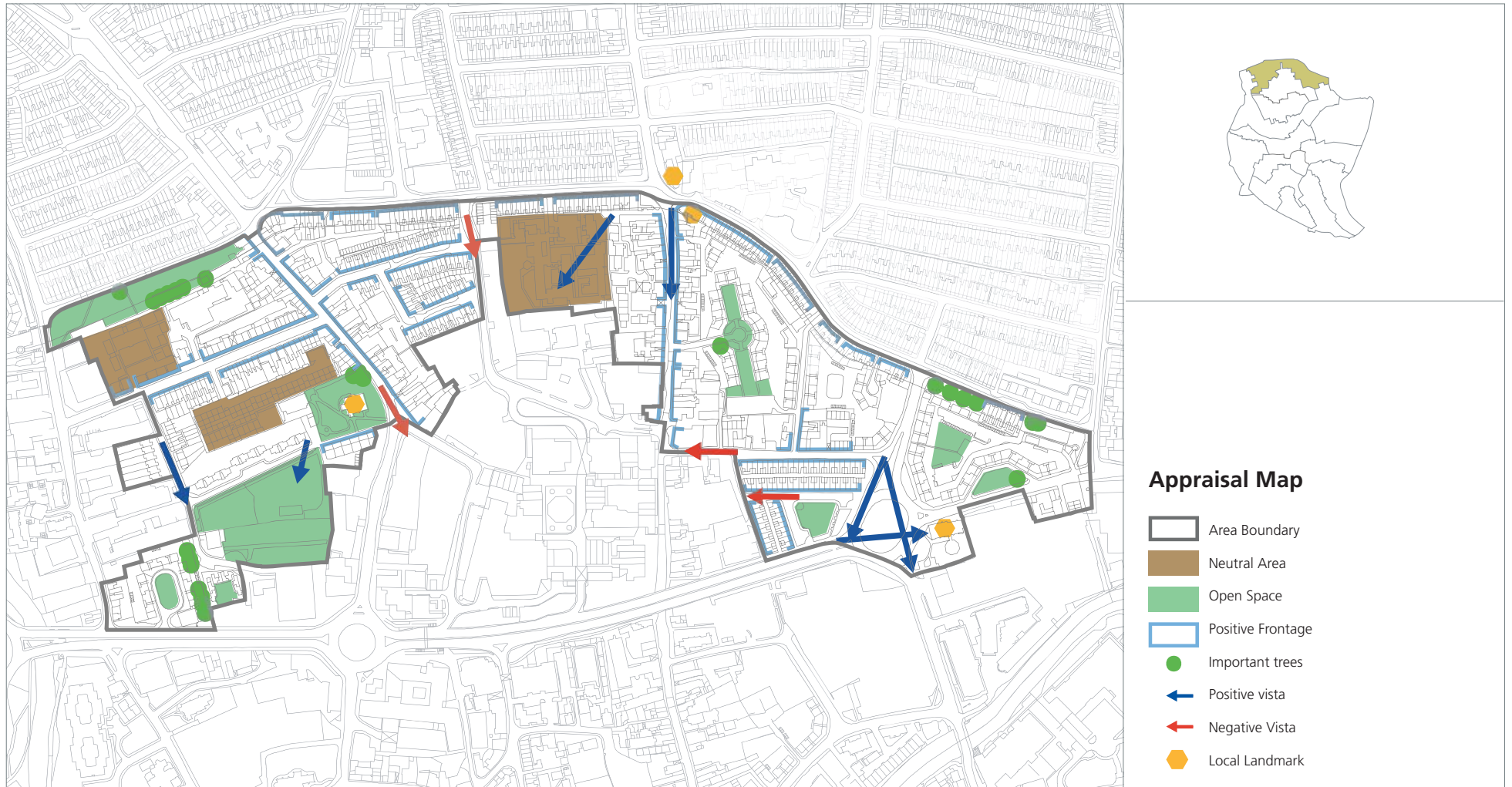
## Strategic Areas of Landscaping

St Augustine's Churchyard, the Gildencroft recreation area and Friends' Burial Ground, although not all publicly accessible, combine to provide a rare area of greenery in the northern City centre.

