


GREYFRIARS

SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

January 2023





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N.B. Maps included in this document are not to scale.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located within Leicester City Centre, approximately 300m south-west of the clock tower. The site is located within the historic Old Town area of the city, which is focused around the Cathedral and is easily accessible from local bus and rail stations and link roads to the M1.

The site is approximately half an acre in size and consists of:

- 1-3 Grey Friars – built 1920s & 1930s;
- 5 Grey Friars (former Barradale offices) – built 1880;
- 7 Grey Friars (Conway building) – built 1878;
- Associated car parking to the rear, accessed from New Street.

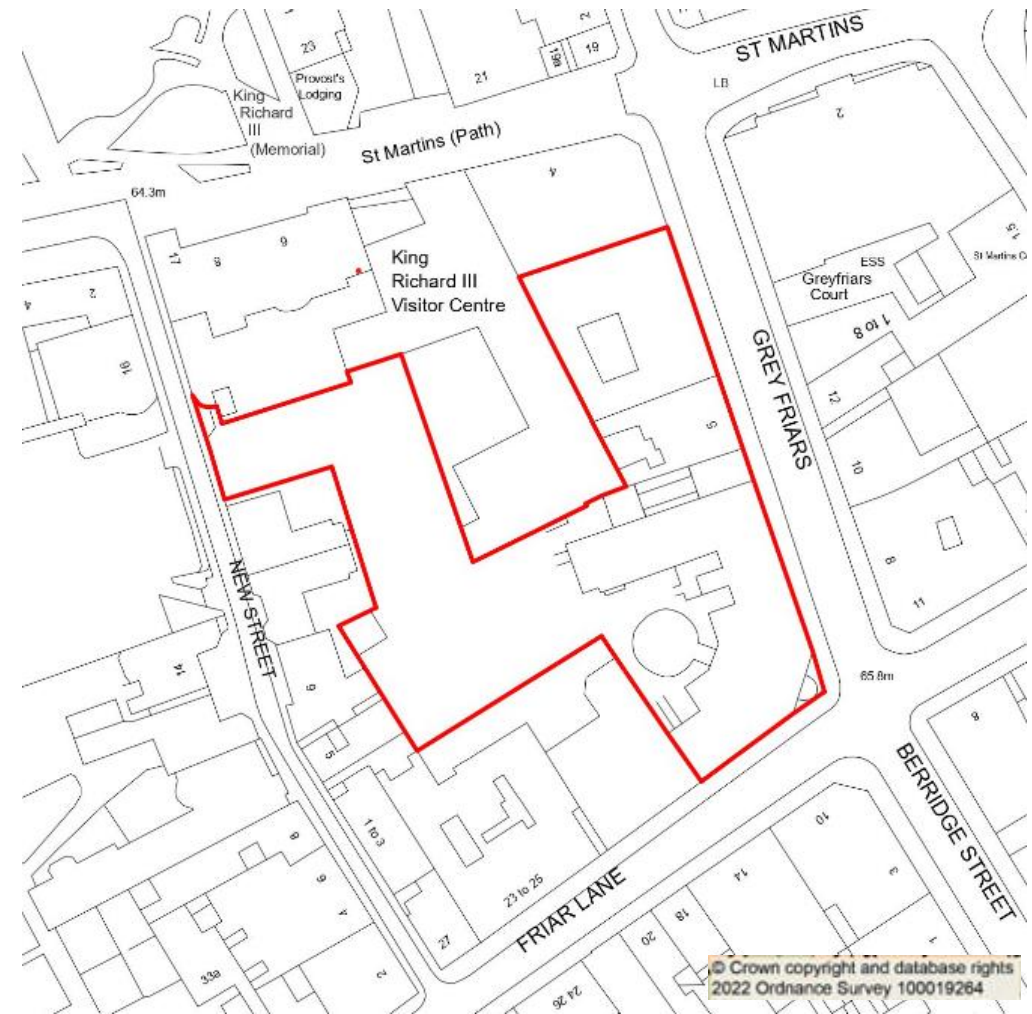
Both 5 & 7 Grey Friars are grade II listed buildings. The entire site is located within the Greyfriars Conservation Area.