- aa.** East Side, Looses Yard off Magdalen Street
- bb.** Stump Cross, junction of Magdalen Street & Botoiph Street
- cc.** 25, Barrack Street



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## Key Characteristics

### Townscape Elements

Magdalen Street (a) and the northern part of St Augustine's Street (b) are relatively narrow and intimate streets with buildings usually of two or three storeys right on the edge of the footpath. The historic street pattern has been lost in the area towards St Crispin's flyover and around Anglia Square.

Some housing courts, both historic and modern, survive to the rear of the frontage buildings (which are mostly shops and pubs). These are an essential characteristic of Norwich and a reminder of the form of development which prevailed in the area until the redevelopment in the 1930s of the area east of Magdalen Street.

The row of C16 houses on Gildencroft (c) facing St Augustine's churchyard fronts a narrow alleyway, but due to the open nature of the churchyard which is partly enclosed by a wall and railings, this alley is far from oppressive. The mature trees within the churchyard also contribute to this attractive area whilst The Gildencroft play area adds to the attractive setting of the houses and church.

Much of Sussex Street survives as one of the most interesting streets of early-mid C19 terraced housing in the central area. This street is rather wider than other terraced streets and the houses, which include some three storey properties, are earlier than those

in other streets. More typical C19 streets include Leonard (d) and Esdelle (e) Streets, which were subject to an environmental improvement scheme in the 1970s. A spine of terraces also runs roughly along the line of the old City Wall on Bull Close Road (f) and Magpie Road whilst Willis Street (g), Peacock Street and part of Cowgate (h) are all that remains of a housing area around the now-demolished St Paul's Church. All the streets of C19 houses together with Magdalen Street, St Augustine's Street and Gildencroft have strong built frontages which produce a good and consistent townscape character.

The remains of St Paul's churchyard (i) survive as the play area close to the Whitefriars roundabout. The green space and mature trees make an important contribution to the townscape. The area of green around the City Wall (j) also provides a very attractive setting to the terrace of houses along Bakers Road which effectively defines the edge of the area.

At the micro scale, the Malzy Court almshouses (k) also form an attractive group of buildings arranged around a green square.

From the 1930s to 1950s, the courts and alleys east of Magdalen Street were redeveloped (l). Formal blocks of two and three storey apartments and houses

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arranged around green areas replaced the tight and often insanitary alleys and narrow courts. Several of these housing groups include green spaces with good mature trees.

C20 developments are quite varied but on the whole do not detract from the character of the area. The courts of houses off Magdalen Street broadly follow the traditional form of development, whilst housing on The Lathes and the west end of Sussex Street provide good definition to the streets (m).

In addition to the glimpsed views of city-wide landmarks, there are several buildings which act as strong focal points within the North City area. St Augustine's Church (n) is the most historic landmark though it is not especially prominent other than from St Augustine's Street itself and Anglia Square / Botolph Street. It is, however, notable for its brick tower which is the only one in the City and was a later addition of 1683-87.

Other local landmarks include the Artichoke PH which is the focus of the view north along Magdalen Street. The new housing (o) on the opposite corner is also an appropriate corner feature and helps act as a gateway into the area. No. 39 St Augustine's Street, a former pub, attractively closes the vista east along Sussex Street. St James Church (now the puppet theatre (p))

is an important focus of views across the Whitefriars roundabout (q).

## Building Types

The oldest buildings in the area are the elements of the City Wall which survive off St Martins at Oak Wall Lane, at the top of Magdalen Street and on Bull Close Road / Silver Road (r). The Walls date to the C13. The church of St Augustine is the oldest complete building in the area and dates back to the C14, although it was significantly altered in the C15 and C17.

There are partial survivals of houses dating back to c.1500 in the area (including Nos. 22-30 St Augustine's Street). Part of this group is a rare survival of a fully timber-framed structure. There are several other C16 buildings in the area including a wing parallel to the road at the rear of Nos. 13-15 St Augustine's Street, part of No.55 and No. 133 Magdalen Street. The adjoining No. 135 has one of the best-preserved rear courts in the area (which dates back to the C17).