The site is located on the former site of the Franciscan Friary of the Greyfriars, the location of the recent discovery of King Richard III. The site has high archaeological potential. In 2017, the whole of the area to the rear of the site, including the car park, was designated as a Scheduled Monument.

All buildings were formerly in use by Leicester City Council as offices and has a class E use class. Each building has the following approximate floorspace:

- 1-3 Grey Friars – 2,592.7 square metres;
- 5 Grey Friars (former Barradale offices) – 585.2 square metres;
- 7 Grey Friars (Conway building) – 995.7 square metres.

The site was located within the Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative project area between 2016-21, which was part funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. More details of the legacy of that heritage led regeneration scheme can be viewed here: [Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative - Regeneration in Leicester \(greyfriarsheritage.org.uk\)](https://www.greyfriarsheritage.org.uk)



S I T E H I S T O R Y

The site is located within the old Roman town of Rate Corieltauorum, an important regional administrative centre. The site of the Roman Forum, the commercial heart of the town, being approximately 220m to the north-west of the site. The grid pattern of the Roman town has influenced the layout of the area ever since.

From medieval times, the land between present day Peacock Lane and Friar Lane was occupied by the Franciscan Friary of the Greyfriars. Founded by Simon de Montfort, the Earl of Leicester from 1238 to 1265. The priory and church stood to the south of St Martin's churchyard, surrounded by gardens and grounds that extended from the west end of the Market Place as far as Southgates.

Little is known about the history of the Leicester Franciscans, although the Greyfriars' church is now famously known as the original burial place of King Richard III, whose body was interred there following his defeat and death at the Battle of Bosworth (1485) until its excavation in 2012.

The church was destroyed soon after the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Grey Friars site became the property of Sir Robert Catlyn, from whom it passed to Alderman Robert Herrick. Herrick constructed a substantial town house and garden within the eastern part of the Friar's site and the site remained in the ownership of the Herrick family until 1711.

In 1743 the then owner of the property, Roger Ruding of Westcotes, divided up the land and New Street was laid out. The Herrick family's house was sold to Thomas Pares, the Pares were one of Leicester's early banking families.

Much of Friar Lane was still undeveloped in the mid-18th century but by the end of the first quarter of the 19th century a continuous street frontage had been developed.

One of the most important houses remaining from the 18th century is 17 Friar Lane, which was built in 1750. Described as 'the handsomest Georgian house' in the city, in the latter half of the 19th century the building was the family home and surgery of Dr Benfield. In 1915, the building was bought by the County Council and used by the county health department.

During the 19th century, the area quickly became established as a very select district and was occupied by the emerging middle and professional classes. The area had become a convenient business location, in particular for a number of well-known architects who opened up offices in the area. Isaac Barradale designed offices for himself at 5 Grey Friars, whilst 7 Grey Friars was originally occupied by William Millican, a local architect, and the Leicestershire Brick & Tile Company, for whom the building may have been an advertisement.

The corner of Friar Lane and Grey Friars remained undeveloped until the early-20th century, as it was the former gardens of 17 Friar Lane. This changed following the acquisition of 17 Friar Lane by the County Council.

Leicestershire County Council built purpose-built offices on the land, with No. 3 Grey Friars being constructed in the early 1920s. The corner building, No. 1 Grey Friars was built later, and was not opened until 1936.











In 1968 the County Council left the offices and 17 Friar Lane. They became the property of Leicester City Council who have owned the site since then. More recently, the property at 17 Friar Lane and small linked parcel of land to the rear were sold to a new owner. That site is proposed for refurbishment as offices.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

5 & 7 Grey Friars are both grade II listed buildings and are of national importance for their special architectural and historic interest. Both buildings are of high architectural quality and retain their original floorplans; the latter (No. 7) however, has been extended and altered. Details of the listed descriptions can be found in appendix A. Further nationally listed buildings are located adjacent to the site, including 17 Friar Lane, which is grade II* listed.

The entire site is located within the Greyfriars conservation area, which was designated in 1969 (reviewed 2014) by the Council, as it is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. All three buildings which make up the site are considered to positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.

The site is of national archaeological importance, as the site is located on the site of the former Franciscan friary of Greyfriars and is a Scheduled Monument. Any works to the car park will have significant archaeological implications.

- Conservation area boundary 
- Listed building 
- Buildings that reflect the character of the conservation area 
- Neutral buildings 
- Buildings that do not reflect the character of the conservation area 
- Spaces that reflect the character of the conservation area 
- Spaces that do not reflect the character of the conservation area 
- Landmark corners 
- Key views 
- Landmarks 



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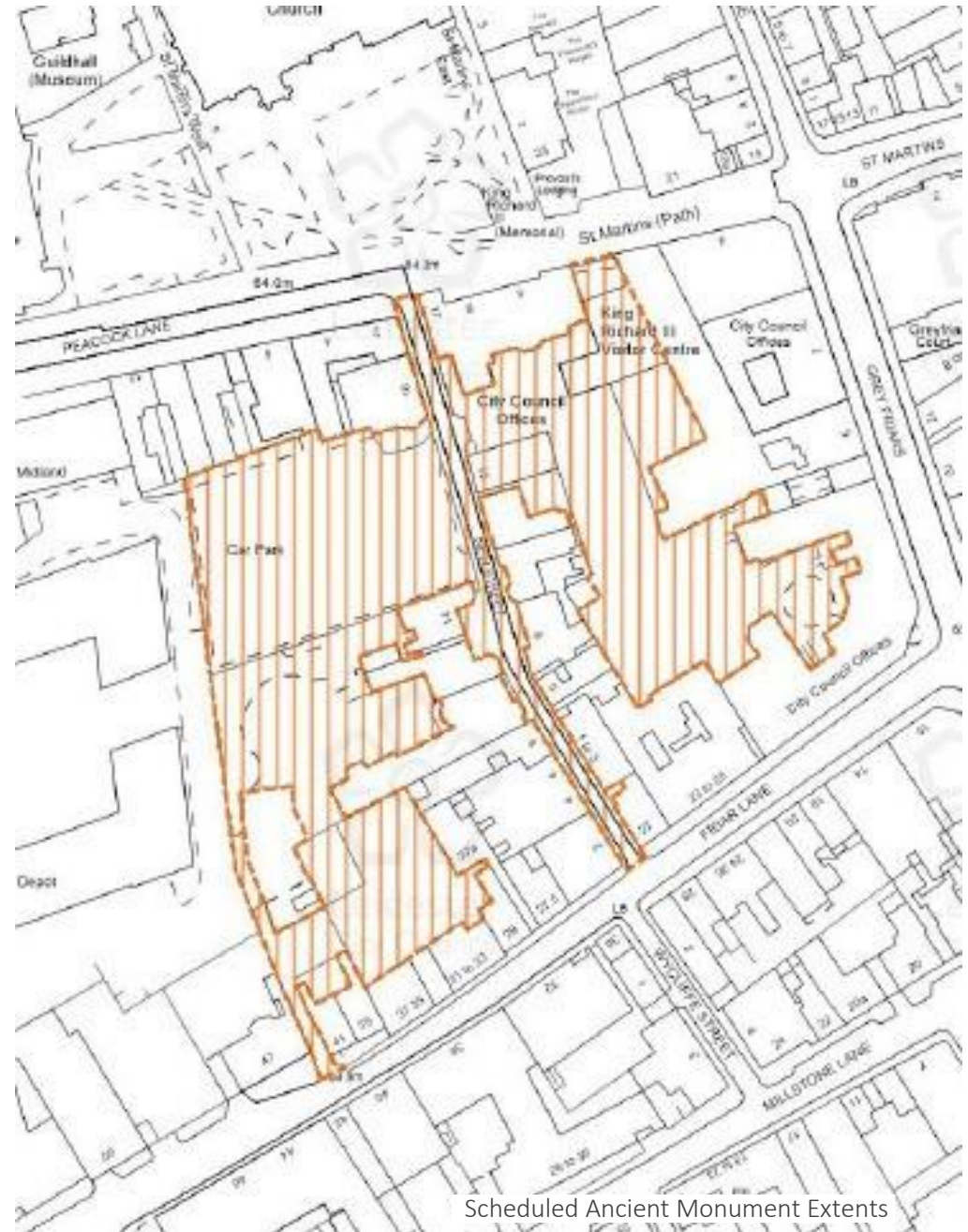
GREYFRIARS SCHEDULED MONUMENT

The area shown on the plan was designated as a Scheduled Monument in 2017. It comprises the open spaces, car-parking areas and rear gardens/plots within the former friary precinct, up to the edge of the buildings, up to the boundary of the Southgates site to the west and the whole of New Street.