The row of houses at Gildencroft also dates to the C16 and is the earliest terrace in the area. Several houses / shops on both Magdalen and St Augustine's Streets date to at least the C17 but were refaced, remodelled or even heightened, usually during the C19, showing that the street remained a popular and important City artery for several centuries.



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During the C19, the growth of the City led to the erection of several terraces of houses with some good early C19 two and three storey examples surviving on Sussex Street (**s** and **t**). Later C19 examples are quite widespread around Wills Street, Esdelle Street and along the line of the City Wall on Bull's Close Road and Magpie Road. These are all two storey and occasionally include public houses and small shops. Cowgate and Bull Close (**u**) also have current and former Nonconformist chapels amongst the terraced houses.

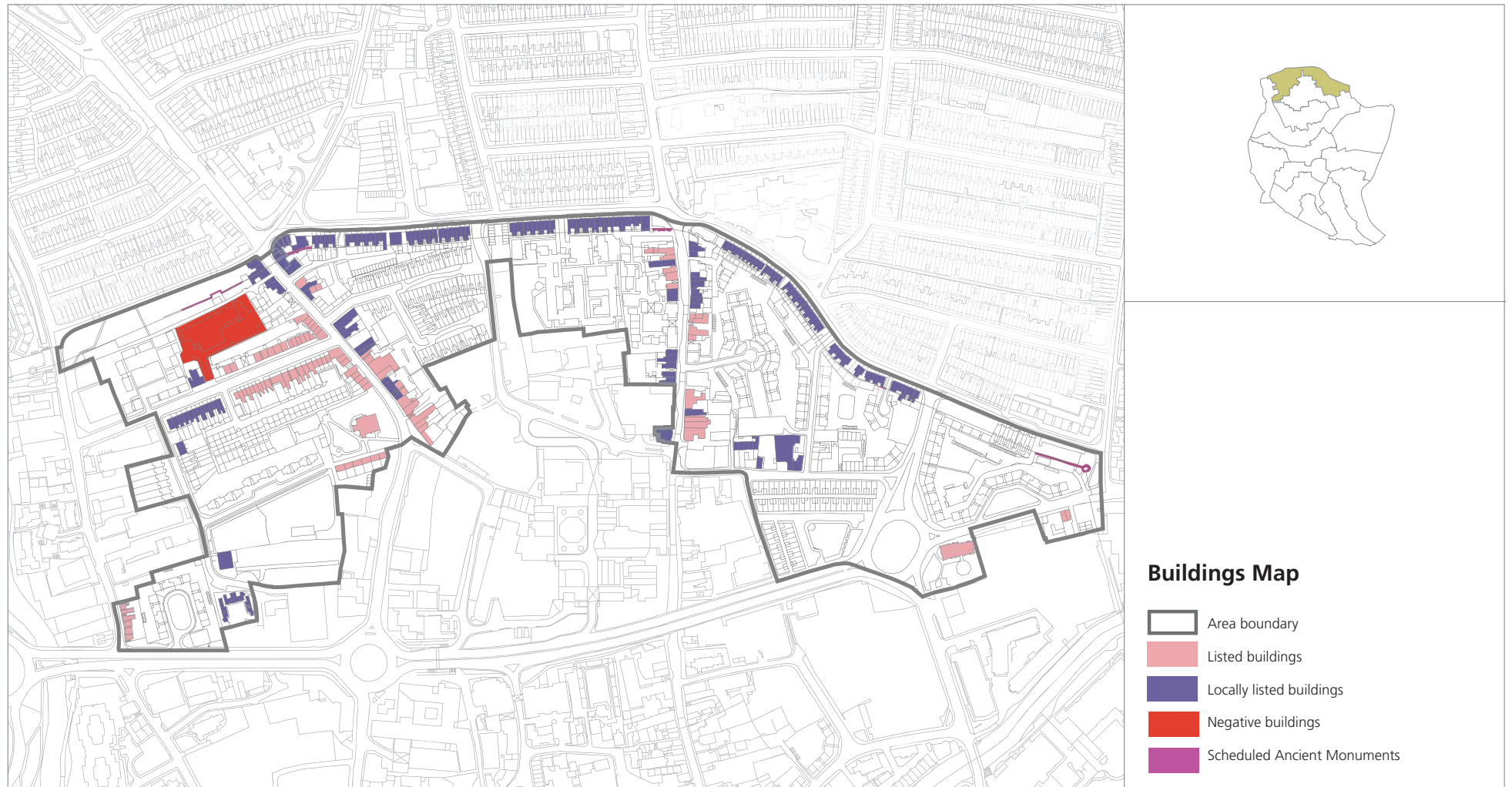
The Malzy Court almshouses are a pleasant group of Victorian almshouses forming a semi-private enclave. The blocks of 1930s apartments and houses are arranged in a similar way though the scale of buildings and spaces is greater (**v**). Several of these developments form sinuous blocks.