Scheduling is the oldest form of heritage protection and is applied only to sites of national importance. While some change may be possible, there is a presumption that scheduled monuments will be handed on to future generations in much the same state as when they were first scheduled.

Scheduling does not affect freehold title or other legal interests in the land but the owner of a scheduled monument will need to apply for prior written permission from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for all works either above or below ground level. The procedure is known as Scheduled Monument Consent or SMC.

‘Works’ are defined by the 1979 Act as demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, adding to, flooding or tipping material onto the monument. Certain development works may also require planning permission but obtaining such permission does not remove the need for Scheduled Monument Consent. The Greyfriars Conservation Area and the majority of buildings adjacent to the area are listed.



Scheduled Ancient Monument Extents

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The main national planning policies to be considered are in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). This document supersedes previous policy documents used to aid in the determination of all planning applications.

At local policy level, the principal documents are the Core Strategy 2010 (as revised in 2014) and the saved Local Plan policies. The following policies are those considered most relevant to the development site (although this does not mean that other policies are to be ignored):

POLICY CS 10 – EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Council will work with partners to ensure that Leicester has a thriving and diverse business community that attracts jobs and investment to the City.

The site is located within the Professional Office Area, where small Class B1(a) offices between 100 and 1,000 sqm and Class D1 uses (except places of worship) will be acceptable. D1 uses should not adversely affect residential amenity. The change to residential use, including live-work units, will be acceptable in principle where premises are unsuitable for modern office uses. Proposals should promote the conservation, enhancement and sensitive use of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

POLICY CS 18 – HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The Council will protect and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment including the character and setting of designated and other heritage assets.

We will support the sensitive reuse of high-quality historic buildings and spaces, promote the integration of heritage assets and new development to create attractive spaces and places, encourage contemporary design rather than pastiche replicas, and seek the retention and re-instatement of historic shop fronts and the protection and appropriate enhancement of historic public realm.

Within the regeneration areas, particular importance will be given to the integration of the historic environment with new development through encouraging heritage-led regeneration.

POLICY CS 12 – CITY CENTRE

The Council will promote the growth of the City Centre as a sub-regional shopping, leisure, historic and cultural destination, as the most accessible and sustainable location for main town centre uses and in recognition of its central role in the City's economy and wider regeneration by adopting the following strategy:

- Maintaining a compact and accessible retail centre.
- Enriching the retail experience by protecting and where appropriate enhancing the historic environment.
- Creating a hierarchy and network of pedestrian routes and good quality civic spaces to reconnect disparate and disconnected parts of the Centre.
- Developing an economically prosperous Centre through the location of small offices and creative industries to complement the New Business Quarter and supporting related uses including new hotels and conference venues.
- Create a safe and inclusive City Centre.
- Supporting residential development, whether by conversion of redundant buildings or new build, where an acceptable living environment can be maintained or created.
- Making the City Centre the focus of public transport initiatives

These policies and guidance should be read in conjunction with the relevant, national legislation:

Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

REDEVELOPMENT

PARAMETERS

OPPORTUNITIES

Prominent city centre location:

- The site is located within the Old Town area of the city centre, in close proximity to many of the city's key attractions, including the Cathedral, Richard III Visitor Centre, The Lanes and the Highcross shopping centre.

Quality of building stock & Heritage Designation:

- Buildings in the area are of a high architectural quality, creating a strong 'sense of place'. New uses for the site can take advantage of the historic and vibrant character and appearance of the area.

Broad range of potential uses:

- Planning policy for the city centre allows for a broad range of uses.

CONSTRAINTS

Heritage designations:

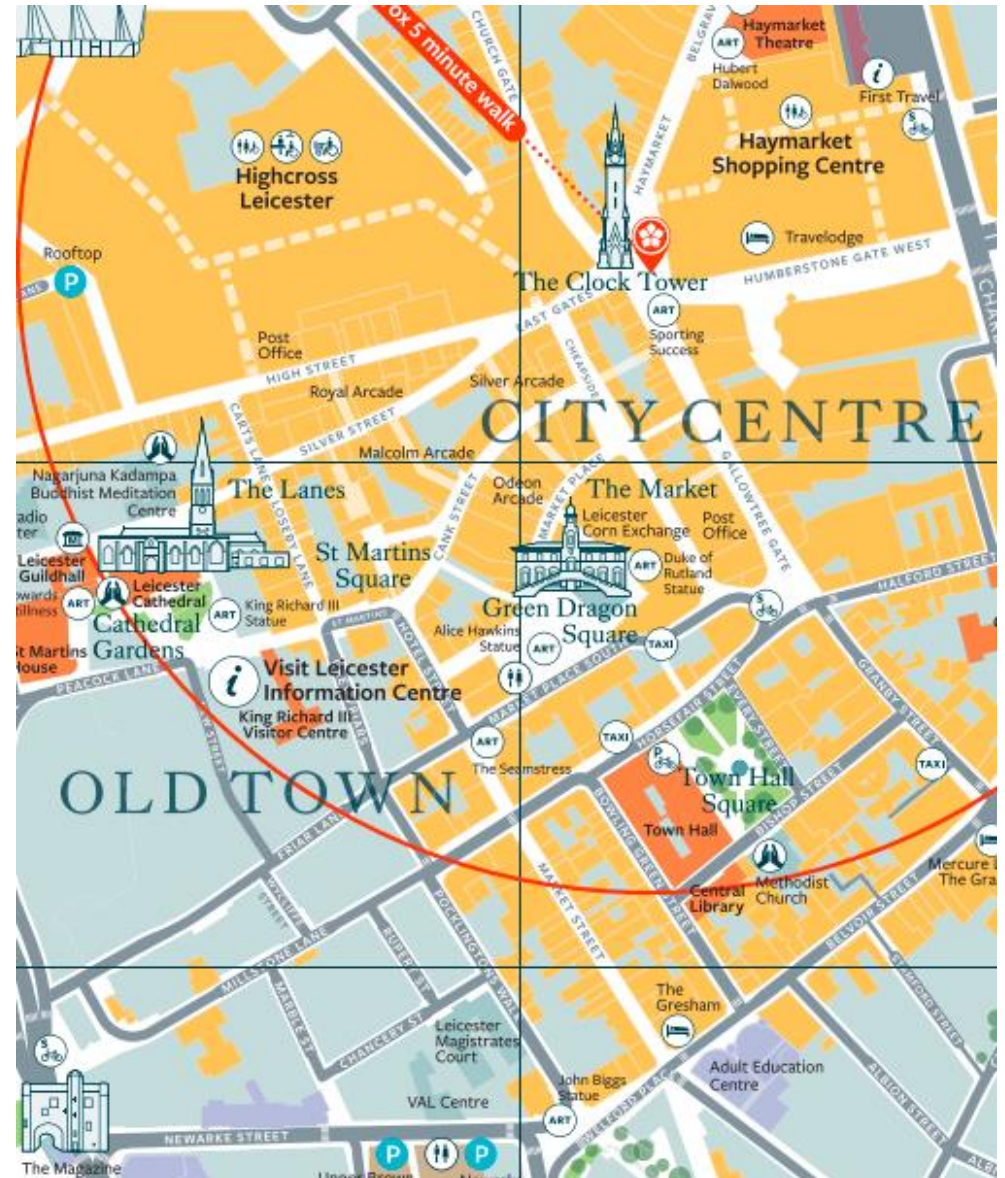
- The site is protected through a number of heritage designations, requiring stricter control over external & internal alterations. This also serves to maintain the rest of this high-quality historic environment.

Lack of active street frontages:

- The ground floors have no shopfronts and limited views into the buildings, although this does create a sense of privacy.

Limited parking space:

- This city centre location has some onsite parking and/or space for private open space to the rear although 5 & 7 Grey Friars have no direct access to the car park.



POTENTIAL USES

This guidance has been designed to give a summary to the history of the site and the parameters for any potential development of the site.