Although the negative buildings in the Anglia Square area are very visible (**w**), there are few negative buildings within the Northern City Character Area itself. The exception is the office building off Sussex Street which although partly concealed behind frontage buildings is more visible from St Martins at Oak Wall Lane to the rear.

## Building Details

The prevailing building material of the traditional buildings in the area is red brick. Occasionally this has subsequently been rendered or painted. The earlier properties in the area often have flint rubble used for walling with red brick quoins and dressings. Only one property, No. 55 St Augustine's Street, includes elements of stonework. Typically of the city, many properties are timber framed though often this is only at first floor level with the ground floor in brick or brick and flint. Numerous timber framed

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structures were refaced in the C18 and C19 centuries.

Virtually all the traditional buildings in the area have pantiled roofs with black pantiles common even on later C19 terraces. Some slate roofs can be found though these are often the result of later reroofing.

The terraced properties in the area exhibit the usual variations in brickwork detailing of cornices, window and door head details and chimneys between the different groups. Two of the terraces on Magpie Road are of gault brick with red brick detailing. These minor variations between terraces, the pattern of windows, doors and chimneys and the presence of passageways all adds to the rhythm and interest of the various terraces. Some of the houses, particularly on Esdelle Street and adjoining streets have been rendered, the brickwork painted and



the windows and roof coverings replaced.

Examination of the buildings on Magdalen and St Augustine's Streets is equally rewarding with a variety of different brickwork and cornice details, and bargeboards to the dormers or lucams (the five lucams to Nos. 23-5 St Augustine's Street being a particular townscape feature). Virtually all the buildings are vernacular and the majority of decoration is of the C18 (such as timber dentil cornices) or C19. Of similar age are the shopfronts, some of which are of interest. Probably one of the most complete, although later C19, is that to the Catherine Wheel PH (x). On the terraces, sash windows prevail with variations in the style depending largely on the age of the fenestration.

The carriage arches of the properties on the two commercial streets, which give



access to the courts behind, are an essential characteristic of the streets and are common to several other streets in the City.

The apartment blocks which date from the 1930s to '50s are consistently in a revived Georgian style with multi-paned sash windows, bays and overhanging eaves. The blocks are generally in a red brick with the upper storey in a more buff brick and with plain tiled roofs.

Several of the properties on both Magdalen Street (y) and St Augustine's Street are in poor repair or only partly used. This gives a slightly run-down appearance to parts of the street.



## Management & Enhancement

1. Enhancing City Gate / City Wall and Gildencroft areas (A1.2, B4)
2. Improving historic interpretation of City Gate / City Wall and Gildencroft areas (LP: HBE 1, 8, 9, 12 & 16, TVA 8 & 9; SPD – Heritage Interpretation)
3. Alleviating traffic problems (LP: TRA 26; Streetscape Design Manual)
4. Scale of new development restricted to 2/3 domestic storeys (D2.2, D3)
5. Design of rear buildings – courtyard form (D4)
6. Access to rear of buildings – carriage arches (D4)
7. Restore front boundary walls (E1.2)