It is not overly prescriptive and identifies possible uses that would be considered acceptable by the Council for the site. The following options are most likely to be considered:

OFFICES

The site is currently in a class E office use and located within the Professional Office Area. The continuation of this use would complement the character of the area, keeping businesses within the city centre. It would have the advantage of limiting the amount of alterations needed to the existing buildings.

RESIDENTIAL

The Council supports the conversion of city centre buildings into a residential use, where an acceptable living environment can be created. Within the old town area of the city centre, we would support the creation of family homes and larger high-end apartments.

HOTEL / CONFERENCE VENUE

Leicester is seeing an increase in tourism, with many of the city's main visitor attractions being within walking distance of the site. The location and building stock would support the creation of a hotel / conference venue, adding to the visitor facilities within the old town area.

Serviced apartments are also increasing in popularity within the city centre and could be a viable alternative.

MUSEUM / EDUCATIONAL USE

An alternative use for the site could be the creation of a museum or an educational use. This would allow for the site to remain in one single use, creating an 'anchor' building for the area.

This option would require careful consideration, as the conversion of the listed buildings would require maintenance of their historic floorplans.

MIXED- USE DEVELOPMENT

As noted throughout the document, the site can be split into three distinct buildings. The Council would therefore welcome the subdivision of the site, reinstating the three separate buildings. Each building could then accommodate a varying use, creating a diverse mix of benefits to the area.

Class F uses (except places of worship) could be introduced into parts of the site, as could the introduction of a class E(b) food & drink use (restaurants / cafes), boosting the active night-time economy within the old town area. These uses should not however, compromise the active use of the upper floors. The Council would not support any use that would result in the upper floors remaining vacant.

The Council would wish to see 1 & 3 Grey Friars remain together, creating an 'anchor' building for the site, reflecting its visually prominent location, previous use and regular footfall within the surrounding area.

1 & 3 GREY FRIARS

A purpose-built early-20th century office building for the County Council, the building was built within the gardens of 17 Friar Lane and designed to take advantage of the prominent corner plot.

The building was built in two stages, with No. 3 being built in the 1920s, No. 1 being built in the 1930s and opening in 1936.

It is the only non-listed building within the site but does make an important positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Greyfriars conservation area.

Any works proposed to the building should respect this sensitive location, preserving the external appearance of the building. Original windows and doors should be retained, whilst the existing corner entrance should remain as its principal entrance.

There is greater scope to re-work the internal floorplans of the building, as internal alterations are not controlled through the planning process.

The 1st floor rotunda to the rear of the building is of more modest historic / architectural interest and could be removed potentially, but the design of any works will need to be carefully considered, including the Scheduled Monument status of the land below.

It is recommended that No. 1 & No. 3 Grey Friars remain as a single building, forming the 'anchor' building to the site and the wider conservation area.



5 GREY FRIARS (FORMER BARRADALE OFFICES)

The building is a grade II listed building, reflecting its national importance as a building of special architectural and historic interest.

Originally built in 1880 as the offices of Isaac Barradale and his architectural practice, the building is of a distinctive Domestic Revival style, with an impressive 1st floor oriel window. The building retains its original floorplans and has a small enclosed courtyard to the rear.

Any proposals should be influenced by the historic character and significance of the building and should refer to the following general principles:

- The historic floor plan should be retained and reinstated with only minimal and necessary subdivision.
- All existing historic features including staircases, fireplaces, cornicing, joinery, windows, doors etc. should be retained.
- All alterations and repairs should be carried out in accordance with good building conservation practice.
- Historic circulation patterns should remain visible even if not utilised.

There are opportunities to enhance the significance of the listed building as part of the redevelopment of the wider site. The following works would be welcomed by the Council:

- Reinstatement of front entrance door as a main access.



7 GREY FRIARS (CONWAY BUILDING)

The building is a grade II listed building, reflecting its national importance as a building of special architectural and historic interest.

Originally built in 1878 for the Leicestershire Brick & Tile Company, it was designed by the Leicester architect Stockdale Harrison and is of a Gothic style, in a high-quality orange-red brick. Unlike the other buildings within the site, it has been extended and altered to accommodate an office use, with the internal courtyard being reduced in size throughout the 19th century as infill extensions were added. There is scope for change to the internal floorplans.

Any proposals should be influenced by the historic character and significance of the building and should refer to the following general principles:

- The historic floor plan should be retained and reinstated with only minimal and necessary subdivision.
- All existing historic features including staircases, fireplaces, cornicing, joinery, windows, doors etc. should be retained.
- All alterations and repairs should be carried out in accordance with good building conservation practice.
- Historic circulation patterns should remain visible even if not utilised.

There are opportunities to enhance the significance of the listed building as part of the redevelopment of the wider site. The following works would be welcomed by the Council:

- Reinstatement of larger internal courtyard by removing later infill extensions.
- Reinstatement of direct access from main entrance to courtyard.
- Exposure of original cast iron columns to ground floor & removal of paintwork from brickwork.



CAR PARK & VEHICULAR ACCESS

The car park to the rear of the site is accessed from New Street.

The existing vehicular archway from No. 3 Grey Friars is now only accessible to pedestrians.

If the wider site is to be subdivided back into three distinct buildings, a key consideration is how this will impact upon the parking arrangements, as both No. 5 & No.7 Grey Friars have no direct access to the rear car park.

Any changes to the car park may have archaeological implications, as it is part of the Greyfriars Scheduled Monument and below ground works would disturb the site of the former Franciscan Friary of Greyfriars.



A P P E N D I X A

NAME: Former Barradale Offices
ADDRESS: 5 Grey Friars
LIST ENTRY NUMBER: 1031581
GRADE: II
DATE FIRST LISTED: 29-Jan-1998

DETAILS:

Former architect's office. 1880. Designed by Isaac Barradale for himself. Red brick and rough-cast with ashlar dressings and plain tile roofs. 3 storeys plus attic. Ground floor has central chamfered ashlar doorway with double doors and overlight with coat-of-arms. Either side single 4-light ashlar mullion and transom windows with glazing bars to the top lights. Above single continuous canted oriel window, with mullions and transoms, supported on ornate carved wooden brackets, 10-lights arranged 4:2:4. Above 2 canted oriel windows with 3-lights each and glazing bars. Jettied attic has 2 rough-cast gables supported on curved wooden brackets, each with a single 4-light casement window. This purpose-built architect's office is a very early example of the Domestic Revival style.

A P P E N D I X A (c o n t i n u e d)

NAME: Conway Building
ADDRESS: 7 Grey Friars
LIST ENTRY NUMBER: 1407228
GRADE: II
DATE FIRST LISTED: 25-May-2005

DETAILS:

Offices with a storage and additional office space in the yard to the rear. Dated 1878. By Stockdale Harrison (original drawings are in Leicestershire Record Office) for W W Clarkson & Co, brick and tile merchants. Red brick with stone dressings; Welsh slate roof with corbelled out decorative stacks and pierced ridge tiles. Gothic Revival style. Main block to Grey Friars is 3 storeys and part basement. 7 bays wide.

A good example of late C19 Gothic style commercial buildings by a significant local architect. The fine brickwork and use of elaborate terracotta detailing may well 'advertise' and have been provided by the patrons themselves as they were brick and tile merchants. Forms part of an important group of commercial buildings in Grey Friars and St Martins.

GROUND FLOOR:

Plank doors with decorative iron straps to outer bays set in moulded surrounds with quatrefoil in tympanum, all under brick arch with stone hoodmould on carved leaf capitals; panelled double doors to centre bay under overlight with grille, all set in flat, moulded, stone architrave. Paired timber sash windows with arched heads, stone surrounds with central mullion and tiled panel above.

FIRST FLOOR:

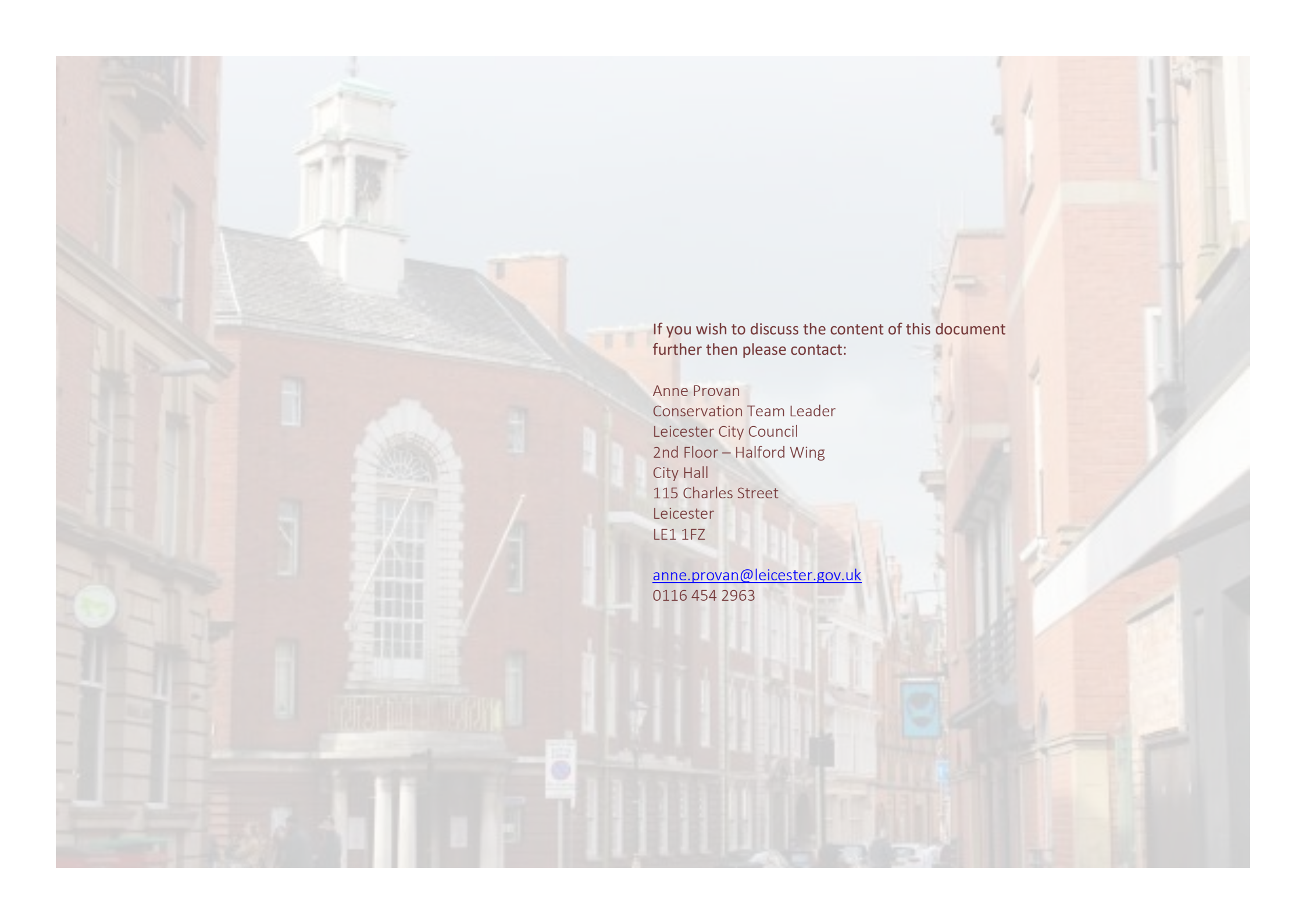
1.2.2.2.1 lancet windows in moulded stone surrounds with transoms, capitals to central piers and continuous string course; outer pairs under tile panels and central pair under stone panel inscribed "CONWAY BUILDINGS".

UPPER FLOOR:

1.2.2.2.1 timber sash windows with trefoil heads and stone lintel/string course; centre and outer pairs are set under brick arches with tiled panels and stone hoodmoulds all framed by gables corbelled out from the first floor; stone plaques in panels, the central one inscribed 1878. Cut and moulded brick cornice with acanthus decoration; stone pinnacles to centre gable. The whitewashed yard fronts behind retain mainly wooden mullion and transom windows and have elaborate sill bands and a dentil cornice. Ornamental wooden lucam where there was formerly a hoist.

INTERIOR:

Dog leg stairs at either end of the building with fine cast and wrought iron balustrades and some original woodwork in rooms.



If you wish to discuss the content of this document further then please contact:

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